

SANDBACH FOOTPATH GROUP (SFG)

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Monday 17th October 2016

Present: 25 attendee's

Apologies: Sheena Marshall, Gina Rowe, Ralph Browes, Pat Smith, Brian Roberts, Craig Bayley, Joan Eccleston, Miriam Wynne, Rodney Daniels.

AP = Action Point, FP = Footpath, FB = Facebook, CF = carried forward

Welcome and introductions (TB): TB welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to sign the register.

1. The Officers: Janet Jepson (JJ) has stepped down as secretary and Jane Stanway (JS) has agreed to stand for the position. Graham Whitehouse (GW) proposed JS, seconded by Isobel Bennett (IB), motion carried unanimously.

2. Matters Arising From the Last Meeting: TB drew the meetings attention to the previous minutes which are available on the SFG website.

At a previous meeting Gina Rowe (GR) suggested that local school children could be taken on walks. Cllr Paula Eaton says she will now take this on and has confirmed that she will start with her son's school (school not known).

3. Financial Report:

Description	Expenditure	Income	Balance	Note
Grant from STC		375		
Stand at Sandbach Today (2015)	10		<u>365</u>	1
Waymarking discs	184.50			
Waitrose Green Token Scheme		400		
Stand at Sandbach Today (2016)	10			
Bank charge adjustment		10	<u>580.50</u>	2
Provision for other costs incurred				
Rights of Way Training Day	37			
Cost of 2016 AGM	50			3
Possible corection to bank charge	10		<u>483.50</u>	4

Notes. 1, as reported at 2015 AGM. 2, Balance of account 31Aug2016.

3, cost of hiring Masonic Hall. 4, Estimated funds at AGM 17Oct2016

Balance held £483.50 but this will be adjusted to take account of any insurance premium paid in the future (see item 8)

The Financial Report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. TB confirmed that SFG will need to look at ways to generate additional funding in future.

4. Review of Progress Since The Inaugural Meeting: TB said many thanks to all that have helped or assisted in achieving progress to date.

a. FB – GW provided a brief update and confirmed that there are now 656 members on FB, with a lot of contributions by way of photographs of walks and also information on other walks undertaken by members.

b. Email List – TB stated that his circulation of information via email was limited to 100 and he has 126 email addresses, so he sends in 3 lots. **AP:** This is to be looked at and Kevin Dean said he would assist TB.

c. Guided Walks - TB confirmed that SFG is not a walking group but a footpath group therefore we are trying to encourage people to take ownership of walks. There are now 13 walks on the website and if anyone has an idea for a new walk please let TB know.

TB thanked Dick Macauley (DM), who represented SWWG for the opening up of permissive paths. Waymarkers have been erected on these paths.

A new walk is now available (copies available at the meeting), which has recently been walked by U3A. Christine Smedley (CS) also confirmed that she is looking into 6 new walks.

5. Planning Issues:

- a. Dingle Lane – JS gave a summary. Planning for Dingle Farm development is refused at present but attempts are being made to try to adopt it as a right of way. Various people have written to Cheshire East (CEC) confirming that Dingle Lane has been walked for over 20 years.
- b. Capricorn – this development **will** affect FP14. The new plans for this site take no account of FP 14 at all. Someone at the meeting stated that CEC may not even be aware of the threat to FP14. Phil Wyatt (PW) has not been notified as he should have been as the SFG named member. **AP:** sub group to be set up to monitor this development. Volunteers: Pam Roberts, CS, JS, Paul Hughes, PW and TB.
- c. Orphan FP's – TB stated that it would be nice to have permissive paths to join up some of the orphan paths. **AP:** produce a map showing aspirational paths to present to CEC. Sub group to be set

up to take this forward. Volunteers: IB, GW, Carolyn Lowe (CL), Dave Sprosan, Dave Peever and TB

6. Accessible Routes: Salt Line/Borrowpit Meadows and The Rail Trail, whilst not circular walks, are all fully accessible with a radar key. Craig Bayley wrote a complimentary email, saying he had tried the route in his mobility machine, enjoyed it very much and used the radar key.

CS stated that she may have a circular walk with no stiles.

AP: CS to notify TB of the details of this walk.

In order to improve accessibility the meeting discussed the estimated cost of replacing a stile with a kissing gate at about £800 (fitted) versus a wooden gate costing about £400 (fitted). However a kissing gate is generally necessary for farmers fields where there may be livestock. Stiles also can present problems for some dogs!

7. Report By PW on PROW Meeting: Meeting held on 4th October 2016.

- a. Volunteers should report any problems with FP's to CEC. The existing system is only working to a limited extent, therefore an online reporting system is being set up, where you can upload photo's and comments of any problems identified.
- b. Deregulation 2015 – for the reduction of burdens resulting from legislation for businesses or other organisations or for individuals. CEC will publish an online guide to DMMO applications.
- c. Public Path Orders – diversions simplify the process. If no pathway diversion is possible – path will be extinguished.
- d. PROW committee to be removed and Planning to take over.

8. Insurance: it is estimated that Civil/public liability insurance will cost approximately £230. DM suggested that SFG need to find additional funding to pay for this insurance, he further stated that insurance is a necessity. CL proposed that SFG take out insurance, this was seconded by JJ, motion carried by a majority of votes. Keith to provide TB with contact details of the insurance company.

[Since the meeting insurance has been taken out via the Zurich for £82.50 inc tax, starting 1st November.]

Fund raising: SFG needs to look at ways to increase its income.

Suggestions were made to contact both the Nationwide and Coop, who both have schemes that support local groups. It was also suggested that SFG hold an annual fund raising event or ask for donations on guided walks?

9. Adopt A Path: TB asked everyone, who hasn't done so already, to apply to CEC for a letter of authorisation. If you have the letter of authorisation, then you are insured by CEC and if a landowner challenges you, the letter gives you authority.

The adopt-a-path scheme itself has proved difficult to administer, so SFG now simply suggest a voluntary scheme: when on a walk, please pick up litter and carry secateurs to cut back vegetation.

10. Publicity: CL confirmed that she sends out press releases to local papers when a circular walk is published.

TB suggested that in the future SFG could ask the 600+ members on FB and email to help save a FP by writing to CEC, when there is a matter of major concern to SFG. As a last resort we might even consider using the "Mass Trespass" tactic.

11. Other Items:

AP: Map showing all PROW's to be exhibited in Sandbach Library (CL) and possibly other notice boards around town.

CL volunteered to start the process at the library. When that is done we can contact other parishes. A volunteer is required to help get maps into the notice boards. Details of the Parish Clerks should be on the CEC website.

Haslington doesn't appear to have a footpath group anymore.

12. Constitution: the existing constitution is available on SFG website. TB proposed various changes to the constitution, which largely related to replacing "committee" with "members" and also to remove the association with SWWG. A new draft of the constitution to be drafted by TB.

13. AOB: CL proposed thanks to TB, the chairman and other group walk leaders.

Date of next meeting: October 2017 to be advised.

Venue to be advised.