

# Sandbach Footpath Group, chairman's report October 2020

SFG usually has a proper AGM during October, but this year we cannot meet due to the Covid regulations.

Instead, we can try and communicate news and progress since the previous October. If you have any questions, comments, or objections to this report and the previous minutes, please reply accordingly to this email.

**Donations.** We have not been able to handle money since March, but some people have brought donations in envelopes. We still have ongoing insurance and website charges to pay, so it would be nice if members could make a yearly donation for the period October to October. Suggested annual donation is £5, or 50p per walk, whichever is preferred. You can make a donation direct to our bank account:

sort code 30 12 59,

A/C number 18742868,

A/C name Sandbach Footpath Group. Or, bring an envelope to a walk and give to the leader.

All donations gratefully accepted, but no one is counting or recording and all are welcome to join in, any regulations permitting.

Many thanks to those who have already recently donated.

## Report October 2020

1. **Previous AGM.** Please read the minutes from the previous AGM, October 2019, available from the SFG website under the "minutes" tab, or on this link:

[https://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SFG\\_6-AGM-Minutes-28Oct2019.pdf](https://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SFG_6-AGM-Minutes-28Oct2019.pdf)

2. **Elections.** At the 2019 meeting the chairman, Trevor Boxer and treasurer, John Hind, were re-elected for a further 2 years, so their period of office would run until October 2021. Jane Stanway, our secretary, was minded to stand down this year, but in the circumstances has agreed to continue for an extra year. Therefore, we can continue with the existing team until October 2021 when all the officers will need to be elected. This procedure seems to be fairly common in other similar organisations in these difficult circumstances.

3. **Treasurer's report Oct 2020.** A summary is shown here, but a full treasure's report can be viewed on the SFG website, together with a pdf version of these notes.

Balance brought forward from previous year £21226.01

Balance to be Carried forward to next year £7823.56

Expenditure £14598.11 ( including £14381.11 for Kissing Gates Project)

Income £1195.66, ( including £1046.66 from Terry Hughes Just Giving Page)

Zurich insurance gave a 3 month extension FOC due to reduced activities during Covid, so it will appear in the next accounts. Many thanks to John Hind for producing the report.

4. **Festival.** Unfortunately, there was no June/July Festival this year, but a lot of work was done in preparation, including a new local quiz by Jenny and Keith Haines. Hopefully, next year, we can try again and the preparation work can be reused. Assuming we can proceed, nearer the time, we will be appealing for people to help organise and lead walks. Have a think about this and if you have ideas or suggestions for events, please send them by return email.

5. **The “miles without stiles”** Kissing Gate (KG) project was progressing well at the 2019 AGM, with our grant from the CEC New Homes Bonus Scheme partially committed. However, when Covid came, the factory making the gates was furloughed and supplies dried up. They restarted production in July and progress on the KGs restarted. The whole grant of £20,998 has now been either spent or committed. CEC have been doing the work according to our instructions. We have slightly over committed on the grant, but we are in the fortunate position of having collected donations from members. Also, Terry Hughes very successfully organised donations through Facebook Just Giving, so we will have some money left over for more KGs (or other projects) when we are sure of the bills coming in from CEC. Many thanks to Terry for organising this and to all who donated.

6. **Future projects.** If you have any ideas for future projects or other stiles to be converted to KGs, please reply to this email. Even if we have committed most of our funds, we may well be able to apply for another grant in the future.

7. **Our walking programme** has been severely restricted since Covid, but we have a team of leaders taking groups of 6 (inc. leader). This has worked well, and people have said they have enjoyed the walks. Pre-covid, October 2019 to March 2020 we had about 368 people attend walks (inc. the New Year’s Day walk) but, after Lockdown, July to the present we had about 190 attendees, which is still a good achievement in the restricted circumstances.

Many thanks those that have supported the walks during this time.

8. **Leaders.** I am sure members would like to thank the leaders for offering the walks. If you have aspirations to lead, you will be very welcome, please reply to this email accordingly. We could have more than one or two walks a week, with only 6 per walk, there is probably a pent up demand.

9. **Eventbrite** is the way we announce walks by email and/or Facebook and this works well, limiting the tickets to the 6 walkers and keeping a note of names in accordance with regulations. Many thanks to Graham Whitehouse who set up the Eventbrite process.

10. **Members.** We have about 432 members via email and over 3300 on Facebook. This is about double the members we had a year ago. Thank you all for your interest; it’s always interesting and entertaining to see the pictures people post on the Facebook page.

11. **Footpath 14 extinguishment.** Our thanks to Chris Meewezen and The Open Spaces Society for work on this. It is still hoped that the path through the Persimmon estate will be a proper path, not merely a pavement beside a road.

12. **Footpaths 17, 18, 19 and 50** remain under threat in the Muller estate (aka Houndings), the appeal having found the housing section in favour of Muller, but the commercial section was rejected.

That is about all to report in this unusual season. On the positive side we are managing quite well, but we all hope for better times.

Signed,

*Trevor Boxer*, chairman

Dated: 20 October 2020