

Sandbach Footpath Group AGM, 25 October 2021
Minutes

1) Apologies

Rod Daniels, Chris Meewezen, Vic Blundell, Dick MaCauley, Annie Hall, Ella Hall, Barbara Wallace, Jacky Stamp, Glyn Robinson, Cath Brunyeen, Karen Cox, Elsy Booth, Phil Booth, Carolyn Lowe, Hilary Jamieson, Greg Cooper, Tana Thorne, Trisha Creedy, Paul Hughes, Geraldine Hughes, Mel Rendell, Barbara West, Sarah Forbes and Pauline Rowley.

Attendees 31

2) Approval of Previous Minutes – Chairman’s Report Oct 2020 (there was no AGM for 2020 – due to Covid restrictions).

- a) Chairman’s Report. Donations still could be made via Bank Account, sort code 30 12 59, A/C number 18742868, A/C name Sandbach Footpath Group
- b) No Elections, but the three officers continued for a further year until Oct 2021, when elections would be held. Trevor Boxer chairman, John Hind treasurer, Jane Stanway secretary.
- c) Treasurers Report – Previous year - £21,266.01 – Carried forward £7823.56
Expenditure £14,598.11 (£1,046.66 being from Terry Hughes Just giving page).
- d) Zurich gave a 3 month holiday from insurance.
- e) No Festival due to Covid.
- f) No Kissing gates available due to the factory being closed down. It re-started in July.
- g) Many Thanks to Terry Hughes for Organising the Just Giving page to help raise funds.
- h) The Walking programmes were restricted but Covid allowing we had a good number of walks.
- i) Leaders – many thanks to the leaders, but could always have more.
- j) Eventbrite (organised by Graham Whitehouse) was a great help when booking limited numbers
- k) Members 432 on Email and 3300 on Facebook, about twice more than the previous year.
- l) Footpath Extinguishments, FP14.
- m) Footpaths 17,18,19 remain under threat as at 20th October 2020.
- n) Approval of the Previous Minutes (report) – Proposed by G. Whitehouse and 2nd by D. Peever -All in favour, vote unanimous.

3) Elections.

Jane Stanway is standing down as Secretary.

Chairman – Trevor Boxer to be retained as Chairman – Proposer Alan Boardman, 2nd Dave Peever. All in favour – Unanimous.

Secretary – Kay Hind – Proposer Jane Stanway, 2nd Barbara Tomkinson – All in favour – Unanimous.

Treasurer – John Hind – Proposer Jonathan Granger, 2nd Graham Whitehouse – All in favour – Unanimous.

Vice Chair – Janet Luther – Proposer Pat Boxer - 2nd John Hind All in favour – Unanimous.

4) Review of this year’s Walking Festival to October 2021.

Given the difficult times this year’s Walking Festival went ahead and was successful, albeit limited numbers and some cancelled – mainly walks incorporating food.

1,000 miles collectively walked and the feedback was positive.

Jenny and Keith Haines did a new Quiz Walk entered by 100 people and the winner had a hamper from Godfrey C Williams and Son. Many thanks to Keith and Jenny for all their hard work.

5) Future Projects

We may have to apply for future grants.

- a) **Bradwall FP6 Wood Lane** – 4 Stiles that are hard to manoeuvre; at least the one by Wood Lane could be changed to a Kissing Gate. It may not be possible to do all due to layout of the land and electric fences used. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Wood-lane.pdf>
- b) **Hall Lane FP15** -This is near to a busy (fast) road and in order to get over the stile there tends to be queues which can be dangerous in view of the fast vehicles, so a Kissing Gate there would make access easier and queues less likely. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Hall-Lane.pdf>
- c) **FP23 off Crewe Road** – Jonathan Granger discussed the CEC Land – Brook, Wood, Dingle Wood, St. Mary's Dell and Offley Wood. The Awkward Footpath 23 on the canal bank needs attention. It could be made safer as the alternative route is a long diversion. SWWG are doing a Crowd Funding option with CEC to top up shortfall. Phase 2 maybe the Bridge and path by Arclid Brook as it is suffering from erosion. Maybe to get a raised walkway to make it accessible during Winter as it tends to flood. The project [SPACEHIVE.com/Sandbach-canal-footpath](https://www.spacehive.com/Sandbach-canal-footpath) to help raise funds to restore a Section of FP 23 opposite Wheelock Wharf. The project on the website aims to raise £2,059 then Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group, in collaboration with Canal and River Trust, will be able to start work early in 2022. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP23-Wheelock-canal.pdf>

Trevor to have a meeting to discuss the viability of Kissing Gates [a) and b)] to maybe get together a working party to examine the way forward and possible costs.

6) Review of Kissing Gates project - funded by

- a) Sandbach Town Council £1,500 about 4 years ago.
- b) CEC NHB Scheme £20,998
- c) A further 7 have been put in by Bathgate on their land.

7) Financial Report by John Hind;

SFG Financial Summary 2021-2021			
Cheques			
Number	Item	Membership	Value
LB000031	Open Spaces Society 19/20	Membership	£45.00
LB000032	CVS	Membership	£45.00
LB000034	Zurich Insurance 20/21	Insurance	£157.00
LB000035	Cheshire East Borough Council	Kissing Gates	£5,539.56
LB000036	Graham Whitehouse / Liuks Consulting	Hosting	£60.00
LB000037	Ground Works West Midlands	Hassall Green N.R.	£60.00
LB000038	Open Spaces Society 20/21	Membership	£45.00
Totals			£5,951.56

Receipts			
	Value	Balance Brought forward	£7,823.56
Member Subs / Donations / Quiz	£1,211.87	Receipts	£1,211.87
		Payments	-£5,951.56
	£1,211.87		

Balance to carry forward	£3,083.87
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Credits: Kissing Gates			Debits
CE New Homes Bonus Fund	£20,998.00		£1,321.74
			£3,504.08
			£4,397.88
			£6,487.15
			£5,539.56
		Total Spend	£21,250.41
Residual Balance	-£252.41		
This simply shows that SFG have spent all of the New Homes Bonus Fund, and supplemented the project by £252.41 from SFG funds			

- 8) **Members** – at present 4,611 on Facebook and 510 on Email of which Mailchimp tells us 66 % of Emails are opened.
- 9) **Reports** – (DMMO = Definitive Map Mod Order, PINS = Planning Inspectorate)
- a) **FP14** on Persimmon Site at Hawthorne Drive. This is subject to extinguishment. Cheshire East Council first said extinguishment was unlawful and now have changed their minds. A Public Inquiry has been applied for through the Planning Inspectorate and Persimmon can do no further work in the area until it is resolved. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP14-and-Wrights-Lane.pdf>
 - b) **Dingle Lane** – This is not a Footpath, Bridleway. It has no status. A DMMO was applied for in 2016. There are long DMMO backlogs and PINS has been contacted for a “Direction” from the Secretary of State. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Dingle-Lane.pdf>
 - c) **Wrights Lane** – leading from Heath Road to Footpath 14. There may be a further possible development in the pipeline and again a DMMO has been applied for with witness statements from 20 people. Thank you to all those witnesses. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP14-and-Wrights-Lane.pdf>
 - d) **Footpaths 17/18/19 and 50** – Houndings Lane/Muller site – Muller have withdrawn this for now, but we will have to watch for further applications. Sandbach only have 20 Footpaths in Sandbach and potentially 4 would be lost on this site. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FPs-17181950.pdf>
 - e) **Elworth Hall Farm to Cookesmere Lane** – Before planning approved there was a path from Orchard Place to Cookesmere Lane shown on documentation, but after building was completed, the pathway was not done. It should have been completed when the estate was finished but it was not. Trevor Boxer did this walk with Councillors Katherine Flavell, Laura Crane and Suzie Akers-Smith. A proper surfaced walkway for this route, accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs would be a much better unpolluted walk from Elworth to Town. Link: <http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Elworth-Hall-to-Cookesmere.pdf>

- f) **Abbey Fields** – Middlewich Road/ParkLane/Abbey Road – The original plans showed a footpath to Wheelock Rail Trail. The Path never materialised. There appears to be a problem with enforcement of these footpaths. Cllr. Laura Crane was attending the meeting and is aware of this.

<http://www.sandbachfootpaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Abbeyfields.pdf>

- 10) **Festival 2022.** A unanimous vote for more Walking Festivals and Graham Whitehouse to head this and any ideas for such events or help would be most welcome.
Geocaching will be added to The Walking Festival.

11) **PRoW meeting.**

(PRoW = Public Rights of Way, PNFS = Peak and Northern Footpath Society)
Trevor Boxer attended a CEC PRoW virtual meeting on 6th October 2021 mentioned within was a backlog of 41 DMMOs (42, with Wrights Lane). We have joined PNFS so we may be of mutual help, reporting footpath problems and applying for DMMOs.
PRoW = Public Rights of Way, PNFS = Peak and Northern Footpath Society

- 12) **Zurich Insurance** have a level of Personal insurance added.

- 13) **Adopt a Path** – If you want to adopt a path, please contact Jenny Butler at CEC PRoW to obtain a letter of Authority to work on brambles etc. Please use the link to PRoW on the Adopt a path tab in the SFG website.
You will need secateurs to trim when out walking.

14) **Any other Business -**

Comments by Celia Lyon:

- a) Description of walks rely on knowledge of trees that not all people have. Trevor agreed to review the earlier walks to make them easier to follow.
- b) To either number or code Kissing gates when there are more than one in quick succession going to different pathways.
- c) With regard to SFG website, local walks maps page, try to make people more aware of what is done by SFG doing a footnote giving Bank Details to aid contributions.

Other ideas to do/consider from the floor

- d) Local Footpaths use one per month to get different walks;
- e) Have an away day ie to Alsager/Congleton/Astbury once a month;
- f) Do a tea shop walk/pub walk” House” on Congleton Road (new coffee shop) have said that they would be happy to accommodate sausage rolls and tea/coffee if they are messaged before hand.
- g) A themed walk but being mindful that this doesn't dilute the walking festival walks.

- 15) Next meeting to be announced nearer to October 2022.

- 16) Trevor closed the meeting after thanking all for attending.