

SFG AGM Nov 2025 SFG - Minutes

7.30pm, Thurs 6th November 2025

Wesley Centre, Wesley Avenue, Sandbach.

Unfortunately, Kay Hind hasn't come tonight because of health reasons, so we are making a recording of the proceedings for later transcription.

1. Apologies.

Kay Hind, Sarah Armstrong, Mark Armstrong, Eileen Dorman, Andy Bailey, Robert Shaw, Janet Luther, Barbara Tomkinson, Greg Cooper, Karen Bowyer, and Richard Vickery.

2. Approval of the previous minutes from October 2024.

Proposed by Keith Hayes, seconded by Dave Peever. Vote to approve the minutes was carried unanimously.

3. Matters Arising. None.

4. Update from Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group.

Jonathan Granger, chairman of SWWG, gave a comprehensive report of the activities of the Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group:

FP23 was completed and about 100 trees planted, mostly in the low-lying field from the Dancing Bridge to the canal. For example, alder, oak, willows, hazel, alder buckthorn, birch, aspen, black poplar, many have survived.

The Filterbed Wood Extension was completed and is now well used, Town Council funded.

Brook Wood maintenance continues including repair to some signs following minor vandalism.

St. Mary's Wood. The new path is progressing and the new steps are already being used. A new footbridge is planned. This will be an alternative to St Mary's Dell, which may be reduced due to the enlarged roundabout and road widening.

Bats Observations.

Some detection devices were borrowed, tried in various places such as Mill Hill Lane and the ponds beyond Offley Wood. At least 4 bat species were shown to live locally.

Wild Flowers.

Several areas of grass have been allocated for seeding with wild flowers. Notices will hopefully prevent unnecessary mowing.

5. **Footpath closures, threats and diversions.**

Hassall FP16, which links Jubilee Villas - Malkins Bank Bridleway to Mill Lane was closed because the bridge collapsed. SFG offered to some money for a new bridge, or there could be a diversion through a little wood. Unfortunately, there is long term toxic pollution from the old tip seeping up on the fairway so extensive amelioration works need to be done. Trevor asked at a recent CEC Public Rights of Way meeting, whether the path diversion could be brought forward prior to those remedial works being done, the route pegged out and the diversion order done so that all the paperwork is complete, objections answered, and then it could be done straight away after the works. CEC were not keen on the idea, so we will see how it progresses.

1700 extra dwellings are in early stages of planning applications: for Sandbach: Ettiley Heath, Hind Heath Road, Crewe Road, Sandbach Heath. The Sandbach Heath application is close to a public right of way footpath but, does not threaten it. Therefore, we do not need to take any action regarding footpaths.

Close to the M6, near the new roundabout with the exit leading to a planned development (hotel, McDonald's etc). A bridge over the valley, for access to a new commercial employment site, is planned. This commercial site would adversely affect FP14 from Sandbach Heath to Church Lane, St John's. We need to watch out for future submissions.

Anwyl (previously Muller) site near B&M. Anwyl plans are favourable to the footpaths, so hopefully SFG need take no further action. Ref 24/4287/FUL

Muller 25/4269/EIA. A very recent preliminary planning application for about 500 dwellings off Houndings Lane and on towards Malkins Bank. This may affect the footpath we call "The Bidneys", i.e. Sandbach FP24, Hassall FP7 and Betchton FP1. Again, we need to watch future submissions.

Insurance

The insurance has increased from £157 to £168.40, and we paid that to cover until March 2026. That covers us for being stupid, for example, leaving a farm gate open and cows escaping onto the highway.

Parking charges.

From 26th of May 2025, most of the car parks are being charged for, all except Christmas day. The car park, end of Congleton Road, near the garage, £3.50 all day only. Lower Waitrose, Chapel Street, and Westfields, Crown Bank, Hawk Street, and Well Bank for 3hr is £1.80 to £2.80. 3hours was chosen because walks are usually up to 2.5hr, so 3hr would cover. Westfields after 3pm is free. So, do we want to walk from Sandbach, say from the lower Waitrose car park, for a 2hr walk and pay £2.60 on what would have been a free or 50p walk? A vote was taken and about half of attendees seemed content to pay. A walk we do from there is Bradwall Manor, but we have not done that since they introduced the parking charges.

6. **Treasurer's report.** John Hind presented, as summarised below.

Number	Item		Value
LB000121	Unity Methodist Church	Hall Rental for AGM	£44.00
LB000122	Peak & Northern Footpath Society	Membership	£30.00
LB000123	Sandbach Partnership	Membership	£10.00
LB000124	T Boxer	New Years Day Mulled Wine	£14.34
LB000127	Sandbach Food Bank	New Years Day Collection	£176.00
LB000128	T Boxer	Zurich Insurance	£168.40
LB000129	T Boxer	Open Spaces Soc Membership	£45.00
	Expert Hosting	Hosting 2024/2025	£144.00
	Lloyds Bank	Service Charges	£29.75
Total Outgoings			£661.49

Receipts					
			Balance Brought forward		£2,463.81
	Value				
Member Subs / Donations	£706.24		Receipts	£706.24	
			Outgoings	-£661.49	
Totals	£706.24			£44.75	
			Balance to carry forward		£2,508.56

7. **Donations.** A vote on the membership donation of 50p per walk or £5 annually, possibly increased to £1 and £10, indicated members to stay as we are.

8. **Spring and summer Weekend walk events.**

13 walks in May and over two weekends in July.

They were all well attended, some better than others. One in July was cancelled because of thunder and lightning. If we want to do that again next year, we are going to some stage need to look at resources. So, we'll have a conversation after Christmas to see who is willing to lead a few walks because it's down, at the moment, to three or four people and to do this again, we're going to need a few more people to join in. So hopefully some of you will...

Many thanks to everyone who helped at leading or back-marking walks, everyone seemed to appreciate the events

9. **New Year's Day walk.**

Our custom is to have this with mulled wine at the Football club. John already made arrangements with Hayley, and she said, we can borrow the football club this New Year's Day, and we can even use the toilets.

We have suggested three pounds donated to charity for the last two years. One year, we donated to The Pantry, and the other one to The Food Bank. It was suggested we could also consider the Talking Newspaper. After discussion (some after the meeting), it was suggested that we keep to a food charity because fortunate people have been treating themselves to fancy food and wine over the festive period, we should stick to a food charity.

10. **Review of members.**

We have 5700 on Facebook, 620 on email and dreading the day when they all turn up at once for a walk!

Over the year, about two walks a week with the spring, and summer weekends 14 walks. It adds up to about 120 walks, roughly 10 people per walk. That comes to about 1,200 people on walks. That is quite an achievement, so we can give ourselves a little pat on the back.

11. **Adopt-a-Path, secateur work and litter picking.**

If you want to do any secateur work, litter picking, and so on, on the public right of way footpaths, you can get an authorisation form from Cheshire East, so that if you're snipping away at the brambles by a stile and a farmer challenges, you can show the authorisation form. It only applies on a public right of way.

A question about the authorisation was:

"Do you have to renew that?"

Answer. No, once you've done it, that's it.

12. **Election of Officers.** It's two years since the officers were elected. We have the three officers. Trevor Boxer chairman, John Hind Treasurer, Kay Hind Secretary. All were asked if they were willing to stand and the answers were yes (including Kay who said yes, through John, in her absence). No-one wanted to stand against the officers. A block vote was proposed and agreed for all officers and the vote held.

Mel Yewer proposed the vote and Richard Hovey seconded. The vote was carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Vice Chair. Unfortunately, Janet Luther has retired due to ill health and we now need a new vice chair.

Mel Yewer volunteered.

Proposed by Dave Peever seconded by Brian Ashcroft.

The vote was unanimous in favour with no abstention, Mel Yewer being elected.

13. **Any Other Business.**

Trevor reminded attendees about Lyme Disease, spread by ticks. He had this a few years ago. If anyone is interested in being aware and avoiding getting bitten by a tick and possibly getting Lyme disease, a few leaflets were left out for collection.

14. **Next meeting** will be announced nearer the time, probably next October or November 2026.

Many thanks to all for attending.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.