

Frodsham Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee

held in Town Council Office, Castle Park
On **Tuesday 3 October 2017**, at 7pm



Present: Councillors A Oulton, C Ashton, P Martin, F Sutton

In attendance: Mr T Blundell, Mr J Beswick, Ms L Kenny (Admin Officer), Mr P Morris (Facilities Manager)

Meeting 4

No	Item
57	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Cllr L Brown and were accepted.
58	Declarations of Interest None
59	Minutes of Meeting 3 held on 5 September 2017: The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record, proposed and seconded by Cllrs A Oulton and P Martin.
60	Opportunity for the Public to Speak No members of the public were present.
61	Hob Hey Wood <p>The merits and potential pitfalls of establishing a local group of volunteers to deliver the management plan for Hob Hey Wood were discussed. It was noted that a charity named Friends of Hob Hey Wood was set up by FTC in 2003 with the objectives “to preserve and conserve for the quiet and peaceful benefit of the public the natural woodland areas of Hob Hey Wood in the county of Cheshire”. FTC is the sole trustee and the charity has current funds of £1,386.22.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Ben Greenaway (BG) from the Mersey Forest, who had agreed to attend the meeting to advise the Committee on this issue, was unable to attend due to problems on the rail network, but will supply a sample constitution for a Friends Group, which would need to be consistent with the objectives of the Trust. BG would be willing to attend a future meeting, if required.</p> <p>Cllr Ashton expressed concern about the control of volunteers working in the wood. Cllr Oulton endorsed this opinion, adding that the group must be self-managing to achieve the Council’s objectives without requiring significant input from FTC staff. Issues such as health and safety, training of volunteers and the maintenance of interest need to be considered. Cllr Martin suggested that the goal of the group should be the achievement of the five-year plan. Cllr Sutton explained the history of the original Friends of Hob Hey Wood Group led by a former councillor, who had a love of the wood and developed a good network of enthusiastic volunteers. It will be important to find a similar leader for a revitalized group, and important that FTC retains control of the work of the group without micromanaging and demoralizing volunteers. Mr Blundell suggested that regular meetings between the group and the Council would be essential.</p> <p>Cllr Oulton suggested that the money in the Friends of Hob Hey Wood account might enable good quality training for volunteers to ensure they have the necessary skills.</p> <p>Mr Beswick described the achievements of the Tarvin Community Woodland Trust which has successfully managed a community wood for nine years.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(i) That establishing a Friends of Hob Hey Wood volunteer group was the best way to achieve the objectives in the five-year management plan for Hob Hey Wood;</p>

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	<p>(ii) To gauge the level of local interest in getting involved in such a group by placing laminated notices in the wood, together with an article on the Council's website and social media pages – Admin Officer (AO) to draft the information and circulate it to the Committee for approval;</p> <p>(iii) Invite Tarvin Community Woodland Trust or, if they are not available, a similar group to attend the next meeting of the Environment Committee to share their experiences. The Committee would be willing to visit Tarvin if that was more acceptable to the Group;</p> <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Martin.</p>
62	<p>Cheshire's Sandstone Ridge</p> <p>The Committee noted the report of a workshop held on 12 Sep to discuss the future of the Sandstone Ridge and consider the suggested actions coming out of that workshop in the form of a "Call to Action for the Town and Parish Councils of the Sandstone Ridge".</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Invite representative of the Sandstone Ridge Trust to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss work of the Trust; (ii) Add the Trust to the list of organisations featured on FTC's website, and provide a link to its website; (iii) Promote relevant FTC events and news on the Sandstone Ridge website, facebook and twitter sites; (iv) Nominate Cllrs Oulton and Ashton as points of contact to liaise with the Sandstone Ridge Trust; (v) Suggest to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group that the protection and conservation of the natural beauty and special qualities of the Sandstone Ridge should be promoted in the Neighbourhood Plan; (vi) R1 - that the Council brands itself as "The Gateway to the Sandstone Ridge" (or similar) and use the Sandstone Ridge logo on the Council website and other communications; <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Martin.</p>
63	<p>Tree Matters</p>
63.1	<p>Cllr Oulton reported back on a site inspection carried out by himself, Cllr Ashton and the Facilities Manager (FM) to inspect the issue of overhanging trees on Howey Lane. He apologized to Cllr Sutton for not inviting her to participate.</p> <p>The site inspection had identified a Sweet Chestnut tree which appears to be on land owned by National Grid, which has branches overhanging the road, as well as growing very close to some of the vents of the NG installation.</p> <p>The inspection had also found other overhanging trees adjoining FTC land, but there is a need to establish the exact boundary of FTC land ownership to determine who is responsible for these trees, which are showing stress cracking and are shading the street lights.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Send a letter to National Grid, informing them that branches of large Sweet Chestnut which appears to be on their land are overhanging into the roadway, as well as growing very close to some of the vents of their installation; (ii) Investigate ownership of the land on which overhanging trees are growing along the boundary of FTC land; (iii) Write to CWAC Highways Department requesting that they cut back the overhanging vegetation; (iv) Request via Cllrs Critchley and Poulton that CWAC Cllr Shore visits Howey Lane when she next visits Frodsham, to look at the issues identified. <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Martin and Ashton.</p>

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63.2	<p>Cllr Oulton reported back on a site visit he had made with Cllr Ashton and the FM to Manley Copse, approximately six months after the felling of the large unsafe Beech trees formerly on the site. The repairs to the boundary fence and the excellent repairs to the bench go towards giving the site a “recovering, rather than abandoned” status. There had been no repetition of ad-hoc tree planting by neighbouring residents.</p> <p>The Committee discussed future actions on the site and it was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Obtain a quote for the provision of Hawthorn and Blackthorn whips for future planting to fill gaps in the hedge; (ii) Remove self-seeded Holly from the copse; (iii) Apply to the Woodland Trust for a free copse tree pack (10 Silver Birch, 10 Rowan and 10 Wild Cherry) to plant in the wood; (iv) Hire a tracked chipper to get rid of the accumulated brash from hedge trimming and conifer removal within the copse; (v) Organise a community event in January 2018 to involve residents in chipping, Holly removal and tree planting, and to invite the person who renovated the bench, and his employer, who provided the workshop facilities; (vi) Inform local residents of the work that is planned; <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Martin.</p>
63.3	<p>The Committee considered a request from the WW1 Commemorative Group to plant or dedicate a tree to commemorate the centenary of the Zeebrugge Campaign on 23 April 2018. The Council has a Commemorative Tree Policy, last reviewed in 2009.</p> <p>Given that the trees to be planted in Manley Copse would be whips, it was decided to offer the WW1 Group the opportunity to dedicate one of the existing flowering cherry trees on the Park Lane play area, subject to the views of the Friends of Park Lane.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Seek the views of the Friends of Park Lane and the WW1 Working Group on the dedication of a tree on the Park Lane play area; (ii) Revise the 2009 Commemorative Tree Policy, changing the name “Trees and their Environs” to “Environment Committee”, deleting the £20 charge and noting that request to plant trees in Castle Park should be addressed to CWAC rather than FTC; (iii) R2 – that the Council adopts the revised Commemorative Tree Policy; <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Sutton.</p>
64	<p>Community Orchards</p> <p>R3 - to level and turf the area of the former Children’s Garden in Ship Street to create a manageable grassed area and reduce the cost of ongoing maintenance at a cost of £385 plus VAT – proposed and seconded by Cllrs Martin and Sutton.</p>
65	<p>Rights of Way Maintenance</p> <p>A resident had contacted the Council to say that she had been told that Hoverforce have placed a large banner obstructing or partially obstructing the public right of way on Footpath 52, and that the sign also created a potential distraction to motorists on the motorway (although the person had not observed this herself).</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Ask the CWAC Public Rights of Way Officer for an update on progress to replace the missing signpost on FP52 where it turns NE towards Grassy Lane and draw his attention to the potential obstruction; (ii) Mention the possible distraction from the motorway to the local PCSO; <p>proposed and seconded by Cllrs Ashton and Sutton.</p> <p>Cllr Sutton gave an update on a complaint she had been dealing with over the condition of a chain link fence adjoining the footpath from Howey Lane to Park Lane. She has been in touch with the landowner’s gardener and the matter is in hand.</p>

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66	<p>Litter Picking</p> <p>Cllr Martin reported that the last litter pick, on 9 September, was only supported by three councillors and one resident. This may be explained by the poor weather. It was noted that the next litter pick will take place on the afternoon of Saturday or Sunday, 9th or 10th December. Councillor Martin will use Facebook to ask for suggestions for the venue and report back to the next meeting with the exact date and location.</p> <p>The AO will approach Network Rail to see if they are able to assist with clearing litter from the track side of the fencing at the rear of the Queens Head and along the path from Alvanley Terrace to Fountains Lane. Cllr Oulton mentioned that the trees growing on Network Rail land adjoining this path are overhanging the footpath – the FM reported that he will cut these back as part of his maintenance work.</p>
67	<p>River Weaver Navigation Society</p> <p>Cllr Oulton reported that he had spoken to several members of RWNS at the recent Winsford Salt Fair, and they are keen to increase their involvement in Frodsham and increase the usage of the river bank between Frodsham and Northwich.</p>
68	<p>Clerk's Items</p> <p>Mersey Forest have notified FTC of a free training and networking session focussing on community woodlands and wood allotments, taking place at Risley Moss, Warrington on 11th November 2017. As it clashes with Remembrance Day, none of the Councillors will be available, but Mr Blundell expressed an interest in attending.</p>
69	<p>Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 7 November at 7pm at Castle Park House.</p>

- R1 That the Council brands itself as “The Gateway to the Sandstone Ridge” (or similar) and use the Sandstone Ridge logo on the Council website and other communications – proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Sutton.
- R2 That the Council adopts the revised Commemorative Tree Policy – proposed and seconded by Cllrs Oulton and Sutton.
- R3 To level and turf the area of the former Children’s Garden in Ship Street to create a manageable grassed area and reduce the cost of ongoing maintenance at a cost of £385 plus VAT – proposed and seconded by Cllrs Martin and Sutton.