

Minutes of the meeting of the Sherston Footpaths Group held in Sherston Village Hall at 7.30 pm on Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Present:

Martin Rea
Maggie McKenna
Phylip Harries
Nigel Freeth
Helen Freeth
Roger Allen
Richard Skeffington
Sue McKechnie
Andy Osborn
Steve Dunn
Jay Dunn

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Stan and Pat Bunce and Graham and Sue Morris

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of 19 November 2008.

The Minutes of the above meeting were duly approved.

3. Walks Booklet.

We had previously agreed that this meeting would try and concentrate on the production of the Walks Booklet.

Phylip Harries, who was going to take the responsibility for the production of the booklet, presented some rough ideas for the booklet – the idea was to have a surrounding folding ‘case’ probably with pictures and description of the interesting architecture, geology etc. of the village, which would contain separate sheets describing the various walk alternatives.

It was discussed whether we should use a modified OS map for the walks which would be much better detail but would make it more expensive because of copyright. Apparently some 30p per time the map is reproduced.

Martin Rea gave us the excellent news that the Parish Council had agreed to give the project £500 towards production. Martin also said that he was in conversation with County to try and access some grant funds – hopefully some £1,500. On this basis the Group decided that if the budget was available we should use the OS map.

There are various ways to treat the paper the maps are printed on – it can be on heavy stock and sealed, laminated or plasticized – each of these obviously have a different cost implication. ~Jay Dunn suggested that we might insert the whole booklet within a plastic case – so when a map was selected it could be moved to the front of the case

for easy and dry viewing by the walker. Phylip undertook to find out the cost of these various options.

Phylip thought that based on our discussions we could be talking about £2,500 for 500 copies. This was obviously a VERY rough guide.

The cost of the project was discussed and the Group agreed that it should be a 'not for profit' exercise and that any funds accruing would be re-invested in relevant path improvements etc. i.e. it was for the community.

Andy Osborn and Richard Skeffington both raised the point that, if we are selling the booklet it should represent good value and that it was important that the content was appropriate with enough interesting walks.

Regarding the grants, Martin explained that in order to be eligible we need to get rough costings of the project to County (Richard Broadbent – Countryside Access Officer) before end of February and Phylip said he would prepare figures and report these to Martin.

Noel Banks had been in touch with Martin and spoke of a John Graham in Gloucestershire who is very knowledgeable about grants and may be able to give us relevant advice.

However Martin expressed concern that waiting for administration in respect of the grants etc. could cause significant delay and he felt that we should try and progress the walks booklet in the meantime.

Maggie spoke on behalf of Stan Bunce (who was on holiday). Stan Bunce had made some suggestions for path routes that he and Pat had walked both long and short walks to the north and east of the village. It was discussed whether it might be possible to make a 'pattern' with one long/one short walk to the north, east, south and north plus a village walk – making nine walks for the booklet. The Group really need to try to go firm on whatever walks are proposed and then walk them to report on if they are practical to be included in the booklet for the general public.

Maggie proposed that before the next Group meeting, those who had walked most of the routes could have an informal meeting to rough out proposed paths and then this could be discussed when the full Group meet next.

5. Matters Arising

(a) New Paths

A Sherston resident had emailed Noel Banks asking if certain Permissive Access routes could be joined (to the South of the village/sewage works and river) to link up for a 'circular' walk. Noel had passed this email on to the Group but it was thought that at this stage it would be too complicated for us to tackle. It certainly could be considered once we had got our booklet off the ground.

(b) Voluntary Working Groups

Sue McKechnie reported that Mr Russell Harding – Cotswold Voluntary Warden in Colerne said that their people are part of the Cotswold Volunteers and they are covered by insurance. To be a Volunteer you have to go on a day course to obtain specific advice. It was proposed that Noel Banks should be contacted to give us advice.

It appears that other groups have appointed a Working Party Co-ordinator, who would liaise between the landowner and County as to any proposed work to be carried out. Apparently when people get to understand that the work that is being carried out is free, they become more co-operative. If the Co-ordinator encounters any problems they can refer to County.

Martin said he was hoping to hear from Colin Lovelock at County who was to be invited to come and talk to us and to get information regarding equipment etc.

(c) Tree Wardens

Martin had supplied the Group with the information regarding a day at Lackham when the Wiltshire Tree Warden Scheme was to be discussed. No-one in the Group wished to take part and so Martin proposed that he should insert the information into Cliffhanger and then anyone who was interested could apply.

(d) Ladyswood

As far as Martin Rea was aware, there had been no progress in respect of the problem with the Rights of Way on this property. County had said it would arrange a site meeting with the landowner but Parish Council had not been notified so presumably nothing has been done. Kay Dunn expressed concern that if this was not monitored the landowner could assume that the diverted route had received tacit approval but, as it would not be a legal RoW, the landowner could ignore it in the future.

(e) Rights of Way Database

Martin reported that he had enquired at County re their proposed database as several groups were keen to have this set up and apparently the Ramblers Association is also pushing for such databases to be established. This is obviously going to be a lengthy project.

(f) General RoW problems

Although County had said they would write to landowners regarding any over-cropping and ploughing problems Martin felt that this could take a great deal of time and should perhaps be a last resort where there are constant difficulties. The length of time County was taking to deal with footpath 13 at

Ladyswood was perhaps a reason for only contacting County when matters could not be resolved on a local level. He suggested that an article could be put into Cliffhanger with a general introduction as to the work of the Group and its aims re Rights of Way and the booklet – on the basis that it a project for the benefit of the community. This would make all landowners aware of our activity. This could then be followed up by a letter to all landowners explaining how we worked and would deal with problems over a particular RoW i.e. to bring them directly to the attention of the landowner offering practical advice if requested and in some cases actual assistance. Only if a problem persisted would the matter be referred to County.

6. Next Meeting

It was proposed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 4 March 2009 in the Village Hall.

MM
28.01.09