

SHERSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Sherston Footpaths Group held in Sherston Village Hall at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 4 March 2009

Present:

Martin Rea
Jay Dunn
Steve Dunn
Nigel Freeth
Helen Freeth
Kath Shard
Steve Shard
Maggie McKenna
Phylip Harries
Roger Allen

Member of the public: Philip Connor

1. Apologies.

Received from Andy Osborn, Richard Skeffington, Stan and Pat Bunce. Martin Rea reported that sadly Graham and Sue Morris had decided not to continue their association with the Group due to other commitments. They were thanked for their contribution to date.

2. Approval of the Minutes of 21 January 2009.

Steve and Kath Shard pointed out that their apologies for the last meeting had not been recorded for which apologies to them. Otherwise the Minutes were approved.

3. Walks Booklet.

Martin Rea reported that the WCC did not think that the Sherston Walks Booklet would be an appropriate vehicle for a Parish Improvement Grant – their opinion being that the grant was essentially for actually improving a right of way rather than for a booklet. They also felt that the publication should be free. General feeling of the meeting was that, if it was free, it would not be used by the people who were the ‘target market’. That source of money is therefore not available. However, there is the Cotswold Conservation Board’s (C.C.B.) Sustainable Development Fund which might be a source of finance and Martin said that he had emailed to see if there is an opportunity for any funding. In June it should be possible to apply for funds to the new Area Board for Malmesbury and the Villages.

Phylip reported that he had done research with Ordnance Survey and we can get ‘clean’ maps – and this exercise should not be too expensive. Phylip had produced a dummy of the booklet that he showed to the meeting which was a rough of an A5 booklet with photos, history and general information about the village, inside which would go the maps of our proposed 10 walks with their descriptions etc. He also

showed the meeting a couple of plastic wallets, which would work out at circa 50p each. At previous meetings the figure of £2,500 for 500 booklets had been suggested. Martin suggested that if we get grant funding then we could charge at or under cost.

There was some discussion about the possibility of perhaps one sponsor for the back cover – but Philip Connor made the suggestion that we could identify the pubs that were on or adjacent to any of the walk routes and approach them to have their details listed. The meeting thought this was an excellent proposal and it should be taken forward in due course.

Martin Rea said he would contact The Rev. Hugh Thompson-Glover to get permission to use his historical copy if appropriate.

Thanks were given to Phylip for his work so far on the booklet and Martin Rea took the dummy booklet to show to the Parish Council.

Maggie reported that she had not organised the ‘informal’ meeting of walkers to try and put together the suggested north, south, east and west walks, one long and one short of each, but that she would do so before the next meeting.

4. Working Party

Martin Rea had obtained information from the Parish Clerk that the Parish Council’s insurance would cover members of any working party as long as the work was ‘within reason’. Depending on the type of work it could mean that members of any group might have to go on courses which would be complicated and time-consuming. Apparently Noel Banks is the C.C.B’s South Cotswolds Working Party Co-ordinator and it would seem to be much more sensible if their group could carry out any of more ‘hazardous’ work as they are already fully trained and covered. Essentially we ourselves would have to avoid using power tools – particularly chain saws as this is the area where insurance/training could become an issue. It was suggested that perhaps we could have a ‘test run’ with a project or two. On part of Walk 13 there is a very overgrown area and an unusable stile and on Walk 18 (Commonwood Lane) there is a gate, two stiles and general clearing that needs attention. Colin Lovelock to be approached to supply the materials. Martin will liaise with the landowners and report back.

5. Tree Warden

Martin Rea said that this scheme was still being encouraged by the Parish Council but no-one had come forward. He proposed putting an article in Cliffhanger about the scheme to see if there was any interest from a member of the village.

6. Footpath 13

Martin Rea invited Philip Connor to report on this matter. He had initially been in contact via email with County regarding the appearance of a newly planted beech hedge along what may be the grass verge of the highway outside Ladyswood Farm.

Parish Council had been made aware of the matter and had referred it to the Area Highway Engineer to determine whether it was highway land. He had also raised the continuing problem of the nearby footpath 13 having had a polo pitch constructed over part of it and which had been fenced off - essentially an obstruction even though it could be climbed over. There was also the health & safety aspect of a public footpath having polo played across it. These problems have been reported to County previously by Jay and Steve Dunn as well as by the Footpath Group. The matter had also been raised at the Group's meeting with Richard Broadhead of the RoW Dept. All this pressure has brought no result even though Richard Broadhead had agreed to arrange a site meeting when he met with the Group in October 2008.

As a result of Philip Connor's emails Richard Broadhead had again suggested that there is a site meeting between the landowner, Mr Martin Mead, Parish Council representatives and Richard Broadhead himself. A date for the meeting is awaited.

As County seemed in the past to be unsure of the precise location of the RoW, Jay Dunn said they could supply their GPS readings to exactly identify the path.

7. Liaison with Landowners

Martin Rea proposed that he would put an article in April/May issue of Cliffhanger describing what was being planned generally by the Walks Group. This would then be followed up by letters to the individual landowners. Martin Rea said he would circulate the draft letter to members of the Group for their approval and comments.

8. Matters Arising

Rights of Way Database.

Martin Rea raised the status of the proposed county Rights of Way Database, which should provide the ability for people to log on and record any complaints they have on the database. He has heard nothing more.

Litter

Local resident Mr Richard Stancomb has been in touch with the Parish Council on the matter of litter quite rightly pointing out that the community have a responsibility to clear up litter on RoW. Everyone agreed that helping to keep the village and surrounding area free from litter should be encouraged. Group members often picked up litter on their walks as a matter of course.

9. Any Other Business

There were no matters raised.

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 22nd at 7.30 in the Village Hall.