Campaigning for Better Cycling

**Minutes of a Meeting of Cycle Shepway**

held on 30 May 2018 at the Civic Centre, Folkestone

Present: John Letherland (Chairman), Rhona Hodges (Secretary), Alan Joyce (Treasurer), Jean Baker (Founder), Joe Grey (Deputy Chairman) Paul Rees, Colin Hart, Bernadette Bell, Emma Bell, Steve Burton, Stan Smith (Kent Wildlife) and Tony Hills (County Councillor for Romney Marsh).

Apologies for Absence: Hugh Robertson-Ritchie, Katie Cullen and Tony Gilbert.

1. **Minutes of the meeting on 15 March 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 were approved. There were no matters arising which were not included on the current agenda.

1. **Fifth Continent Biodiversity**

Stan Smith of Kent Wildlife gave a presentation on a £2.3m project working across the Romney Marsh and involving the restoration and maintenance of rare habitats, including "Blue Lanes"(neglected and forgotten drainage ditches); community involvement with landowners and young people in projects such as film-making; community archaeology and species monitoring.

An overall budget of £189,220 had been allocated for a programme of interpretation, comprising maps, waymarkers, interpretation panels and themed walking and cycling trails; the aim was to interest locals and visitors in the landscapes, biodiversity, history and life today on the Marsh. In time he hoped to establish social networks for communities, to enhance conditions for wildlife and to set up accessible information and training opportunities.

Joe Grey suggested that there might be an opportunity to interest landowners in a cycle/walking route between New Romney and Lydd. SS replied that some landowners were already in consultation about possible archaeological features under farmland. Budgets had already been allocated for remapping and reprinting existing RMCP cycle route guides, and 4 visitor interpretation hubs were planned, although sites for these and facilities for car parking on the Marsh would be hard to find. Members suggested that using church car parks for a modest charge might prove mutually beneficial. Paul Rees said that Ashford BC was interested in providing cycle routes to the RM Canal.

Bernadette Bell enquired about possible hubs for bikes and trail maps for areas beyond Hythe; some of her clients were families who would be interested in aspects of wildlife and local history. Jean Baker suggested that it would be useful to liaise with Art in Romney Marsh since that organisation arranged exhibitions in Marsh churches.

Tony Hills described efforts to establish existing but neglected roads as "quiet lanes" on the Marsh, to be restricted to walkers, cyclists and horse riders. He remarked that to keep them open for vehicle use is often a prohibitive cost and many are therefore in danger of closure. He suggested that consultation with the Cinque Ports Federation might be productive for achieving the Cycleway.

**Agreed** that JL will send him details of the Cinque Ports Cycleway route to SS, and that members continue to support the project via the website: **www.fifthcontinent.co.uk**

1. **Chairman's report**

JL regretted that Gary Young was unable to attend the meeting to give an insight into the planning of Otterpool Town; he hoped to arrange for him to come to a future meeting. He confirmed that Steve Burton and Colin Hart had been nominated to consult with James Hammond of FHDC to ensure that issues relating to cycling were prominently considered at the planning stage.

The proposed memorial to David Taylor was still being planned. JL to report further.

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1. **Cinque Ports Cycleway and other KCC matters**

Katie Cullen had sent her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting, but her report as at 15 May on KCC matters was presented:

* The Toucan crossing (part of the route from Harvey Grammar School to The Leas) was due for completion within 2 weeks. (Members commented that work was still slowly progressing)
* The application for Village Green status for Hythe Green was due to be determined earlier in May, depending on availability of KCC members. **Agreed** AJ to make enquiries about the progress of the application.
* Phase 4 of the Cycleway (Reachfields to the Nicholls Quarry development) was being designed to include a Toucan crossing at Palmarsh school.

AJ suggested that since the Ranges were programmed for closure for 6 months, that period would provide an ideal opportunity to complete work beside the MOD fence.

JL asked for suggestions for application to the Coastal Revival Fund. JG proposed the completion of the former railway line route from Warren Road, Folkestone, to the Harbour. **Agreed** JG to find out from Alex Sansom if an appropriate Group exists to co-ordinate applications.

**5.**  **Members' Activities**

* Colin Hart continued to be frustrated by lack of action to clear mud and floodwater at Shuttlesfield farm. Tony Hills suggested that he should contact Pauline Rocket at KCC, District and County Councillors.
* BB reported a successful start of her bike-hire season, using some family vehicles supplied by Activ Cycles. She was still considering setting up "bike and leave" schemes with hubs along the route to the Marsh and/or an app to allow clients to leave their bikes at any point on their journey.
* PR asked members to notify him and the Country Eye website if they saw illegal misuse of the NCR2 route near Dover by off-road motorbike riders.
* JB commented on the video film made by Linda Simmons of KCC which included a questionable ride down the Zig-Zag path at Folkestone Leas. She also offered cycling books given to the Group by Railli Taylor.

**6.**  **AOB**

* JG suggested that the "quiet lanes" project might use bollards to keep out motorised traffic, but Tony Hills said that legal problems and the need for occasional vehicle access would probably prevent their use.
* For further consultation on Marsh matters, email addresses as follows: stan.smith@kentwildlife.org.uk;
* JL thanked both Stan Smith and Tony Hills for attending the meeting and for the information they had provided. Both were also welcomed to attend future CySy meetings and to assist the group with connecting and collaborating with groups involved in expanding cycling activities in the area.

tony.hills@kent.gov.uk.

**Date of next meeting – Thursday 27 September 2018 at 6pm**