

Rights of Way and Tree Advisory Group report

October 2020

Meetings

A meeting was held on 2nd September at which the Tree Strategy and a proposal for digital mapping were discussed. These were presented to and approved by full Council at the September meeting. Other information discussed at the meeting:

Footpaths

- *The order for the new finger posts has been placed with Shelley Signs*
- *Only 1 contractor has submitted a bid to deal with the overgrown vegetation in Manor Close*
- *Group will progress claiming a right of way now the exact route of the proposed new footpath has been identified*
- *Shelley Signs have been hastened to produce the draft historic walking leaflet*
- *Photographs of the erosion of the Ouse Valley Way footpath under the A14 bridge have been sent to the Ouse Valley Trust and Cambridgeshire County Council are aware of the issue*
 - *It was noted that the fence in this location has been moved away from the river bank increasing the width of the footpath*
- *It was agreed that work to cut back the hedge on the Ouse Valley Way should proceed (superseded by Great Ouse Valley Trust meeting see below)*
- *It was agreed that Cambridgeshire County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer will be contacted again regarding any proposed action on footpath B7 along the side of Paddocks Farm*

Trees

- *It is planned that the village handymen will plant the donated trees in the cemetery this autumn*
- *It was noted that the tree surgeon business that had carried out the work on tree 060 is not happy with the outcome and has taken action against their employee and intimated they will come back in a couple of years to rebalance the tree*
- *It was noted that Huntingdonshire District Council is planning to conduct a tree canopy survey across the district*
- *It was suggested that an advisory leaflet on tree planting be drafted for distribution to village residents*
- *An additional contractor was suggested to be approached to quote for survey work; Robert Yates, email robert.rgs@virgin.net, or mobile 07801183677*

Great Ouse Valley Trust

The Chair of the Advisory Group attended a meeting of Partners of the Great Ouse Valley Trust on 22nd September. The usual issues in relation to the maintenance of the OVW were discussed. The Trustees are proposing that the £45k awarded to the Trust for the path by the A14 fund should be used for path maintenance and signage. On Thursday 8th October the Footpath warden and the Chair of the group will walk the Buckden stretch of the OVW

together with two Offord Councillors and we will feed back to the GOVT trustees our views on the work that needs to be undertaken and where we think additional signage and information boards should be sited. Hopefully the work to make the path more accessible will then be actioned. NB Notes from meeting attached

Tree Warden

Attended the Annual Conference for tree wardens (virtually) and has shared with the Chair a number of initiatives which will be taken to the next Advisory Group meeting. Plans and targets for next year will then be presented to full Council

Great Ouse Valley Trust

Notes of Trustees and Partner Members Meeting

Tuesday 22nd September 2020

Held by *Zoom* due to COVID emergency

Present:

Trustees:

Graham Campbell (GC) (Chairman), Helen Boothman (HB),
Bridget Flanagan (BF), Graham Wilson (GW)

Partner Members:

John Chitty (JC) Brampton PC
Helen Dye (HD) St Ives Eco Action Group
Alan James (AJ) Chair Cambs & Peterborough CPRE
Alan Marnes (AM) Southoe & Midloe PC
Roger Mitchell (RM) on behalf of Hemingford Grey PC
Pete Riley (PR) Offords PC
Dawn Spooner (DS) Brampton PC
Caroline Underwood (CU) Buckden PC

1. Apologies: Phil Rothwell, Trustee, Ian Jackson, Trustee. Peter Downes, Trustee, Sue Rogers & Tina Yates, Swavesey and District Bridleways Assoc (SDBA), Robin Waters (Hemingford Grey PC)

2. GC welcomed everyone to the meeting and organised introductions.

He summarised news and activity of the GOV Trust since the last Partner Member meeting in June 2020.

After the scrapping of the Huntingdon Third River Crossing when the CPCA Feasibility Study found that it was 'not a good idea', GOVT has been able to concentrate on moving forward with work to promote and encourage recognition of the GOV. GC thanked all Partner Members and their organisations who had helped over the last 6 years to raise awareness of how damaging the proposed 3RC would have been on the environment, landscape and amenities of the GOV. The collaboration had proved effective and GC looked forward to more partnership working.

The structure of the GOVT is progressing well. The website is informative and attractive. The Facebook page is being updated and has a new co-ordinator. Regular press releases and news stories have been arranged. The Supporters' Group is underway. The application to NE re AONB designation for the GOV is to be revisited and progressed. Ongoing projects for tree-planting, hedging and improved liaison with landowners on the Godmanchester Commons are successful.

3. The Ouse Valley Way (OVW) Long Distance footpath project.

GC explained that maintenance of this path had originally been the responsibility of HDC, but had been transferred to CCC. Over the last 10 years it has become increasingly neglected due to financial pressures, and is now rather left behind. GOVT has been working with CCC over the last year in an effort to remedy matters. CCC has received £45K for the

OVW from the A14 Legacy Fund. With the help of GOVT, CCC is asking parishes to identify and undertake minor maintenance works to the path in their parishes. CCC has a stock of way-marker signs and is ready to have these installed if parishes can identify locations where they are needed – either for replacements or new signs. The 20-year old interpretation boards along the route need some repairs and a possible re-vamp of the artwork. GOVT are liaising with Coral Designs who did the artwork for the original boards. Advice from the parishes will be sought as to where new ones are needed. Along with the interpretation board art works, new information leaflets/maps will be designed and also hosted on the GOVT website.

CU commented that the path in the Buckden parish needed large scale maintenance work. AM said the same for the path in Southoe. AM asked for a copy of the way-marker signs. GC will send , along with info on the interpretation boards. AM would like parish boundaries to be shown on OVW maps.

HD suggested an approach to HLF for further funding. Also more community engagement and connectiveness in the content and design of the interpretation boards.

AJ suggested a board at Earith to mark the crossing point of the Rothschild Way, and also give some history of Fen drainage and the Bedford Rivers.

DS said that Brampton PC have arranged much surveying and work on the path in their parish. Bank erosion due to cow wallows was a continuing problem. There was discussion over the EA's role in bank repair, but it was clarified that ultimately the responsibility lies with the riparian owner.

GC asked parishes to locate places for signs, boards, and also where repair work is needed by using the Location App 'what3words'.

GC will report on progress with CCC after a meeting this week.

4. Planning White Paper

GOVT feels it is very important to respond to this document. The closing date is 29th October.

HB proposed that in order to be representative of its membership, it would be very helpful to ascertain the views of Partner Members , PCs and other bodies within the GOV area. HB suggested a draft survey on the major points of the Paper that may affect GOV – particularly the proposed Zones and the projections for housing numbers. Discussion followed:

AJ said that CPRE will submit a national response and local ones also. He interpreted the Paper as a 'developers' charter'. He felt it would reduce local democracy – despite the existing process having served the country fairly well to date. He was aware that there were strong challenges to the calculations and algorithms proposed for specifying housing need and required numbers.

GW felt that the Paper should make far greater effort to regenerate the north of England, rather than further saturating the south.

AM considered the Paper to be very destructive of the current Planning process. Local and Neighbourhood Plans have been drawn up over many years with considerable input from local democracy – and this could all now be swept away.

GC concluded the discussion saying it was clear that Partner Members' views should be represented in GOV's response. He thanked them in advance for their submissions to the survey.

5. AOB

HD asked if GOVT and members were aware of Natural Cambridgeshire's Local Nature Recovery Plan? GC had attended the on-line meeting on September 16th. HD suggested GOVT help to disseminate and promote information from this meeting to its members. GC will send out the Tool Kit

AM suggested that GOVT link with the Fens Biosphere group. GC explained that Mark Nekkert had spoken about this project at the Partner meeting in November 2019.

6. Conclusion

GC thanked everyone for joining the meeting. It had been a stimulating morning.!