

# FOOTPATH WORKING GROUP

## Notes of the Meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in the Pavilion at 7.30pm

**Present:** S Collins (SC), S Young (SY), P Harris (PH), P Nichols (PN), G Jinkerson (GJ), L Marsh (LM), L Humphrey (LH), L Yaxely Watts (LYW), D Watts (DW)

Anita Rose (AR)~Clerk

- 1. Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from B Leech and M Davies.
- 2. The notes taken at the last meeting on 25th September 2019** were accepted as a correct record and were unanimously agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising:** S Collins informed the group that Cllr M Davies resigned at Christmas as Councillor to the Parish Council and Chairman to the Footpath Working Group. S Collins was pleased to confirm that he would like to remain as a member of the group. The Parish Council are looking at Co-opting someone onto the council at our next meeting which will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> March.
- 5. To provide an update following Norfolk County Councils decision to provide school bus transport:** S Collins reported that following the recent communication from Travel and Transport Services Norfolk County Council; declaring the route unavailable as a walking route and offering a free school bus transport service for children living in Stoke Holy Cross and attending Framingham Earl High School. It was however noted that the free transport would be reviewed and potentially withdrawn if any improvements are made to the current route or if the traffic flow decreases significantly for any reason. In light of this information it was agreed at the last Parish Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February that the Parish Council can no longer support the trod path initiative between Lower and Upper Stoke at this moment in time.

After an in-depth conversation it was decided that this situation became two campaigns; one for school transport and one for a trod path for walking. Many members were in agreement that they felt this situation was being forced by Norfolk County Council where one decision was having to be made. It was felt that the village should be entitled to both to meet all needs within the village.

P Nichols, family and other Lower Stoke parents fought long and hard to achieve the free transport for the children in Lower Stoke. The South Norfolk Council rejected the application four times before accepting it. Traffic and distance are all that counts to achieve this result. P Nichols reported that much of the previous support for the pathway in previous questionnaire came from parents wanting a pathway through concern that a safer route for their children to and from school was necessary however he said much of this support would no longer be there as the free school bus removes the need for the pathway for the school journeys. The road between Upper and Lower Stoke only has room for two cars nothing else. P Nichols said that he would not want his children walking or cycling on this road as he feels it is too dangerous.

S Young reported that she had always felt that the Parish Council had not been supportive of the footpath. She would like to walk all year round if she could walk there safely. There is currently no village shop and no safe walking routes to get to a from places. The current verges in place not just between Upper and Lower Stoke but also on Norwich Road and Caistor are difficult to walk, they are uneven. S Young made a suggestion to extend the footpath from the old school to the 40mph sign connecting to High Ash Farm giving good access for prams, bicycles and walkers.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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L Humphrey circulated a report from R Humphrey to the group referencing as part of the application Mr Patterson offered a voluntary contribution of £75,000 towards the proposed footpath the S106 agreement refers to “for community use” by the Parish Council. The clerk was tasked with contacting Anita Varney to clarify this agreement. L Humphrey also reported that the verge between Upper and Lower Stoke had been eaten away by traffic and raised concerns of the current speed limit of 60mph on this road.

S Collins reported that last year on 12<sup>th</sup> November an Extraordinary Meeting was held to discuss and agree all projects and earmarking of funds received from S106 and CIL payments. This was to provide a clear understanding of the purpose of where each of the funds would be spent and was based on prior advice sought from Anita Varney the Compliance Officer at South Norfolk District Council.

L Marsh suggested for a survey to be carried out to the village asking parishioners their views on what they would want going forward and to advertise the Annual Parish Meeting within the village. L Marsh informed the group that the last village questionnaire results had shown a majority over the Pavilion in favour of a pathway connecting Lower and Upper Stoke and that a new Pavilion would not be able to be used by all (i.e. the dementia group requires 2 rooms therefore the Pavilion would not be a suitable use for them). L Marsh suggested to re-routing the footpath from Long Lane to St Georges Hall; providing circular walking routes to link to Boudicca Way.

L Yaxely Watts reported that residents in Upper Stoke are out on a limb and feel not part of the village. A trod path would link Upper and Lower Stoke completing the village as a whole. L Yaxely Watts had raised concerns over the lack of safe cycling ways.

G Jinkerson reported that a survey had been carried out back in 2014 for the new community hall and trod path. G Jinkerson suggested to the group about creating other walking routes within the village for all to enjoy.

All were in supportive with the school bus however it was agreed that a footpath was still needed.

The following suggestions were made going forward;

- Salamanca walk can this be used as a footpath?
- Additional trod paths for Norwich Road–Caistor / Mill Road–Dunston Common.
- Arrange a walking group / Spring walks to find new routes.

A suggestion was made that maybe the Parish Council should consider paying for the school bus and after some discussion the conclusion was that it was not the role of the Parish Council to fund and would not be right to force a levy on villagers in Upper Stoke or villagers who did not have children attending Framingham Earl High School.

Sandy thanked all for attending the meeting closed at 21:09

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_