

Friends of Train Wood & Marriott's Way AGM 16th September 2015 at The Norman Centre

Meeting started at 7.35pm

Invited speaker David Yates, Norfolk County Council Senior Trails Development Officer provided an update on the Marriott's Way Improvement Plan and other related issues with an opportunity for questions and comments at the end.

He explained that 650 people filled in forms at five consultation drop in events that included our area, Aylsham, Reepham, Costessey and Hellesdon; these provided a good snapshot of the public's view.

The 10 year Action Plan has been refined down to the area between Barn Road and Thorpe Marriott, this is as a consequence of the £250,000 funding which has been provided to focus on cycling.

The responses from the consultation exercise reflect that a balance is to be sought between cyclists and pedestrians.

The Marriott's way surface is very rough in places and to remedy this is an Action Plan priority.

The Sustrans survey response had a slightly different outcome indicating that lighting was an issue therefore lighting is to be provided on Anderson's Meadow and the Marriott's Way. However there is not a lot of appetite for such lighting between Costessey and Drayton due to the special designations of scientific interest.

There appear to be two options:

1. To provide lighting between specific times e.g. 4pm – midnight or
2. The lights are on very low during all hours of darkness and because of sensors become brighter as a body comes closer.

The main question is; what is best for bats?

Bat surveys are being undertaken and once the data has been collated and approval from Natural England has been obtained, action will be taken.

The funding has to be spent by the end of this financial year. The poor quality of surfacing on the other side of Hellesdon Road is also an issue that needs to be addressed. As a consequence of concerns over the urbanisation of the countryside research is still being undertaken as to what would provide the most environmentally sound solution and we have to wait for the outcome of that before it is known how far the improvements can go.

It is hoped that small scale improvements can be made elsewhere perhaps as far as Thorpe Marriott with e.g. better signage to the Marriott's Way from residential areas.

With regards to biodiversity £30,000 has been set aside for The Fringe, to undertake practical woodland work, with the aim of making this group self-sustaining. There is some tree work that still needs to be tackled and invasive species dealt with.

Russell Wilson is the officer working on the Ecological Management Plan to ensure that it is tailored to the needs of rare species such as the slow worm and to ensure that access routes are made slightly better.

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It is unlikely that there will be any further funding in the new financial year.

A bid for the Heritage Lottery Fund was made to make the most of our railway heritage and the nature that came after but this was turned down with the reason that the project was too big.

As a consequence the items deemed 'the arty bits' (e.g. the greeting archway at the Barn Road start of the Walk and developments at the Aylsham end) have been removed (may go elsewhere for these e.g. Arts Lottery bid)

Ideas are to create a digital archive, use living memory (listening project) have an education officer to develop materials and work with High School students in danger of exclusion and provide community education, and to provide community events such as World War 1 cycle race, develop knowledge of biodiversity from the urban section through to Aylsham and as part of this interpretation improve information via e.g. phone apps using geo location.

It is important that what remains of the railway heritage is protected.

In order to put together the second bid, development money (£40,000) has been released so that David Yates may work on the project full time. His aim is to submit a bid for £450,000 in March 2016.

The outcome will be known by June 2016

Questions arising from comments

Stuart (FONCS) asked where the images for the apps etc. were to come from

Response: The records office

Stuart also asserted how important it was that the entrance to the old City Station railway site (and Marriott's Way) is developed to heighten public awareness. What is the best way for us to move forward?

Response: David Yates is willing to attend meetings.

John Elliot commented that two aspects of Marriott's way and Train Wood don't seem to figure in the plans.

1. The fresh look at the uses of the River Wensum being made – what are the links between the reinvention of the Wensum as a community resource and David Yates project?
2. The wood and river as a major resource for fishermen; the platforms are in a poor state of repair. Will these be looked at in the development plan?

Response: Fortunately, David White who is coordinating the Wensum Valley Work is a colleague of David Yates. David feels it would be a struggle to get improvements to the platforms made as the funding priority was cycling.

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Sue Cabbage provided a point of information in that the platforms would also be of educational benefit by providing safe access to the river for activities such as 'dipping' for aquatic mini beasts.

Joyce Aynsley drew David's attention to the fact that in the Slough Bottom area of the Marriott's Way, the Green Gym had hacked back and cut through a drain which the Himalayan Balsam is now travelling through.

Response: David Yates made a note of this.

Richard asked if the sign at the start of the way could be designed via a school project and involve the press and publicity.

Response: the original metal sign proposed in the original bid was to be professionally made to a design created by children.

Richard felt that with regards to signage repairs need to be made to that which already exists (and drew attention to a sign behind the old snooker hall, purporting to direct cyclists and pedestrians to the city when it in fact pointed to the river via the woods)

Response: David made a note of this

Lucy suggested that an audit of what is already there is conducted so that signage could be started again and have a consistent look.

Alan Cabbage then drew this part of the AGM to a close by thanking everyone present for their attendance at the meeting on such a grim, wet evening and commented that it was rewarding to know that the views of the community are being heard.

There then followed a short break for refreshments and the free raffle.

8.30pm the meeting resumed

1. The chair again thanked attendees for attending and remaining
2. Apologies were received from: **Mart Sc**, Richard Bearman, Christine O'Hanlon, Simeon Jackson, Sue Phillips, Rachel Watson, and Anne Harris.
3. Minutes of the last AGM on 17th September 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate representation of the meeting.
4. Matters arising: Page 1. Alan Cabbage (Chair) thanked John Battley- who has experienced a number of personal pressures on him- for his support over the years.
5. Chairs report: see appendix 1, attached.
6. Treasurers report: see appendix 2, attached.
7. Election of Management committee

Chair: Alan Cabbage, Nominated by Stuart McPherson, Seconded by John Elliot

Appointed

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Treasurer: Adrian Holmes, Nominated by Alan Cabbage, Seconded by Jan Middleton

Appointed

Secretary: Susan Cabbage, Nominated by Jan Middleton, Seconded by Angela Reynolds

Appointed

Management committee:

John Elliot, Nominated by Susan Cabbage, Seconded by Alan Cabbage

Lucy Galvin, Nominated by Alan Cabbage, seconded by Angela Reynolds

Jan Middleton, Nominated by John Elliot, Seconded by Lucy Galvin

Stuart McPherson nominated himself, seconded by Daniel Knights

All appointed

8. A. O. B. Later on this week (Saturday) there is the open day at Marlpit which is linked to us by the Marriott's Way, at which FoTW will have a presence

28th October a management meeting open to all members at The Stage (?) at 7.30pm

9. Date of next AGM: Wednesday 14th September 2016

The meeting closed at 9.10pm