

DEAN FOREST GREENWAY

Draft Minutes Wednesday 4th March 2020 at Yorkley Community Centre

B Freshwater (BF) (Chair), J Carr (JC) (Lydney Town Council), I Pope (IP) (DFR), S Freeman (SF) (Forest Edge South NDP and Yorkley Community), P Andrews (PA) (Park that Bike), J Grimshaw (JG), C Levett (CL) and J Linden (JL) (Greenways) and D Kent (DK) (Minutes).

Please note acronyms used in this document

DFR Dean Forest Railway

FE Forestry England

FODDC Forest of Dean District Council

GCC Gloucestershire County Council

LPE Lydney Park Estate

LTC Lydney Town Council

NDP Forest Edge South Neighbourhood Development Plan, which covers the villages of Whitecroft, Pillowell, Yorkley, Oldcroft, Viney Hill and Parkend, and expanses of the Forest as far as the Speech House and Cannop

WDPC West Dean Parish Council

1 Apologies

There were apologies from K Thoday and T Sagar (FE), T Tremlett and J Greenwood (LTC), C Preston (NDP) and W Barnett (DFR).

It was noted that Hannah Christie is the FE Cycle Officer and should be invited to future meetings.

2. Report of Proposed Route Walk on 14th February 2020

A report was provided by S Freeman and is attached to these minutes.

3. Consideration of the Dean Forest Greenway report January 2020.

It was agreed unanimously that the name of the project and of the proposed track should be 'Dean Forest Greenway'.

JG gave a detailed report on the project plan as presented and the actions arising.

Greenways would manage the project, reporting to the Parish and Town Councils. The company would negotiate with landowners, commission reports, prepare planning applications, and design any route changes which may be necessary.

The project plan is for ecological (£3,000) and archaeological reports (£1,000) to be produced by April 2020. With the topographical survey, overall costs for these reports are likely to be around £6,000. The planning application will be finalised by July 2020.

It was expected that the total cost of the project would be in the range £1 million - £1.5 million.

D Rowe of DFR was thanked for his support.

Items considered:

i) Route

The route as described in the report was adopted in principle. It was acknowledged that there may be some issues relating to land ownership and necessary engineering works, but it was believed that none of these issues were critical.

ii) Land ownership.

It was believed that leases of the land (50 years, on a lease or licence basis) identified in the plan could be negotiated by Greenway.

The maintenance of the track post-implementation would be arranged between Greenways, the two councils and FE. It was intended that volunteers would be sought to provide the necessary labour.

A group of 2/3 people with local knowledge would be required to identify possible

iii) Funding

It was intended that initial surveys and further Greenways work would be funded by the Councils. There was budgetary provision for West Dean Parish Council to contribute to report funding. It was intended that a funding request would be presented to Lydney Town Council at its April meeting. BF would attend to support the funding request if necessary.

Natural England would be approached for funding opportunities.

It was intended that some assistance would be sought from local Trusts, working parties, etc.

iv) Highways (Road Crossings)

The Task Group would lead all discussions with GCC. An extension of the existing 20mph restriction is required for a stretch of Forest Road, Lydney at least as far as Light Fantastic's entrance.

v) Planning considerations

JG had met Tony Pope, planning officer at FODDC, to advise him of a proposed planning application. The application would be prepared by Greenways for July 2020, signed off by stakeholders, and submitted to FODDC.

vi) Relationships with major landowners.

JG had had constructive and positive discussions with the 3 major landowners, DFR, FE and LPE. All the known landowners have been contacted so that they did not hear of the project second hand.

vii) Input to the Forest Edge South Neighbourhood Development Plan

It was acknowledged that the project was a central feature of the NDP

viii) Safety

The route was designed to avoid road crossings as much as possible

ix) Ecology

Consultations with Natural England had taken place. Further surveys may be necessary.

x) Industrial Archaeology

Louise Elliott had spoken to the County Archaeological authority on matters to be taken into consideration in the design of the route. Greenways would prepare the necessary information.

xi) Flooding

There were no flooding issues affecting the route, but licences and flood studies would be required for each of the 4 river crossings. Some culverting may be required in one area of the track.

xii) Publicity

It was agreed that there would be no publicity material circulated at this stage. It was agreed that PA would co-ordinate publicity at the agreed time.

There would be a public consultation following the planning application, probably in September 2020.

4. Greenway Construction

Construction could begin in 2021

5. Task Group

A task group consisting of the Chair (BF), a representative of Lydney Town Council, SF and DK was set up.

6. Future Meetings

Future meetings would be held at Norchard.

A walk through would be arranged at some time in May 2020.

Meeting closed 4.05pm