

Registered charity No. 1166492

[www.fromesmissinglinks.org.uk](http://www.fromesmissinglinks.org.uk)

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**2nd APRIL 2019 at 7.00 pm**

**Frome Town Hall, Christchurch Street West, Frome BA11 1EB**

**Apologies –** Geoff Pell, Chris Green

**Present –** Trustees Rich Ackroyd, Richard Hounsell, Tricia Golinski, Ruth Knagg, Grant Gellatly and approx. 60 supporters/members of the public

**Introductions** were made of trustees and other key players.

**Chairman’s report**

Rich gave the following report of the past year’s activities:

A challenging but encouraging year has seen our cash reserves increase and a considerable amount of preparation and development work going on behind the scenes. Frome’s Missing Links volunteers have continued to build community support through a variety of fundraising efforts such as the School Travel Challenge, a ceilidh, sponsored bike rides, and attendance at events such as the Children’s Festival and Mayhem in the Meadow. The amazingly resourceful Friday Team have continued to push forward with practical work where they can and continue to reduce costs by re-using second hand materials and learning new skills.

The main target remains to get Phase 2 and Phase 3 ‘shovel ready’ by September, so that practical work can start again in earnest.

Out total reserves as of January 2019 stands at around £34,000, although we have committed about £5,000 of this on current development work and we still need much more to achieve our goals of completing Phases 2 and 3 in the next 18 months.

Network Rail has finally accepted our proposals at Phase 2 and have given us ‘engineering clearance’ to proceed pending a completed ‘method statement’ and employment of an acceptable contractor for work along the old railway line at Buckland Bridge. Volunteers have progressed preparations at Elliots Bridge and to the west of Buckland Bridge. We do still need to complete negotiations but a chink of light on this section is at last appearing on the horizon.

The Friday volunteers have started work on Phase 3 near Whatcombe Farm by erecting a boundary fence and two gates to allow access. Some tree planting took place in March with Duke of Edinburgh volunteers, although further works to the new path will have to wait until we have planning permission. To gain planning permission for Phase 3 we submitted the footpath diversion application needed in October 2018, which is now being looked at by Somerset County Council (SCC). In addition a geotechnical engineer has looked at the steep unstable wall at Selwood Manor and advised on the work that will be required to stabilise it. A land surveyor has also completed a topographical survey of the route to Cooper Hall. The two surveys along with a flood risk assessment and an ecological survey will inform work on the drawings for the planning application – these are being prepared by local landscape architects Roundfield Ltd to be submitted to the planning authority by one of our volunteers. We thank the landowners at Phase 3 for their agreement to allow us to build a path across their land – formal Heads of Terms documents will be drawn up before any further practical work begins.

The trustees have also commissioned a second feasibility study looking at options for the whole of the ‘Missing Links’ between Whatcombe Fields and Buckland Bridge.

**Treasurer’s report:** Richard gave the following report:

I am pleased to present the accounts of Frome’s Missing Links for the year ended 31st December 2018.

Great efforts have been put into fund raising this year and I am pleased to report that income for the year was £12230 compared to £3014 in the previous year (excluding grants). Many people have donated monies but particular thanks go to the following:-

Sharon Welsh and her family, who held a Christmas Carol Service at their house in Marston Road and raised £280.

Jesse Candy did a sponsored cycle ride and raised £424.

Dalma and Paul Luttrell and their young sons who cycled from Frome to Corfe Castle and raised an amazing £1505.

Our Chairman Richard Ackroyd who cycled from Lands End to John O Groats, raising £2729.

In the summer we launched a fund raising scheme through the Local Giving website for our phase two land purchase, with an ambitious target of £30,000. Whilst we fell well short of this target and only raised £3696 all donations have been very gratefully received and I would like to thank everybody who helped us with this effort. Phase Two is still being negotiated and the funds will be used towards the costs in due course.

In May a number of schools in Frome took part in The School Travel Challenge, organised by Emma Parker of Frome Town Council and supported by Marjory Hatvany and Helen Johnstone. Donations totalled £565. Grant, Catriona and Marjory also organised a Ceilidh at the Cheese and Grain with profits of £890 being achieved.

The Frome Independent Market held in June had a cycling theme, and we were asked to run a cycling jumble stall. This was surprisingly successful and raised £1154.

We have a number of green collection tins in local shops, pubs and cafes, and £305 was donated during the year, mostly from the Coop in the Westway Centre.

Expenditure for the year totalled £4412, including professional and planning fees of £3162 and direct expenditure on the cycleway of £769.

The surplus for the whole year ended 31st December 2018 was £7818, which we have added to our reserves. The Bank balances as at 31st December 2018 totalled £22325. We also have a further £14293 held by Sustrans, which will be used towards the phase two costs.

Our accounts have been independently examined and confirmed, and will be submitted to the Charity Commissioners once approved tonight. They will be available for viewing on the Charity Commissioners website in due course.

Richard Hounsell, Treasurer

The **annual accounts 2018** were approved by the trustees prior to submission to the Charity Commission.

**Nominations and elections** of trustees. Richard Hounsell announced that he was stepping down as a trustee. Two new trustees were nominated and appointed: Chris Green and Adrian Warren. Other posts remain unchanged for the year.

Rich gave a report on the activities of the ‘**Friday Group**’: fencing, hedge-laying, ecological surveys on the route.

Upcoming publicity and fundraising **events**:

School Travel Challenge 20-24 May 2019

Frome Independent Market ‘Cycling Market’ 6 October 2019

FML fundraising Ceilidh at Cheese & Grain 11 October 2019

A supporter suggested that British Cycling’s new ‘Places to ride’ funding might be worth applying for.

**Presentation from James Hallybone of Roundfield**

Visual presentation of different route options from local sustainable landscape designers Roundfield. The recommended route option is still to be costed but an estimate was given of over £1m. Roundfield’s report is to be made available online when complete. Landowners present asked that their details be removed from the public report.

**Discover bike-packing** **with Laurence McJannet**

Local author and cycling journalist Laurence McJannet gave an entertaining and inspiring presentation on ‘bike-packing’: mountain bike camping adventures on the wild trails of Britain. His book is published by Wild Things Publishing.