

Public Consultation – “The Shutes”

1	As a long standing Member of the faversham Society I understand you are wanting to hear from residents about the proposed re naming of The Shooting Meadow. As political correctness seems to forbid the name it is known by, I would like it to be known that I think the preferred option is to leave it without signage so that it can continue to be called what I have known it for the 33 years I have walked and cycled down the path. It will remain as far as I am concerned Shooting Meadow without signage.....why try to fix what isn't broken? Why spend money when it isn't needed? Let people call it what they want rather than impose something?
2	Please drop the proposal to call the pathway by a name (ie The Shuts). We see that as a waste of public funds. It is simply a pathway, known by all who use it, there is no necessity for a name of post code, therefore.
3	I would like the controversial path name to remain being called Shooting Meadow, as it has been for centuries. No alternatives or compromises are acceptable.
4	<p>i). I have often wondered why "No Recorded Minutes", BUT as a NON-Voting Member, have considered that and come to the conclusion on each occasion that it would not be expedient to be dogmatic</p> <p>ii). Andrew Osborne has mentioned a Judicial Review. I have not yet heard of any further progress in, nor Result of any Review; AND therefore any implications impacting upon our Group's further debate</p> <p>iii). In my email 10 April 2025 I commented upon the Faversham Town Council > "...Still digging its hole on the questionable topic of adding Undesirable Name Signage to our PROW ZF8 . . . AND now to ZF29.." The description as Registered on any DESIGNATED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY eg ZF8, ZF29 - is quite sufficient, in my view, without complicating the matter</p> <p>iv). The whole saga has, again in my opinion, brought the Faversham Town Council into disrepute over its handling of the issue since the receipt of that unfortunate, but well intended, email on 26 OCTOBER 2023</p> <p>v). Sofar, Faversham Town Council has ignored Larissa Reed's OPTION 2 - the current "UNAMED STATUS-QUO" and therefore for the Town Council to drop the whole topic.</p> <p>vi). The choice of any potential name such as "The Shuts" is ridiculous;</p>

	<p>The path is not Closed / Shut !!</p> <p>vii). I draw attention to the Faversham Town Council Planning Committee [Inconsistences :]</p> <p>MINUTES for 24 March 2025, wherein:</p> <p>Minute #239 "...requests that Swale Borough Council begin the process to formally name the path from ABBEY PLACE to GORDON SQUARE (Part of ZF08) "The Shutes". [NOTE earlier > (pronounced The Shuts)]</p> <p>viii). MINUTE #260 Meeting held 27 May 2025 : PUBLIC CONSULTATION - "The SHOOTs" ...</p> <p>Regards, COJ "</p> <p>FURTHERMORE, I consider the whole process dictated by The Faversham Town Council Planning Committee, to be totally NON-Democratic, since the Paths are DESIGNATED PUBLIC RIGHTS OGF WAY.</p> <p>To Restrict Comments to only those Electors residing within the confines of the Faversham Parish Boundary, to be wrong - because these paths are open to the PUBLIC AT LARGE; NO Restriction of USER . . .</p>
5	<p>Good morning. I'm a resident of West Street (Flat 4, No 109, ME13 7JB) to be precise) and a fortnight or so ago lodged an objection by post with the Medway Magistrate's Court to the proposed formal renaming (as Queen Matilda's Walk/Place) of the above path. I now write to your good self to register my objection to recently proposed compromise name of The Shuts. If the name of this historic path must be formalised, the title ought to remain as it has been informally for centuries, namely Shooting Meadows.</p>
6	<p>Please keep the name as it is. This feels like wokist nonsense infecting our daily life in pursuit of unachievable vague notion of unachievable piety. Time energy and money would be better spent elsewhere</p> <p>We are happy with the name and please leave it alone</p>
7	<p>If the path cannot be called the shooting Meadow as is has always been known by Faversham residents, Then the shortened version (the nickname) The Shuts is acceptable. My Husband aged 78 and Faversham born has always used this shortened version name for the path.</p>

8	<p>I write as a member of the Faversham Society, interested as I am in preserving the history & traditions of this wonderful town.</p> <p>The very fact that I am wasting your time emailing you at all is indicative of what a silly & unnecessary proposal it is to allow another urban curiosity to be airbrushed from the record. What will be next : Love Lane to be re-named, because its ancient role as the centre of Faversham's sex trade might offend the easily-offended ?</p> <p>Please encourage both the Town Council (&, indeed as if it concerns them, the faceless bureaucrats of Swale) to find something better to do.</p>
9	<p>I would like to add to my objection to the change by simply saying that the name as it has been known for many years in its entirety should not change. We cannot cancel history just because the word shoot is not appropriate in this day. It will not incite violence and this policy belittles the intelligence of the townsfolk of Faversham. There is a proposal to take down another historical statue for the same woke reason. This is an utter waste of time and how using the SHUTS helps I am unable to conceive. 'Rome burns.....' would you not agree?</p>
10	<p>I am writing to request that all old names of pathways, roads building etc remain in the original way. The Towns History can be used to explain the reason such places were named in a certain way and just because something is called shooting it does not mean it in a bad way. Education is best used and the schools can surely cope with the explanation and histories for the pupils affected. Please leave Faversham alone.</p>
11	<p>I do see a bit of a problem with this name though as it looks just like 'shuts' as in 'he shuts the door.' In Arthur's street names book it says that it was known locally as 'The Shoots' with the 'oo' pronounced to rhyme with 'puts' (as in 'puts away') not 'boots'. So 'Shuts' wouldn't get the right sound. It has the added probability of being annoying to the Faversham born and bred and making no sense to anyone who wasn't. .</p> <p>I have been talking about this to anyone I could buttonhole to listen and several other ideas came up. Archer or Archery Lane (not Archer's or Archers' owing to potential apostrophe muddle.) Or Longbow Lane.</p> <p>Both would acknowledge the historic purpose of the shooting meadow without, as far as I can see, having any credible incitement to violence..... I do hope that these names might be considered. If it's not too late maybe you would be kind enough to raise these at whatever committee meeting has got to consider this minor but troublesome matter.</p> <p>A name using Queen Matilda could do very nicely in the future perhaps for any little developments near the abbey site. There may well be conversions like the flats on the corner of Church Street for example. It wouldn't have to be that near in fact. Abbey School is nowhere near the abbey. Vicarage Street has no vicarage now, Stephen's Close is away from town centre. But it is an historical name with local relevance certainly and it would indeed be a nice female reference to have.</p>
12	<p>Although I have only lived in Faversham for 40 years I still think I have an opinion. I have recently read a lot about renaming the path known as "The shooting meadow path " and I agree that "Queen Matilda's walk " is far more interesting and in keeping with the history of Faversham. I have never heard of the "local " name but I have heard of Queen Matilda. I don't know the connection with Faversham of the " local " name for the path, but I do with Queen Matilda. We should be proud of our history and promote it when and where we can . Steven and Matilda are famous, along with all the other historical names associated with Faversham.</p>

	<p>We have a connection with gun powder yes, but I “don’t get “ Shooting meadow path. But at the end of the day , what ever decision is made or what the name of the path is there are greater issues in Faversham that need attention</p>
13	<p>As I have previous stated in writing: as an eight-decades-long resident of Faversham, I,my parents,both also born,bred,worked & lived all their lives in the town & as were their parents before them,we all managed to use this path without feeling the need to call it anything!</p> <p>For goodness sake:The Shuts!!Any sign would immediately be altered to The Shits so please stop this waste of time forthwith I beg of you!</p>
14	<p>I gather the Town Council has suggested the ancient path which used to go to the shooting meadows be renamed The Shuts? This seems an odd and vaguely rude name for an ancient path which already has a descriptive and historic name. My vote is to keep it as it is, and for clarity for tourists etc, put a proper street sign up at both ends of the path.</p>
15	<p>Why on earth are we wasting valuable (indeed ANY time) on this ridiculous conversation? Please leave it as Shooting Meadow Path, don't muck around with it. Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardly anyone had even heard of the name of the path before this • Next to nobody has heard of Queen Matilda (and cares less) • It will be less than a day before some wit changes the name from the Shuts to The Shits, then you will have to keep replacing the sign. • The name Shooting Meadows is not, and has not, inspired one Grammar School child to run in and shoot up the school. <p>Please ask the Council to get on with more significant issues.</p>
16	<p>Don't like The Shuts. Should retain the knowledge that it was a Shooting Meadow and retain the name Shooting Meadow Path.</p>
17	<p>It has always been known as the shuts, so it should remain with that name.</p>
18	<p>I have lived in Faversham for more than 30 years and am a longstanding member of The Faversham Society. I should like the following statement to be included in all representations to Swale Council and any magistrates.</p> <p>I am writing to object to the arbitrary renaming of the lane that runs from St Mary's churchard between the 16th century Grammar School and Queen Elisabeth's Grammar School. It has been known as Shooting Meadows since the Middle Ages. In 1363, King Edward 111 passed a law compelling all able bodied men and boys from the age of 7 to practice archery every Sunday. The Shooting Meadow was where the men and boys of Faversham went to practice at the longbow. The longbow archers played a vital role in all medieval battles such as Agincourt and Crecy. There were no guns in 1363 - only bows and arrows - and to rename the Shooting Meadows is a complete rewrite and denial of Faversham history.</p> <p>Calling the lane 'Queen Matilda's Walk' is ambiguous. All the Norman queens of England were called Matilda: Matilda of Flanders (wife of William the Conqueror); Matilda of Scotland (wife of Henry 1); Matilda of Boulogne (wife of King Stephen}. Which Queen Matilda is it? Presumably Matilda of Boulogne but surely there are enough new roads in all the new estates going up round the town to call somewhere else after her.</p> <p>Neither do I see the point of calling the lane from Abbey Place to Cyprus Road 'The Shuts'. The archery practice fields of all the towns in England were often known as the 'shooting butts' (as in Sandwich for instance which still has its shooting butts area). 'The Butts' I would understand, but 'Shuts'? Moreover, I foresee the pupils at QE very quickly coming up with their own version!</p>

	<p>I am very much in favour of leaving the old name of Shooting Meadows alone. Why not another of the excellent town history streetboards placed alone the little lane or Abbey Place to explain the origins of the name?</p>
19	<p>I don't think a new name and a new sign is necessary, it's a waste of £. Anything is better than Queen Matilda's Way, or whatever it is. That sounds too artificial. The Shuts sounds better, rather historical, though I don't know what it means. However, The Shuts is a name that could easily be misheard, and misspelt, especially by school children! Whatever is officially decided, I'm sure people will continue to call it the Shooting Meadow, if they have always called it that. Best solutions..? Either call it the Shooting Meadow, or, possibly better, don't do anything!</p>
20.	<p>I am a Faversham Society Member (and the bat walk lady too) and have received an email from the society regarding the renaming of the well-used footpath between Abbey Place and Cyprus Road as "The Shuts".</p> <p>I have no issue with re-naming this footpath in the slightest, however as the path is used by a lot of dog walkers as a cut through to the Abbey Farmland, and sadly not all dog owners are as vigilant as others, I wonder whether this new name might be in time be simply referred to as "The Sh*ts" (didn't want to actually write the word, but I imagine you can guess where I'm going) and the potential for any sign bearing the name "The Shuts" might be just too much of a temptation for someone with a spray can...</p> <p>Just a thought, and not wanting to put the cats amongst any pigeons!</p>
21.	<p>For as long as I can remember, and I've lived in the town for nearly forty years, there has never been any official sign allocated to the path that starts at the church, goes past the Masonic Hall (formerly the old Grammar School) and continues along a Public Right of Way towards Abbeyfields. But it has always been known as Shooting Meadows, as anyone who has lived in Faversham for a long time, or has studied the history of the town, is likely to be aware. The name arises from the archery practice that took place on this site centuries ago. This historical connection should continue to be respected, preserved, and not forgotten. There are many historical written references to Shooting Meadows, in publications written by Arthur Percival and in newspaper archives, and I have attached an example.</p> <p>As for any sensitivity about the old name, there seems to have been no problem with the name Gunnery Road being chosen for the Faversham Lakes development, which is very close to a Primary School. If Shooting Meadows cannot be named officially, it should be left unnamed, as of course The Shuts is still a reference to the original name. Better still, the section of path you are proposing to name The Shuts would be better served by an information board giving a pictorial illustration of the whole path, its historical background, and its original name, which would be of great interest to anyone passing by. There surely could be no objection to that.</p>
22.	<p>As a member of the Faversham Society, I write to object to any proposal to rename any portion of Shooting Meadows either The Shoots, The Shutes, The Shuts or Queen Matilda Place. I wish to challenge on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unreasonable Decisions by Faversham Town Council

For centuries the footpath has been known, and referred to, by the residents of Faversham and beyond as “Shooting Meadows” (or by some “the Shoots” for short) due to its lying adjacent to the meadow where archery was historically practiced by all men between the ages of 15 and 60, as required under English Law from 1252.

“The Shuts” is totally meaningless. What exactly are you shutting?

It is my understanding that this whole naming idea came about in 2023 when one resident (yes, one!) contacted you to point out the footpath (Public Right of Way ZF8) didn’t have a name recorded in the Local Street Gazetteer or the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and suggested “Queen Matilda Place”.

The Faversham Society petition against the naming currently stands at 984 signatures. There has been much unrest within the Town and on Faversham social media pages. The Council has clearly misjudged the feeling of residents.

There is absolutely no campaign or appetite to name the path anything other than Shooting Meadows. The whole situation is being perpetuated by a very small minority of town councillors. At the FTC July meeting the proposal to simply leave the footpath unnamed failed by just one vote. Only four voted in favour of carrying on with this two-year saga – the other ten voted to leave it alone, abstained or sent their apologies!

How is this democracy?

2. Swale Borough Council Denies Having Any FTC Request to Name the Path Shooting Meadows

FTC councillors would have us believe that Swale officers have said “Shooting Meadows” is not an appropriate name as it contravenes the SBC street naming policy and would incite violence!

However, I have an email from Cllr Tim Gibson dated 12 August 2025, in response to my “Question to the Leader”, where he states: *“The main issue I need to advise you is that SBC have never had a request from Faversham Town Council to name the path Shooting Meadow Path.”*

The only vaguely relevant clause in the Swale street naming policy document is contained in section 5.8 which states: “Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell or capable of deliberate misinterpretation.” Given that 99% of residents already call it Shooting Meadows, have done so for centuries and there have been, to my knowledge, precisely no shootings – I fail to see how officially naming it will encourage shootings!

In addition, Faversham has a new housing estate with roads named after the gunpowder industry, eg *Gunnery Road, Guncotten Drive and Barrel Lane*, and Iwade has a road named *Shooters Chase*. I am at a loss to see why Swale would reject the name Shooting Meadows if they were actually asked!

3. Lack of Consultation

Until now, neither council has undertaken any public consultation whatsoever. Even now, this is not a *public* consultation, merely a gesture to local interested groups. The idea hadn’t been suggested at the last local elections so the councillors cannot even say it was an election pledge.

There is however an online petition which has gained 984 signatures against any change. The petition has been highlighted on local Facebook pages but that is about it. Anyone without internet access and an email address would have no way of signing. Consequently, that 984 represents only a small percentage of objectors.

	<p>I would like to put that 984 into perspective. FTC spent thousands of pounds of tax payers money over many months to publicise the Creek Bridge petition including: contracting Breakthrough Communications to advise and run the campaign; a Royal Mail delivered flyer sent to every property in Faversham; videos of councillors urging people to sign; Market Stalls in the Town Centre to collect signatures; local newspaper articles; and paid for advertising on Social Media to target Faversham residents. And how many signatures did they get after all that effort? A mere 1500!</p> <p>Yet, at the recent FTC meeting a couple of councillors were of the view that, as only 340 of those signatures on the Shooting Meadows petition are of people with town centre postcodes – the other 650 don't count. So, residents in the surrounding villages, people who grew up in Faversham and still have family and other links, people who work/have businesses in the town etc aren't allowed a voice? Were those names from outside the town removed from the Creek Bridge petition?!</p> <p>4. Failure to Consider the Relevant Factors</p> <p>FTC is ignoring the existing history of the footpath as well as its community links and potential impact of any change on residents. A name other than Shooting Meadows will cause confusion as only a handful of residents will be aware of, accept and use an alternative name.</p> <p>I have a copy of the FTC planning Committee minutes date 22 April 2003 where they discussed a planning application SW/03/0343 submitted by the Old Grammar School. The address given by FTC is "Shooting Meadows, Abbey Place, Faversham". So, 20 years ago, FTC were accepting the name Shooting Meadows.</p> <p>It is unfair that this should be imposed on the majority by a couple of councillors.</p>
23.	<p>Thank you for inviting members of The Faversham Society to express our views about the proposal to name as "The Shuts" part of the path traditionally called the Shooting Meadows Path. The Society has been considering the naming of ZF8 for many months. You will know that we have opposed proposals to rename the other part of the path, "Queen Matilda's Place" and we have appealed to the Magistrates Court to reverse that decision.</p> <p>In April, the Board of the Faversham Society agreed that it would be best if the entire path remains as it is i.e. without any formal nameplates. This remains the view of the Society and our formal position. We believe it is the best way to calm the discord and divisions that the Queen Matilda proposal has caused.</p> <p>Reverting to the <i>status quo ante</i> seems a sensible compromise since it neither formalises the reference to "shooting" which some find offensive, nor does it impose another new name.</p> <p>In addition to being Chair of the Society, I also work as a volunteer in the Fleur Bookshop and have used this opportunity to seek the views of local people. Counsellor Gibson, explained to me some months back that he hoped his proposal would be seen as a compromise by those who were aggrieved by the 'Queen Matilda' decision but , from what I have heard, it seems to have satisfied no one.</p> <p>The following observations have been made to me by members:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naming part of the Shooting Meadow Path, 'The Shuts', makes no sense at all. Historical references to the Shooting Meadows Path record it was known locally as "'The Shoots' with the 'oo' pronounced to rhyme with 'puts' (as in 'puts away') not 'boots'." Trying to reflect a local accent in spelling might seem merely patronising but, when the phonics are further distorted to avoid offence by using "shoots", it becomes ridiculous. "Shuts" is not pronounced to rhyme with "puts" but to rhyme with "cuts" (as in cuts bread). As Dorothy Percival has said, this "... has the added probability of being annoying to the Faversham born and bred and making no sense to anyone who isn't". "Shut" is a verb or adjective and so it needs to apply to an object. It begs the question: what is shut? The word "shuts" is used as a third person singular present tense of the verb 'to shut' (as in "he shuts the door" or "the door shuts". Please let us not confuse young people who are being taught grammar by using it, with a definitive article, near a school! <p>Of course, the same argument could be used in respect of "the shoots" - but that can, at least, be explained as an historical abbreviation.</p> <p>The potential for graffiti to transform a meaningless juxtaposition of words into a colloquial term for diarrhoea is likely to prove irresistible to many.</p>
24.	<p>I am writing to object to any proposal to rename any portion of Shooting Meadows either The Shoots, The Shutes, The Shuts or Queen Matilda Place. The footpath is and has been known as "Shooting Meadows" for many years and renaming it is unnecessary and likely to cause confusion. It has also been suggested that the name "Shooting Meadows" is an inappropriate name as it contravenes the SBC street naming policy and would incite violence. This is totally absurd – especially given that the town celebrates its connection with the gunpowder industry and many street names acknowledge this connection.</p>
25.	<p>I have lived in Faversham all 78 years of my life, as did my Father, Grandfather and Greatgrandfather. The pathway in question has always been the path/alley</p> <p>leading to the Shooting Meadows (medieval) or often locally referred to as " The Shoots ". The word " Shuts " has a totally Different meaning " move or</p> <p>cause to move into position to block an opening " Oxford Dictionary.</p> <p>This is Swale Beaurocracy gone mad and wasting time and money.</p>
26.	<p>Just to confirm, as I mentioned in the VIC last week, that if the footpath has to formally have a name, I agree it should be the name people have used for years.</p> <p>So yes, I support it being named The Shuts.</p>

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