

# Action Sai Kung

Newsletter of Friends of Sai Kung

Issue no. 2



## Recycling gathers pace

Recycling Saturday – the first Saturday of each month – has become a Sai Kung institution since it was launched by FSK volunteers last October. In January, 40kg of recyclable materials were collected, mainly plastics but some metals too. In February the total was 49kg. But in March an amazing 70kg was recovered.

We cast our net wide – polystyrene is welcome, for example. In March our volunteers managed to prevent two minibus-loads of polyfoam boxes from seafood restaurants and wet markets being carted off to landfill. We also pay a lot of attention to quality sorting. This is important, because our recycling partners will not accept contaminated waste.



Working with a commercial partner, our volunteers have recruited 18 bars and restaurants in Sai Kung town for a glass recycling programme. Special-purpose bins have been installed for each participant, mostly in rear alleys, and large quantities of glass are now being collected this way – more than 5,300kg since the programme began in mid-January. The bins are clearly labelled and anyone is welcome to use them.

What more can we do? FSK is planning a Community Forum on Waste Reduction in the next couple of months. Ideas to be discussed include recruiting 'village ambassadors' to co-ordinate local recycling initiatives; creating community infrastructure for collecting, storing and transporting recyclables; pressuring relevant government bodies to improve public recycling by providing adequate disposal containers, increasing collection frequencies, and including glass; and ways to increase community awareness of recycling basics. Watch out for further announcements.

Meanwhile Clearwater Bay School has adopted our Recycling Saturdays as part of its Eco Warrior programme aimed at raising student awareness of environmental issues.

### **Annual chinwag looms**

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 4 April, the day before the Ching Ming Festival. The venue will be Village Malaysian and Indian Restaurant on Po Tung Road. All FSK members are invited to attend, dissect reports from our chairman and treasurer, and help elect/re-elect the committee.



We're looking for a new Secretary to take over from Euan Barty, who is planning to leave the area soon. If anyone would like to take on this role, please let us know – preferably before 28 March. It mainly involves planning and minuting our bi-monthly committee meetings.

The first drink of the evening, and an array of Indian snacks, are on us; additional drinks and food can be ordered at members' expense.

For full details, click on any of the following links:

[www.friendsofsaikung.org](http://www.friendsofsaikung.org)

[www.facebook.com/events/335496516856710/](https://www.facebook.com/events/335496516856710/)

<http://mailchi.mp/66857403f83e/fsk-agm-2018-notice-3258909>

## **Mystery of the missing wardens**

FSK joined Friends of Hoi Ha last month to protest at fishing vessels encroaching on the 'no motorised vessels' area close to the beach at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park. One vessel strung out a net which spanned the entire width of the 'protected' part of the bay.



Illegal activities in the area are supposed to be policed by a team of Marine Park wardens who are based in the village, but they failed to spot these incursions and often do not notice campers who pollute the surrounding land and streams (camping is prohibited close to the Marine Park). In recent times they have also ignored toxic algal blooms that may threaten Hoi Ha Wan's fragile ecosystem. Inexplicably, the wardens' post is being relocated to a new position on Hoi Ha Road, where the wardens will have no direct view of the bay.

These events beg the question: why is commercial fishing still allowed in Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, endangering the corals, mangroves and other species for which the area is famous, some 20 years after it was gazetted as a protected area? In 2008, the Chief Executive, in his annual policy address, said commercial fishing would be stopped in Marine Parks ... but no action followed.

## **Missing the Geopark bus**

Should there be a public bus service linking Sai Kung with the East Dam of High Island Reservoir, where towering hexagonal rock columns form a major part of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark? This is (or should be) a major attraction for visitors to the SAR, yet there is currently no easy way to get there.

Transport Department is planning a regular minibus service to the East Dam. Alas, the plan is to use existing diesel vehicles rather than anything more appropriate for the task. Friends of Sai Kung doesn't object to the principle of a public transport link. We just want to see it implemented in a sensitive way that reduces the environmental impact and minimises the risk to hikers, not to mention the feral cattle for which Sai Kung is also noted.



We are therefore writing to the various authorities involved to recommend the use of electric vehicles that cannot exceed the 25kph speed limit for Man Yee Road. To minimise traffic congestion, we believe the service should operate from Pak Tam Chung, not Sai Kung town. We think it should be confined to 8am-6pm, Sundays and public holidays only.

### **Working to join the groups**

Sai Kung District Council has set up working groups to study three areas that are vital for the local community: environmental protection, Hiram's Highway improvement, and tourism and economic development. Various local organisations with interests in these areas have been invited to participate in these working groups but no approach has been made to FSK.

Since all three areas are of direct relevance to the work of Friends of Sai Kung, we are writing to the District Council to request that our organisation be permitted to take part in these working groups with the same rights as the other local organisations.

### **Workin' on the Highway**

Monthly liaison meetings continue with Meinhardt, the company project-managing the Hiram's Highway project. Overall progress is good and completion of Stage 1 is still scheduled for 2020. The southbound carriageway across the new bridge at Ho Chung is scheduled to open by the end of 2018, at which time work will commence on erecting the third arch for the northbound carriageway. We are discussing the overall landscaping proposals and the design of new recycling and public toilet facilities at Ho Chung.

The approval of Stage 2 of the Hiram's Highway project from Marina Cove to Sai Kung is still subject to consultation although it has been 18 months since the last public consultation meeting. FSK are continuing to request further clarity on the design and are pursuing the short tunnel option around Pak Sha Wan.



## Snippets

We held a curry evening on 26 January at The Village Malaysian and Indian Restaurant in Sai Kung, attended by 27 members and guests. FSK chairman John Wright gave a talk on our aims, actions and achievements in recent months.

Discarded Gobee bikes are becoming a prominent feature of our country parks. Despite being green, are these desirable additions to community involvement in the environment ... or just mega-litter?



Hong Kong historian Jason Wordie gave a fascinating talk on the history of Sai Kung to 30 FSK members and guests on 15 March.



On 27 January, six FSK members and friends cleared the top section of the ancient boulder road which ran from Kowloon Walled City via Customs Pass to Ho Chung and on to Sai Kung. Volunteers cleared the lower section last year.



Hikers and beachgoers are cheering after mounds of trash and dumped tyres were removed from the entrance to the part of Sai Kung Country Park that starts on Hong Fu Road and runs down a peninsula to Trio Beach and beyond. After much pressure, FEHD has finally repaired a nearby litter stockade that was wrecked by Typhoon Hato last year.



### **About Friends of Sai Kung**

Friends of Sai Kung is a not-for-profit community organisation that seeks to preserve and improve the quality of life of Sai Kung people, and to protect the unique environment of Sai Kung for the benefit of Hong Kong residents and visitors alike.

We work across a broad range of issues including planning and infrastructure, waste management, traffic management, tree-planting and animal welfare. Our objective is to achieve consensus between all interest groups. We are prepared to challenge government decisions where necessary.

This is detailed and painstaking work, mostly conducted out of public view. We hold regular meetings with leaders of the Hiram's Highway upgrade project, we liaise with Lands Department and the Town Planning Board on proposed developments, and we urge the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Country Parks Authority and Environment Bureau to improve Sai Kung life through recycling initiatives and greater attention to preserving the natural beauty of our country parks.

Community buy-in is vital to our efforts so we liaise with village leaders and support other groups that are trying to balance development pressures with traditional values. We participate in public-awareness causes, for example to encourage recycling, and join sister organisations from across Hong Kong such as the Save Our Country Parks Alliance, an initiative of Designing Hong Kong, of which we were a founding member.

But it's not all hard graft. We also get together for social events such as barbecues, curry nights and boat outings. If you'd like to get involved with any of our activities, or draw our attention to other areas of concern, please contact us through our website ([www.friendsofsaikung.org/](http://www.friendsofsaikung.org/)) or our Facebook page (*FSK – Friends of Sai Kung*).

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### **Meet the committee ...**

John Wright	- Chairman
Robert Lewington	- Vice Chairman
Karina O'Carroll	- Treasurer, Communications
Geraldine Kennedy	- Membership
Euan Barty	- Secretary
Carol Biddell	- Environment
Carol Ho	- Planning
Barry Hill	- Infrastructure
Tim Collard	- Community