

**Friends of the Flitch Way**  
**Notes from the Committee meeting of Wednesday 21 February 2018**

**Venue:** Discovery Centre, Great Notley Country Park  
**Present** Chairman, Alan Trigg. Secretary, Sandra Reynolds.  
Treasurer, Margaret James. Committee members, Val Blamire,  
Stan Davies, Bob Lucas, John Moss, Wendy Moss.  
Ranger, Tom Hamilton.

**Apologies** None

**Minutes of previous meeting**

Accepted as a true record and signed by Chairman accordingly.

**Matters arising from previous meeting and review of Action Points**

**AP2.1** To be discussed under Chairman's report.

**AP2.3** Position unchanged.

**AP2.5** Ongoing

**AP3.5** To be discussed under Chairman's report

**AP3.6** As above

**AP3.7** Position unchanged

**AP3.8** Done. Model now installed in carriage. Item covered in Braintree & Witham Times.

**AP4.1** Brook Green Application unanimously rejected by BDC Planning Committee.

**AP4.3** Awaiting contact with roofing contractor who had indicated work unlikely to be done before March/April when weather improves.

**AP4.4** Enjoyable get together. Well attended. Brian gave volunteers a demonstration of the newly installed digital system for running the model.

**AP4.6** Fewer attendees than previous year, possibly due to poor weather on the day.

**AP4.8** Ongoing. Draft designs for Stane Street notice boards produced by Stan.

**AP4.9** Ongoing.

**Chairman's report.**

**AP5.1** Alan reported on the funding application to the Garfield Weston Foundation which he was in the process of preparing and which would cover the cost of replacing the boardwalk adjacent to Dunmow Cutting. The application was 80% complete and although he had received a costing for materials, he was waiting for a quote to cover delivery and fitting before submitting the application before the closing date of 30 June 2018. Chairman added that one of the conditions for the grant was that the application needed to be for an amount in excess of £30,000, hence the delay in waiting for the other quote(s). As part of the project, the old boardwalk would need removing and Tom suggested that the contractor used by Country Parks be contacted to submit a quote for removal of the old structure and installation of the new. Tom and Alan will liaise on the matter. The committee also saw some merit in designing and installing an interpretation board, to be sited along the boardwalk, the cost of which could also be included in the application.

### **Treasurer's report.**

Treasurer reported the current account as £9093.83 with £2400.40 in the separate contingency/savings account. No major expenses were expected before the end of the financial year and current donations from carriage visitors averaged £20 per week which covered running costs.

On the social side, Margaret said that the feeling was that the outing to Coggeshall vineyard in October had been disappointing and not good value for money. The rest of the day, however, to Grange Barn, Paycockes and the lunch had been enjoyed by all. Feedback on the poor vineyard experience has been given to the Essex Tourism manager.

The next outing planned for the group would be on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May to Hoses Hall, one of a group of houses which can only be visited through a brochure invitation. A tour of the house and gardens, together with lunch, is planned and 18 people have booked to date.

Margaret said that she and Val had recently been to an Essex Travel show and had one or two ideas for future outings, one of which was a full day cultural tour with lunch based on Gibberd Gardens in Harlow. Margaret will email members once more information is obtained.

### **Secretary's report.**

Secretary reported there having been 425 web page visits with 1422 views in the last week. Top pages in the month were Blackwater Rail Trail 181, Flitch Way 177, Museum 115 and FW History 83. There have been 809 Face book "likes" since the November meeting, an increase of 84.

AGM of the Flitch Way Action Group had recently taken place which Alan had attended on the Friends' behalf. The group has a new chairman who has established good connections with developers. With regard to the bridleway, progress is being made, albeit slowly.

Sandra has been reviewing the Friends' position with regard to the charity's obligations under the Data Protection Act and has made a number of suggestions with regard to changing the content of the website as well as to the membership application form to make the charity more compliant. One of the main requirements is letting people know how their data is used by the charity. Proposed changes were agreed, as was having a 2 year "cut-off" for volunteers or members no longer in touch. Confidential details for volunteers such as next of kin, allergies, medications etc will continue to be kept by Wendy.

A new Outline Planning Application has been submitted for land east of Takeley, adjacent to the Flitch Way and with pedestrian access on and off the track. A 15 metre buffer zone between the development and the track is proposed. Sandra will send the usual letter of objection to Uttlesford DC and monitor the situation. The meeting agreed that developers clearly saw the land along the Flitch Way as a development corridor and further applications were likely.

### **Work Party report.**

As volunteer co-ordinator, Wendy reported 542 volunteer days to date with an average attendance of 13.5 since January. Pleased to report Michael Scade and Roger Johnson having returned after a break. Of 44 listed FW volunteers, 36 have been active during the year. The work done at Rayne over previous weeks has attracted many favourable comments, both in person and on Facebook.

No updated figures for carriage volunteers were available but Wendy commented that the same small group of people were doing the bulk of the volunteering. As a consequence, the

need to recruit new people for the carriage remained. The previous week's half term break had been covered with the carriage open to visitors on a few occasions.

**AP5.2** Stan said that he had recently been given contact details of somebody who had asked whether his 14 year old son could be a volunteer in the carriage. It was agreed that 16 years was the minimum age for volunteers and Stan will notify the parent accordingly. It was agreed that if the parent volunteered himself, there would be no objection to the child accompanying him when on duty as long as the parent was present at all times.

#### **Carriage report.**

Thanks were offered to the ladies of Dolphin Women's Institute who have donated the knitted model of Braintree Station to the Friends to display in the carriage.

Sandra said that she had confirmed with Josh that a 20% discount would apply for FW members purchasing items from the café. In addition, any volunteers working in the carriage qualified for coffee charged at £1.

#### **Footpath Work Group.**

Alan reported on the usual number and variety of sites visited by the group since the November meeting. They included much needed footpath clearance at Ashen, Earls Colne, Great Henny, Rawreth and Takeley where 3 bridges were also installed in addition to a lot of clearance. As with the Flitch Way group, it has been very pleasing to see the many positive comments on Facebook about the work done by P3.

#### **Ranger's report.**

Tom thanked the volunteers for the good turnouts on work parties and despite the high attendance, the sites he had nominated for visits had provided sufficient work to keep everyone occupied.

Referring to the following day's work party at the Felsted travellers site, Tom said that he had recently attended a multi-agency meeting at Great Notley to discuss the problems arising from the site and what was to be done there. The outcome was a consensus that there was no easy or quick solution to the ongoing problems along the stretch of the Flitch Way running alongside the travellers site. Having said that, Tom said that he felt a positive outcome had been achieved and was more confident about maintaining an improvement in the area. With regard to the following day's work party, FW volunteers would be working alongside ECC employees who have been on site all week and have already cleared a substantial amount of rubbish. Tom was unsure whether breaks in the fence have been fixed.

**AP5.3.** Tom said that he had a meeting arranged in the near future with the ECC Bridges officer to discuss the condition of all the bridges crossing the Flitch Way.

Work parties' were likely to finish at the end of March but the exact date was flexible.

Tom added that work party days may need to change from Tuesday and Thursday because of changes in his work patterns. The following week, for example, work party days would be Thursday and Friday, then Tuesday and Wednesday the next week.

#### **AGM preparations.**

Agreed to hold the meeting at 7pm on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May. Tom will confirm availability for the Discovery Centre conference room on that date. Speaker to be sought.

**Any other business.**

Stan advised that he would be giving a talk on the Flich Way to St Mary's Fellowship Group at Bocking on Thursday 19 April.

**AP5.4.** Sandra said complaints have been made to ECC by a local resident regarding the deteriorating state of the Byway at Great Dunmow and the surrounding area caused by off road vehicles. Secretary said that she would also write to ECC to express Friends' concerns in an attempt to improve the situation.

**AP5.5.** Tom said that complaints have been received about dogs belonging to the Essex Hunt being allowed access to Garnetts Wood, their stables being adjacent to the wood. Concerns for the safety of their own dogs and themselves have been raised by members of the public at the number of hounds, their smell and the consequent dog fouling. Tom said that Rangers were in contact with the Hunt, adding that there was a difference of opinion in the interpretation of dogs being "under control" when using footpaths. Tom will report back on progress at the next meeting.

Next Committee meeting agreed for 4pm on Wednesday 6 June at the Discovery Centre.

**Summary of Action Points for next meeting**

**Brought forward from previous meeting**

**AP2.5** Sandra to report on progress by ECC Land Agents towards declaring FW as Local Nature Reserve.

**AP4.3** Wendy to report on carriage roofing repairs.

**AP4.8** Sandra and Stan to report on Stane Street notice board.

**AP4.9** Sandra to organize a walk along the Blackwater Rail Trail.

**New Actions**

**AP5.1** Alan to report on progress of Grant Application.

**AP5.2** Stan to report on potential new carriage volunteer.

**AP5.3** Tom to report on meeting with bridge engineer.

**AP5.4** Sandra to report on byway

**AP5.5** Tom to report on contact with Essex Hunt.