

**Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands**  
**Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 8 April 2024, Great Notley**

**Taking part:** Alan Trigg (Chair), Margaret James (Treasurer), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), and Committee members Graham Dalby, Bob Wright, Wendy Moss, John Moss, Tom Hamilton (Ranger), Guests Andy Hobster, Dick Hughes

**Apologies for absence:** Stan Davies (Vice-chair),

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Tom for being host.

**Approval of Minutes of 22 January 2024** - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

**Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.**

Closed actions:

AP27.1 Alan to contact scaffolding company about delivery of poles. Completed

AP27.2 Stan to circulate Carriage Steward handbook for review. Update – circulated and no change required.

AP27.3 Sandra to book Great Notley Country Park for AGM on 10 May for a 6pm kickoff.

AP27.4 Sandra to invite Dick Hughes to next meeting.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP11.1 Sue Wilson has asked Neil Jones about S106 funding for a bridge over the Blackwater (12/01620/FUL) and there is no response. Sandra has had contact with Witham town council asking for their assistance. Apparently BDC are conducting surveys. Ongoing.

AP 22.2 No success with local panel beaters to repair the Carriage so Alan will speak with Epping & Ongar museum to see if they could inspect the Carriage and advise. Ongoing.

AP24.5 Stan has given the original Dunmow Cutting sign design to Sandra to create a new one. Ongoing.

AP26.2 Need to finalise bench locations and installations with Tom. This should start to happen in next month or two

New Actions:

AP28.1 Bob will take photos of site with boundary dispute as well as the steps in Church Lane, Little Canfield

AP28.2 Sandra to raise a Freedom of Information request for dealings between the developer and Essex County Council.

AP28.3 Sandra to send out AGM invites and print membership cards

AP28.4 Sandra to arrange tea, coffee and projector screen. Update - Claire has confirmed these are available.

AP28.5 Sandra to order cake and sausage rolls from Josh for 40 people

AP28.6 Sandra to prepare annual report and AGM draft minutes based on the reports.

AP28.7 Stan to prepare display board which will be used at Rayne Annual Parish Assembly, Dunmow Town Showcase and the AGM.

AP28.8 Bob to manage the offer of funds from Little Canfield to improve the High Cross Lane path and area.

AP28.9 Sandra and Wendy to provide Bob with costs of information boards.

AP28.10 Tom to confirm insurance cover needed for strimmer.

**Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:**

Since our last meeting we have held work parties at Start Hill and Great Notley Country Park including our Post Christmas in the Woods get together.

I am delighted to say at long last we have received the scaffold poles needed to complete our work at Bannister Green Halt – Thanks to Danny Shipton of Indigo Scaffolding for donating them.

**Margaret James - Treasurer's report**

Our bank balance, as at 31 March 2024 is current account £380.60, and savings account £7,621.93 making an overall balance of £8,002.53.

I will be completing the year-end figures now that I have the bank statements, and will be arranging for Dawn to audit our accounts.

### **Margaret James - Social Activities report**

On Friday 5 April, 24 of us went to Braxted House for a tour of the house and gardens. We all enjoyed the visit very much. We then went on to The Green Man for lunch and a catchup with friends.

### **Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report**

Online statistics – 1064 web page visits and 1814 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,167 followers.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east)

UTT/23/1470/OP Stansted Distribution Centre redevelopment including new buildings of over 10m high directly next to Flitch Way. ECC Highways have included £25,000 for the Flitch Way to improve connectivity with Bishops Stortford. Awaiting decision – no change from last report.

UTT/22/2185/FUL Land at the former Takeley Service Station. The developer Weston Homes has breached the boundary of the Flitch Way to build 8 homes. I have complained to the UDC Planning Enforcement who said it was down to the owner ECC. I then wrote to the ECC portfolio holder Mark Durham twice but still have not had a response.

Stan's comments - Suffice to say that I am appalled at the discourteous lack of response to your attempts to get ECC to do something or at least indicate what they are going to do. The Friends have put in 20 years of working along the Flitch and trying to protect it by your sterling efforts in appealing so many applications for development close to the track. Again, without hearing what Tom has to say, the encroachment by Weston Homes is a real slap in the face and my own view is that Essex County Council regard us as no more than unpaid workhorses who have saved them many, many thousands of pounds over the years without giving us anything back.

Tom stated as a park or department we are not in a position to comment on the encroachment at this time, we have had little to no involvement. We wait for an official reply from the property or external communications department.

AP28.1 Bob will take photos of site with boundary dispute as well as the steps in Church Lane, Little Canfield

AP28.2 Sandra to raise a Freedom of Information request for dealings between the developer and Essex County Council.

Former Winfresh banana depot now being used by UDC. Tom and I met with local councillor Geoff Bagnall and drew up a safe route alongside the depot which will avoid the narrow lane. Geoff has sent this to UDC and we have just heard they are keen to meet us for a site visit.

A public consultation has taken place for Bellway to build 100 homes on land west of Station Road, Takeley next to Bonningtons Farm. It does include a buffer. We have told them we are very disappointed they are trying to build where a Planning Inspector has refused permission. We expect they will apply for planning permission. Ongoing.

UTT/22/3013/OP and 23/2964 A reworked application for 14 self-build sites at Highwoods Farm, Buttleys Lane has been submitted. Refused 7 March 2024.

UTT/23/0918 Round House Butleys Lane have lodged an appeal to build an additional house between the Round House and the Flitch Way. Ongoing.

UTT/18/0839/SCO No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development.

Their S106 obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Buttleys Lane and Ongar Road which runs parallel to the A120.

UTT/21/3596 Moors Fields, Station Road, Little Dunmow for 160 houses approved on 2 March 2023. The planning obligation includes £86,720 for Flitch Way improvements and £120,000 toward improvements to the bridge over the Chelmer in Great Dunmow. Cycle and pedestrian access on to the Flitch Way to be provided, all before first occupation. The full application has been submitted to direct to the Planning Inspectorate and a decision agreed 27 March 2024.

BDC 22/03402 Land to the rear of Gilda Terrace. Permission has already been granted and the new developer Crest Nicholson are finalising their plans. We have asked the play area and pump house be relocated as they are adjacent to the Flitch Way. Ongoing with latest plans dated March 2024 showing no changes next to Flitch Way.

BDC 23/01880/OUT Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – 74 houses directly next to the Flitch Way. Objection made as this sits on land where planning has been refused previously by the Secretary of State. Planning strongly refused on 18 October 23. They have withdrawn their appeal to concentrate on 23/02722.

BDC 23/02722/OUT Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – An alternative layout of 74 houses directly next to the Flitch Way. Objection made. Planning refused by BDC on 2 February 24. Planning appeal to be held on 23 April 2024 and I will speak against the application.

### **Wendy Moss - Work Party report**

Since our last meeting on 22 January, we have completed 13 work parties. Some work parties have been cancelled due to such bad weather conditions and it would have been unsafe to work. We finished the work on the Flitch Way at High Cross Lane, did some work at Gore Bridge Rayne and made a visit to Start Hill clearing the footpath along by the iron bridge. Since then, we have worked at Great Notley Park opening up several areas and taking out some poplar trees to reduce overcrowding. The Great Notley Social event was very successful with 17 volunteers attending. We have gained 2 new volunteers Stuart Warwick who has attended 12 work parties and Steve Cardnell attending 3. During the Easter break 4 volunteers worked at Rayne station replacing the fence that had fallen down at the far end of the station and it looks so much better now. Our volunteer turn-up rate has continued to be good with an average of 9 again and that is most encouraging.

### **Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report**

Since the last meeting in January, the Carriage has been opened for visitors on 25 days, consisting of 25 morning and 12 afternoon sessions. In addition, Brian and Richard have attended on 11 Wednesday mornings, looking after the model railway.

We have had 780 visitors since 22 January and £207.87 has been collected from donations and sales during the same period. The sessions have been covered by 6 volunteers, Kevin, John and Wendy, Lloyd and Gwyneth, Susan and Stan.

Derek has been a notable absentee since the last meeting due to ill health and we were all shocked to hear the recent sad news regarding his medical diagnosis. He remains committed to continuing with his Carriage stewardship for as long as he can, however, and as a means to enabling him to do so, I will be collecting him from his home for as long and as often as he wishes and is able to do so.

### **Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report**

January – Replace bridge Stisted and Gainsford End, Clear Footpaths Hempstead and Radwinter.

February – Replace steps Messing, Footpath clearance Tiptree, Gt Bardfield, Quendon, Rickling and Gransmore Green, replace stiles/gates Great Bardfield, repair Bridge Quendon, install and repair way marker posts Gransmore Green.

March – Footpath clearance Rivenhall, Stebbingford and Lexden Wood, bridge repair Rivenhall.

### **Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report**

Winter work - It was a great winter season if a little frustrating toward the end. The work carried out along the wet Felmoors Farm section looked amazing where we got up to before Christmas and the break for utility work. Tasks involving clearance and tidying to improve access and aesthetics at High Cross Lane East and West followed the Start Hill were followed by the move over to Notley that was meant to be just for a few weeks but ended up lasting until the Easter break. While the ongoing delays were frustrating it did enable us to do some amazing work at Notley and leave an area looking so much better for everyone.

Utility Works - near Bannister Green Halt place in the Felsted area, I believe are nearing completion. The works have been set back by the weather and that has also impacted on the condition the site is in. The contractor will be reinstating the track to a rolled subbase of road planings and we will be organising a contractor at a later date to re-roll and apply a dust finish, this was all agreed prior to the work commencing.

Future Plan - Work parties will recommence on Thursday 18 April and will run every other Tuesday and Thursday the following being Tuesday 23 April. We will be stepping away from heavy clearance

into doing lighter work now we are well into spring to include light cutbacks, bench/sign installation and Halt maintenance. We will also do at least one visit to the Colne Valley Rail Trail and Blackwater Rail Trail. The nature of the work carried out at this time of year means that fewer people are needed so the forward program will include rough numbers needed.

### **Any Other Business**

**Rayne Annual Parish Assembly.** At the invitation of the Parish Council, Stan will be attending the Rayne Annual Parish Assembly at Rayne School on Wednesday evening 24 April on behalf of the Friends, displaying photos of who we are and what we do as well as trying to encourage volunteers, for the Carriage in particular.

**AGM Preparation.** The 20<sup>th</sup> AGM is planned for the 10 May. Dick Hughes has agreed to be our speaker. Andy Hobster and Dick Hughes have agreed to stand for the committee and Graham Dalby will be standing down. Sandra has booked Great Notley Country Park for AGM on 10 May for a 6pm kick-off. We agreed members joining after January would not pay renewal until next year. Josh at the Booking Hall café has confirmed the continuing discount.

AP28.3 Sandra to send out AGM invites and print membership cards

AP28.4 Sandra to arrange tea, coffee and projector screen. Update - Claire has confirmed these are available.

AP28.5 Sandra to order cake and sausage rolls from Josh for 40 people

AP28.6 Sandra to prepare annual report and AGM draft minutes based on the reports.

AP28.7 Stan to prepare display board which will be used at Rayne Annual Parish Assembly, Dunmow Town Showcase and the AGM.

FWAG will try and organise a meeting with Graham Butland to update him on the Flich Wat connection proposals. They will also give out our info at the Dunmow Town showcase on 27 April.

Issues raised by Kevin French - Agreed to add steps at Church Lane, Little Canfield to summer work schedule and advise him to go ahead with Flich Green access path as we thought no one was likely to object to it being upgraded as it's been in use as an access path for a number of years.

AP28.8 Bob to manage the offer of funds from Little Canfield to improve the High Cross Lane path and area.

AP28.9 Sandra and Wendy to provide Bob with costs of information boards.

Dick Hughes donation – Dick would like to purchase a walk behind strimmer as used by the P3 teams for the group – a Powerstrim Portek Roughbrush cutter.

AP28.10 Tom to confirm insurance cover needed for strimmer.

### **Next meeting**

The next committee meeting will be on 17 June at 2.30pm at Great Notley Country Park.

There being no further matters to discuss, the Chair thanked everybody for their contributions and brought the meeting to a close.