

Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Friday 11 June 2021, Great Notley

Taking part: Stan Davies (Chair), Alan Trigg (Vice-chair), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), Margaret James (Treasurer) and Committee members, Wendy Moss, John Moss, Val Blamire, Graham Dalby, Bob Wright.

Apologies for absence: Tom Hamilton

Approval of Minutes of 4 March 2021 Agreed by all and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:-

AP10.4 The Rayne telephone box has been installed and a sleeper border and bench were installed on 10 June.

AP11.2 The Ranger vacancy has disappeared as part of the restructuring of Country Parks.

AP 13.1, 13.2 and 15.1 All 3 benches between Rayne and Braintree have been installed.

AP13.4 Tom has drawn up a list of outstanding work for volunteers for Wendy.

AP14.1 The Carriage heaters have been installed.

AP15.2 John has the wood for new information boards.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP11.1 No progress to report on opening up the bridge at Langford Halt other than Countryside have needed access via the Blackwater Rail Trail. Carry forward.

AP12.2 ECC Facilities Management have approved the Rayne gate replacements and Tom is awaiting an installation date. Carry forward.

AP13.5 The Barbara Holdsworth bench has been delivered and will be installed shortly. Ongoing.

AP15.3 The tent at Rayne Station should be removed next week.

Chairman's report: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first face to face meeting in 18 months. Although Zoom meetings were OK, it was not without its problems.

After serving for a number of years, Bob Lucas stepped down as a committee member and trustee at the AGM. Bob intends to continue to come out on work parties and Stan would like to record our appreciation of his contribution to the good running of the Friends over his years of service on the committee. Pete Lane also stepped down as trustee, and he was one of the founder members of the Friends and continues to run the Footpath Workgroup (P3).

It is good to see some work parties taking place since lockdown lifted, which Wendy will report on later, but the opportunity to get out and meet up again has been much appreciated by all volunteers taking part.

The Friends have been chosen as one of three nominated charities by Sue Wilson, leader of the Braintree Council for the civic year. Sue officially opened the Carriage Museum during her last spell as leader of the Council. It was also nice to see London Marathon runner Szabina Nemeth choose the Friends of the Flich Way as her main charity to fundraise for the October event.

Treasurer's report

Our current bank balance is £7767.85. We have received though online donations from Virgin money £15.64 and from Amazon £5.00. EDF have agreed a further 2 year fixed contract and we will be paying £50.00 a month to ensure our cost are covered. Stan and John will be keeping a close check on the meter reads as we feel they has been some excessive use of electricity over our closed period. The new heaters have been paid for and so have the two new benches and signs. Josh has paid us £70.00 contribution for Rayne phone box area re-vamp. After discussion we agreed to move £800 to the contingency account.

Social Activities Report

A date of 13th September 2021 has been pencilled in for a visit to Bardfield Vinyard for a tour wine tasting and lunch, the cost being £22.50. Wendy and Margaret will get the information out to everyone in the next week. We also talked about a number of venues suitable for the Christmas lunch and Margaret will investigate further.

Secretary's report

Online statistics - 1,420 web page visits and 2,543 page views in last month. Facebook shows 1,897 'likes', up 172 since the March meeting.

Planning Applications

UTT/21/0332/FUL Land at TileKiln Green Start Hill (Wren Kitchen depot). Permission has been refused by UDC. We expect there will be an appeal.

UTT/21/0405/FUL Former Winfresh site on High Cross Lane east (UDC refuse lorry site). Dunmow Council have also asked for a new path along the northern perimeter.

UTT/19/2354/OP Land West of Buttleys Lane (60 houses). An appeal has been lodged against the planning permission refusal.

UTT/18/2574/OP Land south of Stortford Road (332 houses at Staggs & Folly farms). No decision has been made yet but a draft S106 has been produced which included £54,000 for drainage and surface improvements in the cutting and boardwalk section plus the creation of a bridleway and semi-hard, semi-permanent surfacing between Buttleys Lane and Ongar Road which is part of the Flitch Way connection.

BDC/18/01605 Land south of Gilda Terrace. Attended and spoke at the appeal held on 20 April 2021. We are awaiting the decision.

Flitch Way Action Group update - On top of the draft S106 agreement mentioned above, Bishops Stortford College have signed an Express Dedication at Common Law to upgrade footpath 90 to bridleway. The next step is to get agreement and funding for the bridge replacement and bridleway surfacing. Discussions are ongoing with ECC PROW and also separately with Sustrans.

Two further information boards have been created and will be sited in Dunmow Cutting and near High Cross Lane.

13 membership payments are still outstanding and Sandra will send out a final email and if she does not receive a response about membership or volunteering, she will remove them from the database and mailing list. The plastic covered membership cards are extremely time consuming to produce and following a discussion we agree to send out an electronic version next year, which people can print and cut out along with the option to have a plastic coated card if requested.

Work Party report

From the beginning of April, we have carried out 15 work parties in all with an average of 5 volunteers on each day most of these have been under our own steam. Planting trees and carrying out other tasks at Notley, installing interpretation boards and making several improvements to Rayne station and telephone box area. Dick Hughes kindly took charge of the 3 work parties to improve drainage on the Flitch near to Felmoors farm. We also carried out a thorough clean of the railway carriage ready for reopening at weekends. More recently we have worked with Tom installing the new benches and interpretation boards along the Flitch and picnic benches at High Cross lane and with Richard replacing the fence around the pond at Notley.

We have 5 new members - Andy Hobster has begun volunteering, Clive Butcher intends volunteering in the carriage but waiting his induction, Rosie Schonenberger and Debbie Moorhead who hope to join us on the wildflower walk. Phil Roethenbaugh who has yet to join a work party. We have one other project to complete at Bannister Green improving the halt but that will need to wait until Tom is available to help.

Railway carriage update - The Railway Carriage museum reopened on 5 June for weekend visitors. Thanks to everyone who helped give the Carriage a good spring clean prior to its re-opening. Steps are in place to make the Carriage safer for visitors and volunteers. Appropriate signage has been put in place, hand sanitisers are available and a track and trace signing-in record is being maintained. At the moment we are only advertising weekend opening due to availability of volunteers although Derek has been given permission to open during the week when he is there, providing the correct procedures are followed. Derek has been very helpful in getting the carriage ready for opening and he deserves special thanks for the time he has spent at the carriage during lockdown, sitting outside, speaking to visitors and raising funds by selling books and surplus items from the carriage as well as a wide range of other items such as records, CDs etc.

Another of the carriage window seals has blown and will need replacing in due course. There is no great urgency to fix it as it is on the New Road side.

Footpath group (P3) report – There have been work parties at Gransmore Green and Great Bardfield on overgrown bridleways, a footpath clearance at High Easter and work on a path and steps at Stagden Cross.

Ranger's report – Nothing to report.

Any Other Business

Changes to the Trustees have been notified to the Charities Commission.

Next meeting

Friday 17 September at 2pm, hopefully face to face.

There being no further matters to discuss, the Chairman thanked Alan for his last 5 years' service as Chairman and presented an engraved tankard. He then thanked everybody for their contributions and brought the meeting to a close.