

Friends of the Flitch Way
Notes from Committee meeting of Wednesday 6th September 2017

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

Minutes of previous meeting

Proposed as a true record by Wendy, seconded by John. Signed by Chairman accordingly.

Matters arising and review of previous action points

AP1.3 Letter issued to landowner by BDC praising work done to clear dumped material but asking for remainder also to be cleared. Site needs to be checked.

AP2.1 Quotes for boardwalk from various sources to be obtained before applying for grant funding. Total cost estimated to be in the region of £30,000.

AP2.2 Done. Carriage roof estimates done and grant of £3,500 obtained.

AP2.3 Car park work done and benches installed. Information boards and way marker posts still to be designed and installed.

AP2.4 Done. Stan to advise treasurer of cost.

AP2.5 Delay on ECC part on declaring Local Nature Reserve thought to arise from 'money issues'. Tom subsequently contacted by Tim Dixon, head of Country Parks, who said that their consultant had initially queried the Management Plan's acceptability to Natural England despite Natural England having confirmed they had been consulted and we could proceed to the next stage. Tim will contact ECC Land Agents asking them to progress.

AP2.6 Done. Sandra circulated the FWAG status and issues list

AP2.7 Done. The youth volunteering policy was agreed and will be added to the website

AP2.8 Done. The Essex Field Club survey of Dunmow cutting was attended by 3 people.

AP2.9 Done. Correspondence had been exchanged with Client Earth but they were unable to offer additional help.

AP2.10 Wood processor needs to be moved to a power source to enable jet washing etc. Arrangements to be made with Tom to do so at a time to fit in with his very full schedule. Probably October/November.

New AP3.1 Sandra to enquire re cost of advertisement in Essex Chronicle under Farm machinery for sale.

New AP3.2 Sandra also to contact Colchester Auctions re their periodic sales of farm/agricultural machinery.

AP2.11 Done. Andrew and Irene happy to attend stall for Dunmow Carnival but needs to be away from FWAG stand to avoid confusing visitors.

New AP3.3 Alan to speak to Andrew Adair re. booking space at the Dunmow Carnival.

AP2.12 Done. Volunteer flyer approved by committee.

New AP3.4 Stan to contact Printwize to get a price for 500 A5 volunteer flyers.

AP2.13 Done. Meeting venue confirmed

Chairman's report.

Alan referred to work done during the summer break including installation of benches at Garnetts Wood and re-installing the Friends' notice board at Rayne Station which had been damaged after the Rayne Festival. Looking forward to the start of Autumn work parties, beginning at Dunmow Cutting the following day.

Re. Public Liability Insurance for the carriage and volunteers, correspondence from the insurers was awaited.

New AP3.5 Alan to produce a list of potential Boardwalk suppliers in kit form.

New AP3.6 Tom to supply the name of the boardwalk company that they use.

Treasurer's report.

Credit balance of £4,217.85 in current account plus £1,600 in contingency savings account. A further £800 to be transferred to the latter from the current account.

No major bills outstanding and carriage donations continue to cover costs.

On social events, Margaret said that the recent outing to Layer Marney seemed to have been enjoyed by everybody. The next scheduled outing would be on Friday 6th October to Coggeshall vineyard with a guided tour, wine tasting and lunch followed by an optional visit to Paycockes and Grange Barn, New lunch menus were awaited from the vineyard which would be sent out when they arrived in order for food selections to be made.

Secretary's report.

Contact received from Community 360 which is the new name of the combined BDVSA services at Braintree and Colchester. They had invited registration in order to receive updates etc but as a charge would be incurred to register, it was decided not to do so.

On media stats, Sandra said that there had been 340 web page visits in the last week with 1122 views. Top pages were Flitch Way 32, Blackwater Rail Trail 50 and September Wildlife 25. The wildlife section of the website has been re-formatted. Facebook showed 677 likes, up 48 from the last meeting.

A meeting of Flitch Way Action Group (FWAG) had taken place the previous week and some progress was being made, albeit slowly. ECC now recognize the importance of the link. A new Chairman, a local businessman, has taken the place of William Chastell.

Nothing further has been heard from Felsted School re. their involvement in recording memories of the former branch line.

Sandra has circulated committee members with proposed policies for the use of young volunteers on Flitch Way work parties and in the carriage and this was agreed.

New AP3.7 Sandra will approach Notley High School re. youth volunteering in the carriage.

Work Party report.

Looking forward to the start of the new volunteering year at Dunmow Cutting.

Applications have also been received from Tesco, Barclays and from ECC for groups of their employees to come out on work parties. The feeling of the meeting was that supervising such extra numbers would be very time consuming and the responsibility of doing so was not something for 'regular' volunteers to take on. Tom felt that work such as raking banks at Great Notley could be the more appropriate type of work that people could do.

Responsibility for management would lie with the Rangers and Tom will speak to the person at ECC who had made the approach.

Grant of £300 received as a result of Alan's application to Dunmow Town Council. Meeting agreed the best use of the money would be to purchase 2 pairs of long-handled shears and 4 pairs of loppers for volunteers' use. Wendy will also put in an order for safety boots. Tom is trying to get authorization to buy more rakes, particularly useful for the work about to start at the Cutting.

Railway Carriage update.

Contractor is currently on holiday and waiting for him to return to finish the roof. Result of the application of the rubberised material was not successful and contractor is looking into the reason for that, possibly due to the content of the paint applied previously. Wendy has provided the contractor with details of the paint used which may help but roof may ultimately have to be stripped to the bare metal which is likely to incur extra cost. Thanks to volunteers who have provided weekday cover as well as weekends during the school holidays but, as ever, more volunteers are needed as it is the same small number of people taking responsibility to step in.

Footpath Group (P3) report.

Pete continued to put photographs on Facebook following each work party which showed the variety of sites visited since the last meeting. Pat Griffin has recently moved home and would no longer be attending work parties. Pat has been part of the P3 group since it started and will be missed. Ian is also due to move in the near future and Pete would be happy to speak to anybody who would like to know more about the work done by the group.

Ranger's report.

Tom reported changes in Country Parks Ranger structure. With the departure of the most recently recruited Ranger from Notley, Stewart, Tom will now be the only person based there on full time Ranger duties. A newly recruited roving team of 3 Rangers will be based at Crossing Temple to cover all the Country Parks. Demand for their services is likely to be high and require booking a long way in advance.

With regard to the future programme, Tom advised that work will take place at Dunmow Cutting from 7 September to 5 October when he goes on leave for 2 weeks, returning there when he gets back. Tom suggested that work could be done at Great Notley while he was away.

As far as he was aware, there had been no recent reports of problems around the Travellers' site at Felsted.

Tom confirmed that ECC ownership of the Flitch Way was now registered with the Land Registry.

Any other business.

Christmas event to take place in the carriage on Sunday 17th December which will be the last day the café is open before Josh and family go on holiday. Committee agreed a charge of £3 to see Santa and receive a present would be appropriate. Alan and Annette will take on the Tombola stall and prizes will be required. The Nail Game and a book stall will also be operating. A 'friend' of the Friends has offered £200 towards the cost of buying presents for Santa to distribute and Stan said that Josh had also offered to make a contribution.

The café are not organizing anything special on the day.

New AP3.8 A local WI group have offered a knitted model of Braintree station for us to display and Sandra will contact to get further information.

Bob advised that his first aid ticket would expire at the end of October. He was willing to carry on in his role as first aider. Bob advised the next training course to be the following week, 13th September, with the next one not until November.

New AP3.9 Tom said that he had passed the first aid request to Steff but would e-mail Claire.

Next meeting

Agreed for 4pm, Wednesday 27th November at Great Notley in order to give sufficient time to discuss the Christmas event in depth.

Summary of Action Points for next meeting

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