

Friends of the Flitch Way

Notes from Committee meeting of Tuesday 31st May 2016

- Venue** 31 Kidder Road, Rayne
- Present** Chairman, Alan Trigg. Secretary, Sandra Reynolds.
Treasurer, Margaret James.
Committee members, Val Blamire, Stan Davies, Bob Lucas,
John Moss, Wendy Moss
- Apologies** Tom Hamilton, Ranger

Alan welcomed everybody to the Friends first meeting of the year and his first meeting as chairman.

Minutes of the last meeting Proposed as correct by Stan, seconded by Val and signed accordingly by Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes.

No decision yet reached by BDC on Brook Green planning application.
Re-painting of carriage roof had taken place.

Chairman's report

Alan said that, being the first meeting of the new year, he had little to say other than to thank committee members for their ongoing commitment and hope that the year would go as well and be as successful as previous years.

Treasurer's report.

Margaret reported that the bank account had not yet been switched to Barclays as she was waiting for the grant funding from Tesco to be received before she did so. That was expected to take place in mid-June. The mandate for the existing account needs completion, the only change being Alan replacing Stan as a signatory to the account. The un-identified transfer of £358.75 into our account from Essex County Council had been found to be for P3 items.

Run along part of the FW and organized by Braintree Athletic Club had taken place with £52.20 donated to Friends.

Birthday party for a small group of children had taken place in the carriage with £40 donated to Friends.

Donations made by visitors to the carriage continue to cover running costs.

On the social front, the Paper Mill Lock trip is fully booked and an e-mail will be issued shortly regarding other proposed social events.

Secretary's report.

Sandra reported that she and Wendy would be working in tandem for the time being. Several changes to Friends stationery were proposed with logos re-positioned. Stan's

address will continue to be shown at the top of headed paper but individual writers' telephone numbers will need to be put on before letters are issued.

Examples of posters seeking volunteers were shown. They will be printed in different colours depending on which group is being targeted, ie, Flitch Way, Footpaths(P3) or Carriage.

Sandra showed the meeting various analyses of contacts made with FW website and our Facebook pages. Quite detailed in information, the figures clearly showed content of both sites being viewed by a lot of people which was agreed to be very satisfying given the time and effort which had been put into setting up the pages. Both Sandra and Wendy commented how much easier it now was to upload pictures and information onto the sites now compared to previously.

The Travellers' site at Little Dunmow continued to cause problems to users of the path passing the site, the most recently reported being a cyclist who needed hospital treatment after being bitten by a dog which had got through the broken fence alongside the site. Police were informed and Sandra has asked him to notify the Council also. The area is covered by Uttlesford Dog Wardens but it is not known whether they have been made aware of the ongoing dog problem around the site. Sandra has prepared a map of an alternative route through Flitch Green to avoid the site but the meeting agreed that not to be the answer to the problem and strong action by ECC and other relevant parties needed to be taken. Although Wendy had written about the situation to Tim Dixon, head of Country Parks, some time ago, no response seemed to have been made and she will write again to ask for an update.

Re. the Garnetts Wood and Langford Halt project, Tom has agreed to be project manager for both sites and liaise with contractors who would be doing the majority of the work. Volunteers' removal of ivy and other plant material from the platform at Langford could not take place until the Autumn because of nesting birds it was agreed. That would also allow time during the summer for contractors to do any necessary repair work to the platform itself. Wendy has obtained names of approved contractors from Historic England and Stan will provide details of the company which has worked previously at Cressing Temple. Advice from a structural engineer on the extent of platform work required was awaited.

P3 report

The Footpaths group continues to be active and since the previous meeting, visits have been made to a number of different locations including Ashelden, Gransmore Green, Great Tey, Berden, Stow Maries and Radwinter undertaking a variety of tasks.

Ranger's report

Tom made contact by phone and apologizing for not being at the meeting. Discussions with Tom were able to take place, however, using the speakerphone facility, as follows.

Re. the travellers' site, he said that the surrounding fence had recently been restored and a work party will be arranged to clear the path and surrounding area.

Next full FW work party will take place on Thursday 9th June at Start Hill.

New guidelines on fire arrangements will be issued in time for Autumn work parties.

With regard to drainage problems at several sites along the FW, Tom said that appropriate and effective action was still being considered.

The large sign in the garden at Rayne Station was in a poor condition and Country Parks do

not have the funds to repair or renew it. Stan said that the Booking Hall Café had agreed to pay for materials and Tom was asked whether there would be any objections from Country Parks to the Friends doing the work. Tom said in principle they probably wouldn't but the new sign would have to use the station colours, ie green and cream and any changes to the wording shown on the sign would need to be agreed before any work was done.

Railway Carriage report

Pam continued to maintain rota for stewards and good coverage was currently being achieved.

Dunmow Beavers group had held a meeting in the carriage which everybody had enjoyed and they very kindly decided to raise funds for the Friends. In February and April, a sponsored cycle ride along the Flitch took place which raised a magnificent £253. Wendy will send a letter of thanks.

A request to hold a meeting in the carriage on the evening of 14th July had been made by Wethersfield local history group and agreed by Stan who had also agreed to give a talk. Stan reported that, unfortunately, he was now not able to keep that date. He will speak to the group to try to re-arrange the meeting on another evening.

Following a request at the AGM, Stan reported that John had fixed a Perspex cover over the model railway control panel which would prevent visitors from touching the switches on the panel.

The meeting acknowledged the maintenance and repair work done on the model railway by Brian and Roy who did so each Wednesday.

New website design

Secretary said that she had been making enquiries into enabling online donations to be made via our website and had found the Small Charities Coalition website to include lots of useful information, including donating. A BT site, 'Mydonate' seemed relevant for Friends, allowing for Gift Aid and with only a small deduction from each donation. Treasurer asked for action on setting matters up to be delayed until Friends new bank account was set up.

Wood processing

No income from wood sales had been received in the last financial year due to being unable to process cut timber at Great Notley because of a lack of space to do so. A suggestion had previously been made that space might be available on the allotment site at Rayne and a visit with Tom to survey the area will be made. Access and storage of wood waiting to be processed could be a problem.

Any other business

Val said that Butterfly Conservation were arranging a field trip to Dunmow Cutting on Saturday 12th June, looking at butterflies and orchids. Friends would be welcome to come along.

Stan commented that the grassed area at Rayne Station badly needed cutting. In addition, the fallen tree needed to be removed. Volunteers had cleared as much of the tree as they could without power tools but the remaining trunk needed chain-sawing. Wendy will write to Tom about the grass cutting and tree clearance.

Next meeting

Arranged for Monday 1st August, 7pm in the carriage.

There being nothing further to discuss, Alan thanked Wendy and John for their hospitality and brought the meeting to a close.