

## **Friends of the Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands**

### **Notes from Annual General Meeting**

**Date** Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**Venue** Discovery Centre, Great Notley Country Park

#### **Persons present**

Trustees and committee members: Stan Davies, Wendy Moss, Pete Lane, Ann Lane, Andrew Bloomfield, Claire Malone-Lee.

Rangers: Steve Bunn, Tom Hamilton, Claire Jones, Duncan

P3 & PROW: Lisa & Janet

Special Guest: Mary Smith

13 members of the Friends

Chairman welcomed everybody and introduced the Trustees to the meeting.

An entertaining and informative presentation on orchids by Mary Smith, a local botanist then followed which was appreciated by all.

After a short break for refreshments, Claire Malone-Lee gave the meeting an update on the survey of the Flitch Way flora currently being undertaken by Sheila Bearham with assistance from volunteers. Claire said that the last full survey had also been done by Sheila 13 years previously and, to date, 5 days had been spent on the current exercise. A request for others to become involved was made, particularly in the light of Claire's departure from the group at some stage in the future. Different survey methods were discussed by the meeting, the consensus being that a full survey would be preferable to a more piecemeal exercise.

Acceptance of the Minutes of the 2008 AGM were proposed by Keith Hind and seconded by John Moss. Agreed unanimously.

Treasurer's report was made by Pete who distributed copies of the Charity's balance sheet. Copies of the full accounts were also made available for members' scrutiny. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Wendy, seconded by Sid and accepted unanimously.

An explanation of entries was given by Pete who also spoke on the various grant applications which had been made or were pending and how monies arising from them had been spent.

Secretary's report was given by Wendy who thanked everybody who helped her by contacting her each week regarding attendance at work parties. Reference was made to the terrific amount of work done by volunteers on the Flitch Way, in woodlands and at Great Notley. A number of wildlife surveys had also been done during the year.

Wendy gave details of membership numbers and distributed copies of the work programme to mid July. Wendy echoed Claire's request for more people to get involved in the survey and asked for anybody who was interested to contact Claire or herself.

Ann gave the meeting details of work undertaken on behalf of Parish Paths Partnership since June 2008, illustrated with a slide show, as follows:

- 22 Footpath surveys
- 57 way markers installed
- 9 lost footpaths re-opened
- 1 very large fallen tree removed

- 2 bridges installed and 1 repaired
- 6 new handrails installed
- 3 kissing gates installed
- 1 new stile installed, 3 removed, 3 cleared, 1 stabilised
- Several miles of general clearance and any finger posts and way markers on these paths

Jim, Pat, Andrew, Pete and Ann attended a by-way clearance day at Moreton nr Ongar organized by PROW team.

Pete and Ann had attended P3 AGM at Tiptree

P3 members attended the annual walk arranged by PROW team. 7 miles around Fairsted ending with a pub lunch.

6 P3 members attended a hedge-planting day at Marks Hall as well as installing rabbit-proof fences around the hedges.

Pete thanked everybody who had taken part in P3 work parties during the year and also thanked Lisa and Janet for their support.

In response, Lisa said that the work done on behalf of P3 by the Flitch Way volunteers was very much appreciated and said that they were the top group in the County. As tokens of that appreciation, Lisa presented Pete and Ann with a Certificate and a cheque for £50.00.

### **Election of Officers and committee.**

Chairman referred to the voting form sent to members prior to the AGM. One change to the form was that Claire was standing down due to her prospective move from Braintree but all other candidates remained as shown, no other names having been submitted to the Secretary. Apologies were tendered on behalf of Jim Cloke and Don Morecombe who were unable to attend the AGM. John proposed the persons shown on the list, with the exception of Claire, be accepted as trustees and committee members for the coming 12 months. The proposal was seconded by Val and carried unanimously by the meeting.

Steve Bunn, manager of the Country Park expressed his thanks and appreciation for the work done by the volunteers. Referring to the work programme handed out earlier by Wendy, he said that because of Ranger commitments at Great Notley during the summer school holidays, it would not be possible to have Wednesday work parties between mid-July and September. In answer to a question from the floor, Steve said that he would endeavour to arrange Saturday work parties during the Winter, perhaps 1 per month.

Stan said that he had been asked by Don Morecombe to put 3 questions to the Country Park manager. The first was in connection with proposed new routes for the Flitch Way around Dunmow. One had come from Lesley Gillman, the other from Dunmow Town Council and Steve was asked which the preferred route from Country Parks perspective was. A lot of discussion ensued and Steve said that while the more direct Lesley Gillman route was his preferred option, a lot of work remained to be done with regard to agreement on signage through the town etc, the outcome of which was that there is unlikely to be an early resolution of the matter and discussion with Dunmow TC continued.

Don's second question was on the possibility of a couple of volunteers splitting from a Wednesday work party working on the Flitch Way and cycling to areas where overhanging vegetation required trimming back. Steve said that he had no concerns over Don's idea provided that it was done as part of a work party under the general supervision of Rangers. He would not be prepared to authorize anybody doing such work independently, however. Although not specifying individual sites, Don had also commented on the number of broken gates or barriers giving access onto the Flitch Way and asked whether they could be replaced by steel barriers of some sort. Steve acknowledged the problem and said that there was an ongoing plan to do so.

There being no further questions from the meeting, the Chairman thanked everybody for attending the meeting. Thanks were also given to all the volunteers who had taken part in work

parties during the year. Particular thanks were due to Wendy for the many unsung aspects of admin duties which she undertook as secretary as well as to Pete and Ann for all the work done on behalf of P3. A display of photographs taken by Andrew during the year had been a feature of the meeting and thanks to him was also expressed. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Steve and his team of Rangers for their support during the year. At the time of the last AGM, concerns had been voiced that work on the Flitch Way could suffer as a result of the resources being put into the development of Great Notley. That had not happened with the majority of work parties taking place on the Flitch Way, Stan said, and it was fair to say that the volunteers had seen more of the Rangers and their manager since Steve's arrival than had happened previously.

The meeting was then brought to a close.