

Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 2 December 2024, Great Notley

Taking part: Alan Trigg (Chair), Stan Davies (Vice-chair), Margaret James (Treasurer), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), and Committee members Bob Wright, Wendy Moss, John Moss, Dick Hughes, Tom Hamilton (Ranger)

Apologies for absence: Andy Hobster

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

Approval of Minutes of 9 September 2024 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP28.8 Bob is managing the offer of funds from Little Canfield to improve the High Cross Lane path and area. The parish council have agreed the funding and appointed a local contractor with public liability insurance. The 2 information boards have been printed and now need the frames made.

AP30.1 Dick to proceed with his kind offer to purchase a strimmer for the group.

AP 30.2 Sandra to ask Great Hallingbury PC if they would fund a replacement bench near the footpath crossroads.

AP 30.3 Alan to apply for a £2000 grant to replace 2 hedge trimmers, one of which has stopped working.

AP 30.4 Sandra to set up ticketing and produce posters ready for ticket sales starting 26 October.

AP 30.5 Magaret & Wendy will organise 160 Santa presents to allow for a few walk-ins.

AP 30.6 Alan will source some holly for 4 December

AP 30.7 Wendy to arrange a decorating event on the weekend of 7 and 8 December.

AP 30.8 Wendy to ask for volunteers to help set up and run the event.

AP 30.9 Alan will run the tombola

AP 30.10 Sandra to check Zettle payment system

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

None

New Actions:

AP 31.1 Dick to expand his original email outlining the surface problem and what needs to be done to rectify the surface based on his many years' experience in the industry.

AP 31.2 Sandra to contact the local Essex Bridleways Association representative to discuss the surface condition.

AP 31.3 Sandra to contact Mark Coletta and request funding for three additional benches in Takeley ward.

AP 31.4 Sandra to write to Mary Cunningham thanking her for her funding support.

AP 31.5 Sandra and Magaret to meet in January to start to assemble spreadsheet.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

It is with great sadness that since our last meeting Carl Blamire passed away – he was a long serving original member of the Friends. He was a very friendly and interesting character who spent many hours volunteering on the Flich Way and P3 Groups over the years. His knowledge of Dragonflies, Orchids and nature in general was immense and I personally used to love hearing his stories and in depth detail of nature. He will be sadly missed. We send our love and condolences to Val at this sad time.

We have held work parties at The Dunmow Cutting, Great Notley Discovery Centre, Felmoors Farm and Felsted since our last meeting. Unfortunately, due to the weather work at the cutting was curtailed as it was too muddy and slippery to continue working on the banks.

Dick Hughes kindly donated a push along Brush Cutter which made its debut at Felmoors Farm on Tuesday 5th November. Training is to be provided for those who wish to use it at future work parties.

I am still waiting to hear about the application for the Groundworks grant which is still under assessment as of Sunday 1 December 2024.

I have now dropped off two bags of holly to Wendy for the Carriage decoration on Wednesday.

Four members and their wives attended a special thank you lunch for volunteers at The Hawthorns on 7 November. It appears everyone enjoyed themselves very much – thank you to Sue and Bob Lucas for stepping in at the last minute.

The Friends were a finalist in the recent Braintree District Volunteer and Active Braintree Awards 2024, and were Highly Commended in the Volunteer Group of the Year award.

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Our current Bank balance as of 29 November is £2,527.64 and our Savings account is £5,673.17. The total in the bank is £8,200.81.

The balance is inflated by the payments made by members for the Xmas lunch. A payment will be made to Weavers after the meal of £645.45, a deposit of £250 already paid.

I have had notification that our insurance renewal is due on the 5 January the payment will be around £483.47 up from £466 the previous year.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

On the 3 September a group of us went to Finchingfield. Following tea, cakes and an informative talk in the Guild Hall we were shown around the village with many interesting places being pointed out to us. Many of the houses have Georgian facades with Elizabethan interiors. We then went to the Fox on the Green for a drink in the sun followed by a wonderful lunch.

On the 13 December, 31 of us will be going once again to Weavers for our Christmas lunch and get together, I'm sure we are all looking forward to it.

In the new year Wendy and I will be looking into arranging more outings for the following year.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 960 web page visits and 1,523 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,303 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/24/2682/SCO Land to the north of Taylors Farm, Takeley for a 27.4 ha industrial area. The local Parish Councils have pointed out the potential impacts on the Flitch Way and Hatfield Forest. I anticipate a full planning application in future.
- UTT/24/2242 Land to the west of Station Road, Takeley for 68 houses by Bellway Homes. It does include a buffer zone. We have commented. It is awaiting decision.
- UTT/24/2347 Takeley Station House. Conversion to 1 one bed flat and 1 two bed house approved on 4 November 2024. The existing appearance will be retained.
- UTT/24/1198 Land to the south of Smiths Green. Previously 37 houses were dismissed at Planning Appeal stage. This application for 15 houses is on half the land and does include a buffer. We have objected. Awaiting decision.
- Former Winfresh banana depot now being used by UDC. Awaiting update from park rangers regarding the path routing.
- UTT/23/2964 Land at Highwoods Farm, Butleys Lane for 14 houses has gone to appeal in October. Awaiting decision.

- UTT/18/2574/OP No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development. Their S106 obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Butleys Lane and Ongar Road which runs parallel to the A120. No change since last report.
- UTT/22/3470/OP Land north of Baynard Avenue Flitch Green for 72 houses. Planning was refused in November 23 and an appeal made dated June 24. A one day hearing will be held on 4 December 24.
- 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. No change since last report.
- 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. No change since last report.

Wendy Moss - Work Party report

Since our last meeting in September we have carried out 17 work parties with an average of 8 volunteers turning up. We carried out our yearly visit to Dunmow cutting clearing the wildflower banks then several visits to Great Notley opening up views around the lake and finally working at Felsted at Felmoors farm and Flitch green. The new volunteers we have acquired seem to enjoy the work and have continued to come along which has helped the numbers in recent weeks.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

569 visitors have visited the Carriage on 30 occasions since the September meeting, 17 mornings and 13 afternoons. Donations and sales amounted to £85.47.

Volunteers manning the Carriage have been Stan on 14 occasions, Kevin 8, Lloyd and Gwyneth 3, Barry and Ros 4 and Alan H 1.

The lack of a weekday volunteer clearly makes a difference to numbers but recent poor weather has also contributed to the lack of visitors. There is little prospect of attracting new volunteers for the Carriage at this time of the year and no results have been seen from the recent re-advertising for somebody to repair the bodywork.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

September – Clear footpaths in Hatfield Broad Oak and Great Hallingbury, clear footpath, repair and install 2 bridges and a waymarker Post in Great Bardfield.

October - Clear Bridleway and footpaths in Braintree, Clear Bridleways in Little Clacton and Fairstead.

November – Clear Bridleway in Mashbury, clear footpaths in Colne Engaine, Greenstead Green and Stambourne.

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

Running regular work parties has been helped with the arrival of Toby to the ranger team. The last work party will take place on 10 December and Tom is working on a programme for January.

Any Other Business

Restoration of surface near Bannister Green Halt – we have had many complaints about the corrugations and quality of the surface at Bannister Green Halt following the contractors works.

AP 31.1 Dick to expand his original email outlining the surface problem and what needs to be done to rectify the surface based on his many years' experience in the industry.

AP 31.2 Sandra to contact the local Essex Bridleways Association representative to discuss the surface condition.

Bench Replacement and BDC Councillor Community Grant

We discussed funding and replacement bench needs.

AP 31.3 Sandra to contact Mark Coletta and request funding for three additional benches in Takeley ward.

AP 31.4 Sandra to write to Mary Cunningham thanking her for her funding support.

Accounts

AP31.5 Sandra and Magaret to meet in January to start to assemble spreadsheet

Santa in the Carriage

The Carriage will be decorated on Wednesday. Wendy has a full list of volunteers to support the Santa event. To date 138 tickets have been sold for 14 December with only 9 remaining totalling £665.14.

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Monday 10 February at 2.00pm 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.