

Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 03 July 2023, Rayne

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

Apologies for absence: Tom Hamilton (Ranger)

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

Approval of Minutes of 17 April 2023 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP 23.1 Sandra wrote to Takeley Parish council to ask them to fund the replacement bench at Stane Street Halt and this has been agreed.

AP23.2 Info board found for Gatewoods pond.

AP23.5 Sandra confirmed AGM room booking with Tom.

AP23.4 John purchased a battery lawnmower for the area outside the Carriage.

AP23.6 We agreed not to purchase some more Flich Way mugs as the purchase price was too high for us to resell.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP11.1 No update on Countryside development. Sue Wilson has asked Neil Jones about S106 funding for a bridge over the Blackwater (12/01620/FUL) and there is no response. Sandra has had contact with Witham town council asking for their assistance. Ongoing.

AP16.3 Bob has written to SRC quarry and has not had a response and will contact them again.

AP 22.2 Stan has had no success with local panel beaters to repair the Carriage. Sandra will put a post on Facebook.

AP 23.3 Tom to advise on how best to resolve the muddy area outside Rayne Station as the grass is struggling to recover. Josh has agreed to fund grass seed. Ideally rubber grow through mats are required.

New Actions:

AP24.1 Alan will remind the scaffolder when he meets him on 12 July.

AP24.2 Margaret will make a Gift Aid application in August.

AP24.3 Sandra to get 6 A3 volunteer posters printed to help boost volunteer numbers.

AP24.4 Wendy to draft a plan from September to December based on previous years and discuss it with Tom.

AP24.5 Stan will look for the original Dunmow Cutting sign design for Sandra to create a new one.

AP24.6 Sandra to chase Tom for the supplier details whilst we have the parish councils on board.

AP24.7 Graham will take some photos of the sculpture installation and Sandra will contact the Dunmow Broadcast to see if they will run an article.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

Since our last meeting a number of work parties have taken place although slightly reduced due to Tom's availability.

Mr Garnetts statue has now been grounded ready for the new installation.

Still awaiting delivery of some scaffold poles to the Country Park for Bannister Green Halt.

AP 24.1 Alan will remind the scaffolder when he meets him on 12 July.

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Our bank balance, as of 14 June 2023 is current account at £ 7,174.69, and £4,538.92 in our savings account making an overall balance of £11,713.61.

Since the beginning of April, we have received £217.00 in donations from the Carriage.

We agreed to move £3,000 from the current to the savings account to take advantage of the increased interest rates.

AP24.2 Margaret will make a Gift Aid application in August.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

On the 18 July 2023, 25 of us are going to West Stow House in Bury St Edmunds for a tour of the house and gardens and then on to the nearby Guinness Arms for our lunch. This is again from the invitation to view brochure. Hopefully the weather will be good for us.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 1,143 web page visits and 2,045 page views in last month. Facebook has 2,729 followers.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east)

UTT/22/0267 Land at Tilekiln Green Start Hill as a depot for Wren Kitchens. The second application was refused by UDC. A new direct application to the Planning Inspector under Section 62a has been made and the hearing date is 13 July.

UTT/23/1470/OP Stansted Distribution Centre redevelopment including new buildings of over 10m high directly next to Flitch Way.

UTT/21/3272 The Squires 90 houses at Little Canfield. Permission for 90 houses refused on grounds of sustainability and historical illegal dumping nearby. An appeal to the planning inspector has been made. A 1day hearing will take place on 1 August.

UTT/22/3013/OP A reworked application for 14 self-build sites at Highwoods Farm, Buttleys Lane has been submitted. An appeal to the planning inspector has been made.

UTT/23/0918 Round House, Buttleys Lane. Application to build a new house next to the Flitch Way has been refused.

UTT/18/0839/SCO No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development. Their S106 obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Buttleys Lane and Ongar Road which runs parallel to the A120.

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.

UTT/22/3470/OP Land north of Baynard Avenue Flitch Green new application for 72 houses. Raised issues with road safety and asked for contribution as could be part of a Safe route to school. ECC Highways have raised a number of concerns and links and contributions to the Flitch Way have been suggested.

UTT/22/0007 Solar Farm on 114 hectares adjacent to Great Notley Country Park. Objection made. Planning Committee granted permission but still awaiting final decision.

BDC 22/00864/FUL Rayne. Over-55 site for 79 park homes. We requested a contribution and Highways have asked that they provide cycle path access to the Flitch and contribute £20,000 towards surfacing etc. The application has been withdrawn with no intention to re-submit plans. Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – public consultation in Old School Rooms, Rayne Weds 5 July between 4 and 8pm.

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.

Wendy Moss - Work Party report

Since our last meeting in April we have completed 7 work parties, 3 with Tom on the Black water rail trail and the rest on our own in Rayne, Langford Halt and Dunmow cutting. The Rayne work parties were well attended but numbers have diminished recently as volunteers are on holiday or have other commitments. It is also difficult to get tools to the work parties unless Chris Butcher is available to use the trailer or we are only using hand tools. More recently we have been able to work alongside Tom and Richard while they have been working on the trees at Felsted and this week in Rayne. However, once we have completed the Halt and Mr Garnett is in place it will be time to break for the summer we can then resume our activities in September by which time we may be in a better position to formulate a new plan of action.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

The Carriage has been opened to visitors on 40 days for 69 morning or afternoon sessions.

Brian and Richard have attended on 11 Wednesday mornings, looking after the model railway. We have had 623 visitors between 17 April and 2 July. £209.32 has been collected from donations and sales during the same period.

Continuing attempts to find somebody to repair the Carriage bodywork have not been successful. Although he initially said he would do the work, Brett has now decided work commitments at his garage will not allow him to do so. Contact has been made with two further Braintree businesses who expressed interest in doing the work but never followed up that initial interest.

Consideration should now be given to putting something on Facebook to try and attract locals with panel beating or bodywork repair experience.

AP 22.2 Stan has had no success with local panel beaters to repair the Carriage. Sandra will put a post on Facebook.

Despite efforts by the marquee business to stop the considerable accumulation of water in the canopy on the platform, the first rain we have recently had has shown those efforts not to have been successful. Releasing the water from the canopy creates a veritable Niagara Falls, the force of which is damaging the platform.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

April – Footpath clearance in Harlow, Footpath Clearance North Weald,

May - Replace bridge in Clavering, Footpath in Takeley, Bridle Way clearance Matching,

June - Installation of 11 Way Marker Posts at Great Leighs x 3, Felsted x 3, Mashbury x 4 and Pleshey (a record), Footpath clearance Harlow, Footpath clearance Hatfield Broad Oak

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

As I'm sure you are all aware I have been extremely busy on project that have unfortunately restricted my time with the group. I'm about to head into another four week of tree safety work on the Flitch but have got a couple of dates blocked out to do Mr Garnett and the Halt. The first of these is this coming Thursday (22/6) where I'd suggest we get the halt done, just need the poles and I can take the trailer as it's a fair walk from the nursery. May also be good to give it another coat of white as the staining has come through in places. Thursday July 6th is the next date I have with you so would suggest Mr Garnett.

In addition, if there are any willing volunteers to don some waders, there has been a lot of the logs piled around the lakes thrown in and used as a dam on the outflow, it would be great to get these out.

Would there be any interest from those with knowledge of wild flowers in doing some surveys over here at all? (Agreed for 5 July)

Lisa our new upper manager is keen to stress to all groups that we are happy to work with groups to help facilitate working on their own where needed. This is all ok in most of the parks but we have the large issue of transporting tools to and from various sites of course. Going forward I am happy to take more people through the hedge cutter competency and even a strimmer one too but these I think will rely on first aid provision but again, I can look at further people there as I know Chris B was interested.

Any Other Business

Local History Event. At the invitation of Braintree Library, Stan attended what was described as a 'local history day' on Saturday 27 May, scheduled to run from 10m to 4pm, talking to visitors and with presentations on the history of the railway in the morning and afternoon. A lot of time and effort was put into preparation for what turned out to be a waste of time. The only visitors he spoke to were Pete and Ann Lane who were quite familiar with the subject.

In view of the lack of interest (and visitors), his visit was brought to a halt at Noon.

Very frustrating and a lesson for the future.

Takeley Beavers Bob Wright met 15 Beavers from the 1st Takeley group on 23 June enjoying an evening on the Flitch Way. They picked litter, learnt about the history and experienced nature. A good time was had by all.

Work party size and attendance. We discussed volunteer numbers on work parties and agreed the lack of formal plan meant that people were often not available at a few days notice. A workparty will be needed to replace the damaged signs near Great Dunmow (legs missing) and the missing sign in the cutting. Some of the access points are also getting overgrown and need some attention.
AP24.3 Sandra to get 6 A3 volunteer posters printed to help boost volunteer numbers.
AP24.4 Wendy to draft a plan from September to December based on previous years and discuss it with Tom.
AP24.5 Stan will look for the original Dunmow Cutting sign design for Sandra to create a new one.

Little Dunmow and Takeley bench replacement. The parish councils have both agreed to fund a bench and LD will work with us to create an information board.
AP24.6 Sandra to chase Tom for the supplier details whilst we have the parish councils on board.

Garnetts wood statue. Installation has been agreed with the carver for Thursday 6th July.
AP24.7 Graham will take some photos of the sculpture installation and Sandra will contact the Dunmow Broadcast to see if they will run an article.

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on 30 August at 2.30pm at Margaret's house.

There being no further matters to discuss, the Chair thanked everybody for their contributions and brought the meeting to a close.