

Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Wednesday 8 November 2023, Rayne

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

Apologies for absence: Alan Trigg (Chair), Bob Wright, Tom Hamilton (Ranger).

The Vice-chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Wendy and John for being host.

Approval of Minutes of 30 August 2023 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

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

Closed action as unsuccessful with contact.

AP 25.1 Margaret knows someone who has agreed to come and evaluate the work on the Carriage and will report back. This action has been merged with AP22.2.

AP25.2 Sandra to discuss Santa ticketing with Josh. Completed.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP11.1 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.

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

AP24.5 Stan has given the original Dunmow Cutting sign design to Sandra to create a new one. Ongoing.

New Actions:

AP26.1 Wendy to contact Honeycomb storage about storing the people trailer. If this is unsuccessful we can also approach Slamseys farm

AP26.2 Need to finalise bench locations and installations with Tom.

AP26.3 Stan will keep trying to upload the Charity accounts. Ongoing.

AP26.4 Wendy to send out a Santa request for help email to the volunteers.

AP26.5 John will obtain a bag of salt to use on the platform if icy.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

Since our last meeting we have held a number of work parties at the Dunmow Cutting and Felmoors Farm.

The saga of the scaffold poles continues.

Nice to see the grass growing opposite the platform – A job well done

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Our bank balance, as at 6 November 2023 is current account £ 1,917.33, and savings account £7,549.65 making an overall balance of £9,466.98. We have received year to date £694.37 from Carriage donations.

Josh Meehan has given us £100.00 towards the cost of laying the new grass at Rayne Station which covered the cost of the top soil and grass seed. The Friends paid for the Grid/Paving Turf Protectors at a cost of £227.12 minus a £42 refund for faulty panels.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

On the 2 October 2023 we visited Columbine Hall which is a medieval manor house rising from a spectacular moat. Followed by lunch in The Shepherd and Dog, again this was enjoyed by everyone who went.

Christmas is fast approaching and so is our meal at Weavers. We have at present 33 going so there is still room for anyone else who wishes to go please let me know with your menu choices as fast as possible

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 940 web page visits and 1551 page views in last month. Facebook has 2,831 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.

UTT/21/3272 The Squires 90 houses at Little Canfield. Permission for 90 houses refused on grounds of sustainability and historical illegal dumping nearby. I spoke at the Planning appeal on 1 August. Awaiting decision.

Former Winfresh banana depot now being used by UDC. I met with local councillor Geoff Bagnall and UDC are amenable to a safe route alongside the depot which will avoid the narrow lane. A site meeting is required in the autumn with Tom. Ongoing.

UTT/22/3013/OP A reworked application for 14 self-build sites at Highwoods Farm, Buttleys Lane has been submitted. The planning inspector dismissed the appeal on 18 September.

UTT/18/0839/SCO No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development. Local Councillor Susan Barker is quoting a date of 2025 for the associated new school.

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. The full application has been submitted to direct to the Planning Inspectorate and a decision is now due 16 January 2024.

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. Awaiting decision.

UTT/22/0007 Solar Farm on 114 hectares adjacent to Great Notley Country Park. Objection made. Planning Committee granted permission 5 September 23..

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.

BDC 23/01880/OUT Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – 74 houses directly next to the Flitch Way. Objection made as this sits on land where planning has been refused previously by the Secretary of State. Planning strongly refused on 18 October 23.

Wendy Moss - Work Party report

On 12 September we returned to our autumn winter pattern of work parties with Tom. To date we have completed 13 work parties. We have finished raking the banks at the Dunmow cutting and just last week started work on the Flitch Way at Felmoors Farm cutting the banks and hopefully we will be doing some ditch clearing there. Some weeks the weather has been so wet and windy that we have needed to cancel at the last minute. Unfortunately our volunteer turn up has been much lower in numbers with an average of 6.5 compared to the usual 9 so we do need to think of ways to increase recruitment of new volunteers.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

The Carriage has been open to visitors on 32 occasions since the last meeting, 27 mornings and 27 afternoons, mainly at weekends but also on weekdays during the recent half term. Brian and Richard have also covered 9 Wednesday mornings during the period. No new volunteers have come forward but with the poor weather conditions that have prevailed, that has not presented a problem in covering opening times. That situation may change should any of the current regular volunteers be unable or unwilling to continue.

There have been 522 visitors since the last meeting with donations and sales of £196.03.

Given the recent bad weather, volunteers' discretion has been applied in allowing food and drink to be consumed in the Carriage with the proviso that (a) visitors ask permission to do so and (b) they remove their 'stuff' and leave the place tidy.

The Carriage was also used for a student photo project.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

September – Clear Footpath in Bocking, clearance of Byway in Benfleet, clear Footpath in Braintree.

October – Clear Bridleway in Birchanger, clear Footpaths in Braintree and Bradwell, clear Footpath and install way marker post in Lt Baddow, clear footpath in Elsenham.

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

Most updates provided in other sections. Countryside have appointed Richard Cottis as the new lead for the work on the Blackwater Rail Trail. Sandra and Tom plan to meet him in November or December.

Trailer repairs have been approved by insurance, it will be collected, repaired and returned. It will also have a service while there. Going forward I will need to think about where to store it.

Tom had also requested support for a volunteer day on 17 November and Sandra, Wendy, John and Stan will support wearing our “greens”.

AP26.1 Wendy to contact Honeycomb storage about storing the people trailer. If this is unsuccessful we can also approach Slamseys farm.

Any Other Business

Little Dunmow and Takeley bench replacements. The benches were delivered in September. AP26.2 Need to finalise bench locations and installations with Tom.

Charity Commission Accounts. Stan has been unable to upload the latest accounts due to a system error at the Charity Commission.

AP26.3 Stan will keep trying to upload the Charity accounts. Ongoing.

Shalford Parish magazine have asked for an article and Sandra will draft it in January.

Santa in the Carriage date. Santa will be in the Carriage on 22 December from 10am until 5pm. 120 tickets have been sold within 48 hours at the cost of £5.00 per child who wishes to receive a present from Santa.

The Carriage will be decorated on 1 December by Wendy, John, Margaret, Val & Carl. Margaret and Wendy have organised 140 presents in total.

Stan will provide tickets which will be used to identify who gets a present.

Sandra will organise the outside music and Wendy the music in the Carriage.

Setup will include three tables, lights, gazebo, trees, reindeer, tombola and the nail game.

We are looking for volunteers to help on the day. Please contact Wendy if you can help.

AP26.4 Wendy to send out a Santa request for help email to the volunteers.

AP26.5 John will obtain a bag of salt to use on the platform if icy.

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Monday 22 January at 2.30 at Sandra's house.

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