

Friends of the Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 9 September 2024, Great Notley

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

Apologies for absence: Margaret James (Treasurer),

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

Approval of Minutes of 17 June 2024 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP28.10 Tom confirmed that a risk assessment and competency documents will be needed for the new strimmer.

AP29.1 Margaret to contact EDF to arrange a refund and switch to variable direct debits.

AP29.2 Alan to take a meter reading and switch off all power and monitor to see if we have leakage.

AP29.3 Wendy to arrange for an electrician to check the wiring.

AP29.4 Sandra to create two boards at Little Canfield picnic area. One around the links to the Countess of Warwick and the other about the banana sidings.

AP29.5 Dick will draw up a drainage plan for Dunmow Cutting.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP28.8 Bob to manage the offer of funds from Little Canfield to improve the High Cross Lane path and area. A meeting is due to take place next week with Jeremy Fulcher.

New Actions:

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

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

It is with great sadness that since our last meeting Derek Atkinson passed away – he was a friendly and knowledgeable character who spent many hours volunteering in our railway Carriage chatting to visitors and raising funds for our charity. He will be sadly missed.

We have held work parties at various locations since our last meeting including putting in bases and installing 4 new benches near Little Dunmow and Takeley, Clearance around Rayne Station from Warners Close to Gatewoods Pond, Cut back verges from Mill Lane bridge to Gatewoods Lane, Clear Byway in Felsted, Clear verges in and around High Cross Lane East,

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

As at the end of August our bank balance is current account £2,596.87 and savings account £5,659.27, making a total of £8,256.14. The interest in the savings account for August was £6.74.

Due to my house fire all records have been lost my computer is a melted mess!!

I have spoken to Dawn who assures me we will be able to recreate the records for this financial year.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

16 of us went to Finchingfield on Tuesday 3rd September, We very much enjoyed the talk in the Guildhall and then a walk round the village. The sun came out and we were able to enjoy a drink overlooking the village green before enjoying a wonderful lunch at the Fox on the Green.

Our Christmas lunch is booked for the 13th December details and menu will be coming out to you soon. Again, due to the fire all left over presents for Santa along with the sacks are lost.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 1086 web page visits and 1898 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,269 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/24/1198 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.

Former Winfresh banana depot now being used by UDC. Awaiting update from park rangers.

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. 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 has now been made dated June 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 we have carried out 9 work parties with an average of 7 volunteers turning up. Apart from the ones to install the benches with Tom we have worked on our own in a variety of locations where poor access had been reported cutting back verges and generally tidying up the locations where possible. A new map has been installed at High Cross Lane to replace the vandalised one, this is the second one that we have replaced just one to go at Stane Street, and the sign that was pulled out at High Cross Lane has been stabilised again. Attendance at these ad hoc work parties continues to have a good turn up rate so we have been able to make a good job of the clearance work. The new volunteers we have acquired seem to enjoy the work and have continued to come along which has helped the numbers on occasions. John has made up several of the vandalised information boards from different locations and they now have the metal fittings on them it would be good to have a plan to get these put back perhaps in the new year if not before.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

The Carriage has been open to visitors on 39 occasions since the June meeting, consisting of 29 morning and 12 afternoon sessions. In addition, Brian and Richard have attended on 12 Wednesday mornings, looking after the model railway and undertaking maintenance on the outside of the Carriage.

We have had 812 visitors since 17 June and £93.95 has been collected from donations and sales during the same period. The sessions have been covered by 7 volunteers, Stan, Kevin, Richard, Lloyd and Gwyneth and Barry and Ros.

The recent death of Derek has had an obvious effect on results from the Carriage in terms of both the number of days we have been able to open as well as the donations received during the many weekday hours he put in since joining the Friends in 2018. It was good to see a good turnout of Friends at Derek's well attended funeral in Dunmow. It was Derek's wish that any donations made at his funeral be given to the Friends and although the full amount is not yet known, the money given may be used to cover the costs of repairing the DCC Steam Loco.

Derek was a popular and knowledgeable character, well liked and respected by visitors to the Carriage and to the Café alike. He will be sadly missed.

There are no signs of new volunteers joining the Carriage team. One person recently came forward but was found to be unsuitable. It is pleasing to report, however that we have been able to open on every Saturday and Sunday during this reporting period.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

June – Clear footpath in Colne Engaine,

July - Clear Bridleway in Birchanger, Footpath clearance Rivenhall and Silver End,

August - Footpath clearance Silver End, Great Horkesley, Hatfield Broad Oak, Great Hallingbury and Hempstead. Repair footbridge in Panfield,

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

In general it's been a busy summertime with customers and staff holidays very much reducing staff crossover time.

Path around Easton Lodge, no progress as yet but Tom and Claire Bunn should now have time to discuss it further.

Bench replacement - We have no central plan for replacing benches as with other parks. Other parks seem to receive more interest in memorial benches with some having a waiting list.

Work party schedule - Wendy now has a full plan for September, we have some logistical challenges with transport to overcome so further program is in the pipeline.

Path surfacing following UK Power Networks install near Felmoors. UKPN have agreed in principle to instruct their contractor to remove the current surface and replace with a suitable clean (free of glass, porcelain etc) and smooth path. Discussions are still ongoing.

Any Other Business

Vandalism to the information boards – we hope the new method of making boards with metal legs should reduce the level of vandalism.

Bench replacement – there is no formal bench replacement program in place with the Country Park team.

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

Funding grants – Suitable areas for funding include hedge trimmer replacement and the fencing around Gatewoods pond at Rayne

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

Santa in the Carriage event will be on 14th December between 10 and 4.30, priced at £5.

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

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Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on 2 December 2024 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.