

Friends of the Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Wednesday 14 September 2022, Rayne

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

Approval of Minutes of 18 May 2022 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP20.1 Sandra to submit planning comments for park home development in Rayne and ask for contribution. Done.

AP20.2 Alan to get the final 2 or 3 scaffold poles to finish off Bannister Green renovation.

AP20.3 Tom to confirm if he has any white barn paint.

AP20.4 Stan has reminded Peter Lane twice about availability of funds to buy required tools etc for P3 group. He is aware of funds and will order and claim from Friends funds rather than submitting a grant application.

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 Sandra has followed up with an email to see how we can move forward.

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

AP20.5 Sandra to contact Susan Barker about alternative funding for wooden statue in Garnetts Wood. No response received from Susan Barker. In view of the healthy bank balance, decision taken to fund Mr Garnett statue from Friends funds rather than through a grant application. Graham to pursue for statue only, no bench at this stage.

New Actions:

AP 21.1 Margaret will transfer £500 to our savings/contingency fund from current account.

AP 21.2 Wendy has written to volunteers and will prepare an article for the next Parish magazine to try and recruit more stewards.

AP 21.3 Wendy to issue work party email to volunteers.

AP 21.4 Wendy will send email asking for volunteers on the day.

AP 21.5 Stan to advise Booking Hall café of date.

AP 21.6 Stan to revamp signs for end of Carriage.

AP 21.7 Wendy & Margaret to purchase presents including soft toys for infants.

AP 21.8 Sandra to set up online ticket sales and posters ready for half term.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

Hope everyone has had a good summer and been able to get away. Since our last meeting a number of work parties have taken place at the Blackwater Rail Trail, Rayne Station, Stebbing Road ramp, Little Dunmow, Felsted, Bannister Green Halt and Great Notley Discovery Centre. We now appear to be getting back to a new normal.

A small group of Friends manned a water station supporting the 17 July Felsted 10k race organised by Grange Farm & Dunmow runners.

The group visit to the Epping Ongar Railway organised by Margaret and Wendy was a great success.

No further update on contact from the previous roofer – very unlikely that we will see any refund now as so much time has passed.

Thank you to all volunteers. We have also taken delivery of the beater trailer which should help on the more remote work locations.

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Our bank balance as of 1st Sept is £8,892.29 in our current account with £4,011.41 in our savings account making an overall balance of £12,903.70. We have received £9.74 this month and £7.75 in May from Amazon. We applied for this year's Gift Aid and received £208.38

The collections in the Carriage this year so far amount to £379.57.

AP 21.1 Margaret will transfer £500 to our savings/contingency fund from current account.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

The trip on the Ongar railway was a lovely day out enjoyed by everyone who went. It was a good chance to catch up with old friends

17 went to Stanstead Bury on 12th Sept followed by an enjoyable lunch in the Jolly Fisherman in Ware.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics - 1,528 web page visits and 2,888 page views in last month. Facebook shows 2,318 'likes', up 82 since the May meeting.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east)

FWAG and cycle groups in Bishops Stortford are making progress on agreeing funding for route creation between Bishops Stortford, the Flitch and the airport. Over the summer the FWAG group walked the route from Bishops Stortford which runs to the south of the golf course and uses tracks and footpaths to Start Hill. The local landowner has been approached and is amenable to a route. It is still early days but it is encouraging.

UTT/22/0267 Land at Tilekiln Green Start Hill as a depot for Wren Kitchens. Awaiting decision.

There is large amount of local opposition.

A member of the public has alerted us to encroachment and fly tipping from several of the smaller developments near the forest at Takeley. Tom has asked ECC land agents to intervene.

UTT/21/1683 Takeley Station creation of 5 bed HMO and new house. Applicant has appealed the decision refusal. No additional comments made. Awaiting inspectors decision.

UTT/21/3272 The Squires 90 houses at Little Canfield. Awaiting decision. Highways have supported our request and have asked for £56,150 for surfacing, drainage etc and a single access to the Flitch from the development and a single access to the estate and a buffer zone of 25m. They have also recommended running a cycleway parallel to FP33-08 to link the Flitch to Dunmow road. On page 59 of the planning report Highways recommend as Sustainable Transport Contribution, that prior to occupation the payment of £346,500 to improve bus services and contribute to the design and implementation of a cycle route between Takeley and Stansted Airport. It is to go to the planning committee on 14 September and it has a grant recommendation from UDC.

Geoff Bagnell, local councillor is trying to arrange a meeting with interested parties at the old Winfresh site to discuss the alternative route within their site which will reduce the time spent on High Cross Lane.

UTT/22/0391 Land at Highwood Farm, Buttleys Lane for 14 self-build houses refused and being appealed.

The developers at Staggs Farm have approached us for a meeting but it has been postponed. Their obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Buttleys Lane and Ongar Road.

UTT/21/3596 Moors Fields, Station Road, Little Dunmow for 160 houses was approved at the August Planning committee. The planning obligation includes £86,720 for Flitch Way improvements and £120,000 toward improvements to Cherry Garden Bridge in Great Dunmow. Cycle and pedestrian access on to the Flitch Way to be provided, all before first occupation.

UTT/22/2290 Station House (Felsted) application to demolish station and replace with 8 houses.

We have objected but offered our support for the UTT/19/2921 which would retain the Station House.

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

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. Awaiting decision.

Wendy Moss - Work Party report

Since our last meeting in May we have completed 10 work parties with an average of 8 volunteers attending. Most of the work was on sections of the Flitch Way cutting back verges and improving

access, mending fences and rebuilding the halt at Bannister green including producing and installing 2 new interpretation boards there.

We have also carried out some work at Great Notley removing invasive weed from the lake. We have received 4 new members applications since April, two of these wish to volunteer.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

Litter picking station up and running. All costs covered by BDC grant funding

Since May meeting, carriage has been open for 99 morning or afternoon sessions.

7 volunteers covered the sessions with Derek continuing to be the main volunteer, covering 59 sessions. Following comments made to café staff about the Carriage being closed, further notices have been posted at carriage doorways explaining shortage of stewards and asking for volunteers. There have been 715 visitors and £225.39 collected from visitor donations and sales.

Blown window still awaiting replacement.

Some concern at carriage opening in the future should Derek be unable to act as a volunteer for any reason.

AP 21.2 Wendy has written to volunteers and will prepare an article for the next Parish magazine to try and recruit more stewards.

Stan Davies - Footpath group (P3) report

18 May. Bridge replacement and footpath clearance at Fairstead/Essex Way Steps installed at Bradwell.

1 June. 2 wooden stiles removed, steps replaced and footpath clearance at Wendens Ambo. Footpath clearance at Clavering.

15 June. Bridge replacement and waymarker post re-instated on Saffron Trail at Great Waltham.

22 June. Footpath and bridleway clearance at Bocking.

29 June. Clearance work on overgrown bridleway at Hawkspur Green.

9 July. Return to Hawkspur Green to finish bridleway clearance.

13 July. Help clearing blocked footpath given to Felsted P3 group at Stebbingford. Clearance of bridleway commenced.

20 July. Bridleway clearance continued.

27 July. Footpath clearance at Hatfield Peverel.

10 August. Replaced bridge at Bannister Green. Replaced bridge and installed waymarker post at Lindsell.

17 August. 2 footpaths cleared at Hempstead. Bridge repaired at Rayne.

24 August. Cleared bridleway at Little Dunmow. Footpath clearance at Rayne.

31 August. Replaced wooden stile with metal kissing gate at Little Sampford. Further kissing gate installed, also at Little Sampford.

A variety of tasks undertaken at a number of different locations under sometimes difficult conditions due to high temperatures. Much appreciated refreshments provided to group on a couple of occasions by local residents. Work done by P3 volunteers very much appreciated by users as noted by the comments posted on Facebook.

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

Apologies from Tom for the delay in re-starting work parties due to his heavy workload. Contractors are cutting the banks at Dunmow Cutting and he has cleared the path. Several work parties are needed to clear material from the banks which have been cut. Work parties due to start from 27 September.

AP 21.3 Wendy to issue work party email to volunteers.

Any Other Business

Santa in the Carriage – Although 2021 event had been successful, it was felt that two consecutive days had been too much for volunteers. Agreed to have one day only this year to take place on Saturday 17 December (to avoid Rayne village panto set for Sunday 18th). There will be 2 sessions – 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm with an estimated 60 tickets for each session. Stan and John to share Santa duties. Although price increase was considered, agreed to keep it at £3 in view of economic difficulties.

Agreed Sandra's proposals to give "paid" children a ticket to be shown to the Elf attending Santa.
AP 21.4 Wendy will send email asking for volunteers on the day.
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Next meeting

Friday 25 November to focus on Santa event.

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