

Friends of the Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 16 June 2025, Great Notley

Taking part: Alan Trigg (Chair), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), Margaret James (Treasurer), and Committee members, Wendy Moss, Dick Hughes, Andy Hobster

Apologies for absence: Bob Wright, Stan Davies (Vice-chair), Tom Hamilton (Ranger)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the rangers for use of the room.

Approval of Minutes of 31 March 2025 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP33.1 Sandra to contact The Booking Hall café to provide AGM refreshments.

AP33.2 Sue Baumbach has offered to do the volunteer co-ordinator role and is working closely with Wendy on a handover.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

None

New Actions:

AP34.1 Sandra to invite Sue Baumbach to next committee meeting.

AP34.2 Wendy to order metal parts and contact Pete Lane about spare scaffold poles for Bannister Green Halt information boards.

AP34.3 Sandra to ask Claire to confirm the locations of the four benches which must be in Takeley ward.

AP34.4 Sandra to forward Claire Dick's comments and ask for improvement.

AP34.5 Sandra to ask Claire to for ranger participation at the committee meeting.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

Welcome to the first meeting since the AGM. It was pleasing to recently receive the Rayne Parish Council Citizenship Award 2025 recognising our work along the Flitch Way. Since the last meeting we have held work parties at Dunmow Cutting Boardwalk, Langford Halt, Colne Valley Linear Park and High Cross Lane where we finally were able to use the Brush Cutter donated by Dick Hughes – Wendy to provide further details of these and future work parties in her report. Thanks to Little Canfield Parish Council for resurfacing High Cross Lane Car Park. Thanks to Stan who looked after the children from Hawthorns School for their visit to the Railway Carriage recently. Thanks to Bob and Hilary for undertaking an Orchid count in the Dunmow Cutting – nice to hear the Orchids are still around in decent numbers.

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Bank balance as 30 May was £3,826.02 for the current account and £4,710.44 in the savings account, making a total of £8,536.46. Interest on the savings account this month was £4.26.

We have received from Uttlesford DC a grant payment of £1584.00 for three benches. Also a grant from Braintree DC was spent on a new train model for the Carriage.

The payment to EDF energy in May was £82.09 hopefully this should be less through the summer months.

I plan to submit a GiftAid claim in the coming weeks.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

On the 24 July a group of us will be visiting St Paul's Walden Bury a house lived in by the Bowles Lyon family since 1720. We will follow our visited with lunch in the Rusty Gun. There are places still available if any one wishes to join us.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 1,037 web page visits and 1,887 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,337 followers.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east)

Still awaiting feedback from ECC for someone to manage the S106 contribution from the developer of Moors Fields which should fund the bridge over the river Chelmer and am awaiting a response. The planning appeal for 14 self-build houses at Highwoods Farm, Butleys Lane was dismissed on 2 May 2025. Further details below of all applications:

- UTT/23/1470/OP Stansted Distribution Centre redevelopment including new buildings of over 10m high directly next to Flitch Way. Approved 10 January 25. ECC Highways have included £25,000 for the Flitch Way to improve connectivity with Bishops Stortford. No change since 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. No change since last report.
- 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/25/0539 Land to the south of Stortford Road, Little Canfield. Proposed nursery, soft play area, swimming pool, cafe and versatile learning spaces. Awaiting decision.
- UTT/19/2354 Land to the west of Butleys Lane. Previously 60 homes were granted permission following appeal. The new application seeks to reduce it to 46 homes. Awaiting decision.
- UTT/23/2964 Land at Highwoods Farm, Butleys Lane for 14 houses has gone to appeal in October. Appeal dismissed 2 May 2025.
- 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. Appeal allowed 4 March 2025. Inspector acknowledged the Flitch Way was a non-designated heritage asset. A cycle path to the Flitch way to be created.
- Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm – Andy Hobster is our representative on the consultations and feedback has been given to keep the panels away from the Flitch Way.
- 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 March, we have carried out eight work parties with a recently lower average of 6 volunteers turning up. The numbers are not unusual being as we are reaching the end of our season for working. Two work parties on the Boardwalk at Dunmow clearing verges and rangers removing dangerous trees. Two work parties at Langford halt tidying up the platform and cutting back the verges. Two at Colne valley replacing the handrail and installing new steps. Finally visiting several sites along the Flitch Way replacing old signs and installing some new ones as well. Not a bad result considering the lower numbers of volunteers at this time.

We have had news that the information boards at Bannister Green Halt have been vandalised and need new metal legs.

AP34.2 Wendy to order metal parts and contact Pete Lane about spare scaffold poles for Bannister Green Halt information boards.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

Since the March meeting the Carriage has been open to visitors on 33 days for 32 morning sessions and 11 afternoons. Brian and Richard have also attended on 13 Wednesday mornings.

There have been 969 visitors, the majority of whom have been at weekends, on Saturdays in particular. It is pleasing to note numbers of weekday visitors having increased due to the Carriage being open on more weekdays with days being covered by Geoff and Garry, two new volunteers for the Carriage. The Carriage was also open on recent Bank Holidays and during schools' half term breaks. Volunteers during this period have been Kevin, Stan, Susan, Lloyd and Gwyneth, Barry and Ros, Geoff and Garry.

£196.73 has been received from visitor donations and sales of goods. A substantial number of Railway DVDs were donated this month which will hopefully generate more income.

Funding from Councillor Ann Hook's Local Councillor Grant Scheme was received which enabled an all-singing and dancing replacement diesel locomotive to be purchased for the model railway.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

April – Remove old stile and install new kissing gate and finger post at Ridgewell. Clear ditch on bridleway in Thaxted. Cut back and clear bridleway in Berden. Clear footpath in Ugley. Clear bridleway in Clavering.

May – Clear bridleway in Clavering. Clear footpath in Great Braxted and Kelvedon.

June - Clear footpath in Great Braxted and Kelvedon.

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

No report as Tom unable to attend.

Any Other Business

Little Canfield Waste depot path – Sandra to meet Claire Bunn and Sarah Hodgson on site over the next few weeks

Bench Replacement – We have received funding commitments for new benches from Great Hallingbury Parish Council and for 3 further benches in Takeley ward which were funded by grants from UDC Councillors Sutton, Coletta and Brignall. Orders for all 4 have been placed.

AP34.3 Sandra to ask Claire to confirm the locations of the four benches which must be in Takeley ward.

Restoration of surface near Bannister Green Halt – Dick has ridden the section on his bike and although the surface has been top dressed with granite, the corrugations remain.

AP34.4 Sandra to forward Claire Dick's comments and ask for improvement.

Hedgehog Grove Solar farm – Andy has attend two Community Liaison Group meetings along with Rayne and Felsted parish councils. There was much discussion about the impact on the Flich Way and environmental assessment and access proposals are planned.

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Monday 8 September at 2.00pm at Great Notley Country Park.

AP34.5 Sandra to ask Claire to for ranger participation at the committee meeting.

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