

Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 17 June 2024, Great Notley

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

Apologies for absence: Stan Davies (Vice-chair),

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

Approval of Minutes of 8 April 2024 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP11.1 S106 funding for a bridge over the Blackwater (12/01620/FUL) Sandra and Tom met with BDC Landscape Architect Julia Watts on 8 May to see planned crossing and route. Although it is not using the original railway crossing it will be a big improvement and avoid the busy road section. The S106 has been extended a year.

AP 22.2 Tom spoke with Epping & Ongar museum about the Carriage. The mark 2 model is not suited to welding due to its construction so the best thing is to keep patching it up as required each year.

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

AP26.2 Need to finalise bench locations and installations with Tom. This should start to happen in next month or two

AP28.1 Bob took detailed photos of site with boundary dispute as well as the steps in Church Lane, Little Canfield

AP28.2 Sandra raised a Freedom of Information request for dealings between the developer Weston Homes and Essex County Council at Takeley.

AP28.3 Sandra to send out AGM invites and print membership cards

AP28.4 Sandra to arrange tea, coffee and projector screen.

AP28.5 Sandra to order cake and sausage rolls from Josh for 40 people

AP28.6 Sandra to prepare annual report and AGM draft minutes based on the reports.

AP28.7 Stan to prepare display board which will be used at Rayne Annual Parish Assembly, Dunmow Town Showcase and the AGM.

AP28.9 Sandra and Wendy to provide Bob with costs of information boards.

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. Ongoing

AP28.10 Tom to confirm training and insurance cover needed for strimmer.

New Actions:

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.

Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:

Since our last meeting we have held work parties at Rayne Station, Bannister Green, Langford and Stane Street Halts, White Colne Linear Park, Little Dunmow, Pods Brook, Felsted and Stebbing Road ramps.

Disappointing news about the Weston Homes encroachment – Sandra will update in her report.

Margaret James - Treasurer's report

Our bank balance, as at 5 June 2024 is current account £2,558.91, and savings account £5,638.86 marking an overall balance of £8,197.77

In April we transferred from the savings account to the current account £2,000.00. Due to work being carried out at the Station our balance was getting low.
We have now made our claim for Gift Aid and received £214.14 from HMRC.
Membership fees have now gone into the bank making our balance look better, although just over £720.20 of our balance are payments for the outing, which will be paid out soon.
The high cost of energy continues to be a drain on our funds.
We have received £219.57 from Carriage donations since the end for March.

Margaret James - Social Activities report

We have arranged an outing to Mildenhall on Wednesday 3 July of which 26 for us are going, there are still places available if anyone would like to come. It looks to be an interesting day with a ploughman's lunch in the Tudor barn to end the trip.
We have also arranged a trip to Finchingfield Guildhall on the 3 September details of which will be sent out soon.

Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report

Online statistics – 1111 web page visits and 1959 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,236 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/22/2185/FUL Land at the former Takeley Service Station. The developer Weston Homes has breached the boundary of the Flitch Way to build 8 homes. I have raised a Freedom of Information request for dealings between the developer and Essex County Council ref. ECC16579811 04 24 and ECC16759616 05 24 and the response is extremely disappointing. We have approached the local press to raise awareness as to what has happened.

A public consultation has taken place for Bellway to build 100 homes on land west of Station Road, Takeley next to Bonningtons Farm. It does include a buffer. We have told them we are very disappointed they are trying to build where a Planning Inspector has refused permission. We expect they will apply for planning permission. Ongoing – no change since 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. Tom and I had a site visit with Adrian Webb of UDC and spoke with the tenant of Easton Lodge about options. Tom agreed to speak with the Legal Services team and get things in motion for a safer route.

UTT/23/0918 Round House Butleys Lane have lodged an appeal to build an additional house between the Round House and the Flitch Way. Appeal dismissed 15 April 24.

UTT/18/0839/SCO No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development. Their S106 obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Butleys 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 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.

BDC 23/02722/OUT Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – An alternative layout of 74 houses directly next to the Flitch Way. Objection made. Planning refused by BDC on 2 February 24. Planning appeal to be held on 23 April 2024 and appeal dismissed on 11 June 24.

As a result of the latest successful planning appeal and the acceptance by the Planning Inspector that the Flitch Way is a Non-designated Heritage Asset, I have written to BDC and UDC to ask them to add the Flitch Way to their Local Lists of Heritage Assets.

Wendy Moss - Work Party report

Since 2 April we have carried out 10 work parties to date with an average of 6 volunteers on each work party. We have visited all three halts clearing foliage and repairing fencing etc. We have been continuing to renovate the grassy areas at Rayne station and mend fences there. We have also visited White Colne and the Flitch Way sections at Felsted and Stebbing. Attendance for the work parties continues to be sufficient for the needs of the tasks being carried out during the early summer months. Over the next few work parties we hope to install the new benches along the Flitch Way and maybe install some of the repaired information boards and maps.

Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report

The Carriage has been open to visitors on 22 occasions, consisting of 22 morning and 13 afternoon sessions since the meeting on 8 April. In addition, Brian and Richard have attended on 10 Wednesday mornings, looking after the model railway.

We have had 658 visitors since 8 April and £136.53 has been collected from donations and sales during the same period. The sessions have been covered by 6 volunteers, Stan, Kevin, John and Wendy, Lloyd and Gwyneth, Barry and Ros.

Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report

April – Install way marker posts in Kelvedon and Bocking, complete path clearance in Lexden,
May – Clear footpath and install way marker post and repair bridge in Bocking, clear footpath in Braintree and Cressing, clear bridleway in Aldham,
June – Replace 2 bridges and clear footpath in Rayne, Clear bridleway in Aldham.

Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report

Work parties will be reducing over summer and the next few will focus on installing the four benches and information boards. The section at Bannister Green has been surfaced by UK Power Networks and they are paying for a top dressing of granite dust to be laid. Tom hopes to flail the Flitch edges over the coming few weeks.

Any Other Business

Energy cost and usage

Margaret raised a concern about the high monthly payments for energy given our low usage.

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.

Rayne Station. The grassed areas towards the eastern end of the platform show a great improvement thanks to the efforts put in by John to re-turf and re-seed those areas.

Little Canfield re-surfacing and information boards

Bob has made contact with Little Canfield parish council and they are due to meet.

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.

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on 2 September 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.