

Friends of the Fliitch Way and Associated Woodlands
Notes from Committee meeting of Monday 26 January 2026, Great Notley

Taking part: Alan Trigg (Chair), Stan Davies (Vice-chair), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), Margaret James (Treasurer), Committee members, Wendy Moss, Andy Hobster, Bob Wright, Sue Baumback

Apologies for absence: Cheryl Harris, Dick Hughes, Tom Hamilton (Ranger)

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

Approval of Minutes of 10 November 2025 - Agreed by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.

Closed actions:

AP34.3 Sandra to ask Claire to confirm the locations of the four benches which must be in Takeley ward. Update – the benches have been delivered and installed.

AP36.2 Sandra/Alan to approach Vistry to see if they would fund or provide a replacement bench at Langford Halt. Update – They agreed to replace the damaged bench.

AP36.4 Stan to speak to Sandra to see if she knows where we got the last information boards from in view of obtaining a replacement.

AP36.5 Wendy to purchase 10 pairs of Gauntlet gloves.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP36.1 Stan to approach the relevant authorities with regard to obtaining any available grants to replace the damaged Stane Street Halt station sign.

AP36.3 Tom to check on the size of scaffold poles on hand before ordering the clamps as they might be a different size and report back to Wendy.

AP36.6 Sandra to contact Claire Bunn about Highways England regarding the erosion at both ends of Hazlemere Bridge in co-ordination with ECC Rangers

New Actions:

AP 37.1 Wendy to contact Roger Jiggins about out of hours access to the storage unit as there were access issues after the Santa event.

AP37.2 Sandra to invite guest speaker to AGM.

AP37.3 Sandra to add Bob to Facebook admin. Done

AP37.4 Sandra to order replacement information board between Rayne and Clap bridge

Alan Trigg – Chairman’s report:

Welcome all to the January Committee Meeting.

Repair work on the exterior of the Railway Carriage continues – Thanks to Stan and Terry for their excellent work.

It was nice to receive news that the East Anglian Traction Engine Society has offered a very kind donation of £400 to the FoFW following their successful “Saffron Walden Crank Up” event last year. The weather was very kind to us at the 2025 Santa in the Carriage event. Wendy and Margaret will provide further details in their reports – Thank you to everyone for their support in setting up the Carriage and helping on the day and to those who donated prizes for the Tombola and the book stall.

Margaret James – Treasurer’s report

Bank account balance as 13 January 2026. Current account £2,397.88 savings account £4,739.03. Making a total of £7,136.91.

On the 10 December we renewed the insurance for the Carriage, at a cost of £501.94, a slight increase from last year of £18.47.

Santa was a success again, we made £819.39 from the sale of online tickets and £10.00 on the day.

The book stall, tombola and nail game made a total of £118.45.

The presents and wrapping paper cost £179.38. Making the overall balance £768.46. We also had an anonymous donation of £500, £50 from Essex and Suffolk Community and the promise of £400 from Saffron Walden Crank Up.

Margaret James – Social Activities report

Our Christmas meal at Weavers was again a great success everyone enjoying meeting up with old and new friends. The meal was as always beautifully cooked and enjoyed by everyone. We have booked again for next year on 18 December so please put the date in your calendars.

Sandra Reynolds – Secretary's report

Online statistics – 1,156 web page visits and 2,130 page views in last month. Facebook has 3,390 followers.

Aside from the application approval for 8 houses at Buttleys lane. there have been no changes to planning applications since the last report:

- UTT/25/2425 Land at Highwoods Farm, Buttleys Lane for 8 self-build houses with a passing place and footway down the lane. Approved 23 January 2025.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east) awaiting decision

- UTT/25/2786/OP 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. This lies to the north of the B1256 so we have not commented.
- UTT/25/1854/FUL Cranwellian, The Street Takeley. Application to replace existing house and equestrian facilities with 6 houses. It does include a buffer zone. Awaiting decision. No change since last report.
- ESS/16/24UTT An application has been made at the landfill quarry site at Crumps Farm, to redevelop the site and build a 121 industrial units and. Solar farm with the access over the Flitch Way. Awaiting decision.
- Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm – 15 August 25 the company has decided to withdraw their national planning application and proceed via the district planning process – see AOB.

Approved developments with funding for Flitch Way

- 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.
- 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. Approved 11 Nov 25. It includes £40,000 for surfacing and drainage, signage and information boards for section of the Flitch in the vicinity of the site, including the section between the site and the old Takeley Station.
- UTT/18/2574 Staggs Farm Land south of Stortford Road for 332 houses. Work is underway at the site. Includes surfaced bridleway creation and £54,000 for Flitch Way.
- 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.
- UTT/22/3470/OP Land north of Baynard Avenue Flitch Green for 72 houses. A cycle path to the Flitch way to be created.
- BDC 22/03402 Land to the rear of Gilda Terrace for 120 houses. S106 includes £40,000 for Flitch Way. 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 November there have been 12 work parties with the greatest numbers of volunteers (13 – 14) turning up on Tuesdays. On Thursdays there has been a smaller turn up of 5-.

Sadly, because of the awful weather we had a few cancellations but most of those were Thursdays so fewer disappointments.

There were two work parties at Dunmow, cutting out dangerous trees and clearing the boardwalk of vegetation for easy access. One at Great Notley park opening up the lake views and the rest working along the Flitch from Felmoors farm to Mill Lane cutting back verges opening up hot spots for wildlife and cutting hedges to let in the light. Everyone seems to have enjoyed travelling in the trailer buggy which has cut down the walking distance to the site each day.

Susan is doing a sterling job with running the work parties rallying the volunteers and keeping everyone informed with follow up photos and information. We have agreed I will continue to make the initial contact with new volunteers and keep the records from her feedback for the time being. We have gained several new volunteers who have been coming along regularly since starting. The Santa event before Christmas was well attended and I would like to thank all the volunteers who turned up not only on the day to help out but also to deal with decorations in the Carriage before and after the event. I believe everyone enjoyed the whole experience once again.

Stan Davies – Railway Carriage report

Since the December meeting, the Carriage has been open to 638 visitors on 46 occasions, 34 mornings and 12 afternoons. Donations and sales for the period amounted to £179.62. Those figures compare very favourably with those for a similar period last year when we opened on 18 occasions, had 289 visitors and collected £72.12.

The substantial increase in all areas is primarily a result of Garry's commitment to opening the Carriage every Tuesday and Thursday morning as well as Kevin and Stan's regular attendance every Saturday morning and afternoon. A print-out of Carriage opening times is now posted in the Carriage window in sight of visitors. Other volunteers in the period have been Lloyd and Gwyneth, Geoff and John while Brian has attended on 10 Wednesday mornings. Barry has indicated his intention return to volunteering on Sunday mornings following health issues, alternating with Lloyd and Gwyneth. Expressions of interest to volunteer in the Carriage have been made by a couple of individuals, one found to be unsuitable and the other being followed up.

One of the conditions of our receiving approval to our Carriage Planning Application was that it was not to be used as an extension to the Booking Hall Café. It was subsequently clarified with BDC Planning that visitors having refreshments in the Carriage would not contravene that condition if it was part and parcel of their visit to the Carriage museum which is what happens now with the recent poor weather resulting in an increase in the number of visitors taking refreshments inside the Carriage which gives an opportunity for volunteers to spread the word about the Flitch and its history. As part of the process, staff in the café must not send customers directly to the Carriage. Anyone wishing to have their refreshments in the Carriage must ask the volunteer on duty for permission to do so and agreement is at the Carriage steward's discretion. Visitors are expected to remove their mugs etc. when they leave. The Trustees confirmed they were happy for this process to continue.

One of the purposes of our getting the Carriage was for it to be used by the community and it was good to recently welcome a group of teenage special needs pupils from the "Funky Willows" school based near Lakeside.

Some minor finishing work remains to be done on the Carriage bodywork which will be done once the weather improves.

Alan Trigg – Footpath group (P3) report

November – Clear bridleway in Langley, Replace old slats on bridge in Little Easton, footpath and bridleway clearance at Helions Bumpstead and Little Maplestead.

December – Bridleway clearance at Little Maplestead, Clear footpath in Wickford

January – Clear footpath at Beazley End.

Tom Hamilton – Ranger's report

No report as Tom was unable to attend.

Any Other Business

Little Canfield Waste depot path – ECC Property Service have been working with UDC's Adrian Webb and good progress is being made. The next part of the process is for UDC to agree maintenance of the path across their land.

Santa in the Carriage - 165 tickets offered for sale at £5 each on 10 October although there were several purchases in September as the system was live. All tickets were sold by 13 November. Morning 6 x 30 minute sessions between 10.00 and 1.00, 6 no-shows and 2 walk-ins.

AP 37.1 Wendy to contact Roger Jiggins about out of hours access to the storage unit as there were access issues after the Santa event.

Afternoon 5 x 30 minute sessions between 2.00 and 4.30, 7 no-shows and 1 walk-in.

Recommend that next year we do 5 x 30 minute session for both morning and afternoon with each slot covering 17 tickets (170 in total), with lunch between 12.30 and 1.30. The café closes at 4.00. Tickets will be priced at £6 and age suitability set to 7.

Hedgehog Grove Solar farm – Andy reported a meeting was held on 12 January. The site wants access across the Flitch Way and have been in discussions with Essex highways. Current thoughts are to have a minimum of 50m buffer with the Flitch Way. Two separate planning applications will be made in early Feb for the panels and for access to the grid.

AGM planning – We agreed for the AGM to be Friday 8 May and to move to have the speaker after the AGM.

AP37.2 Sandra to invite guest speaker to AGM.

Facebook updates – We discussed who was best place to do work party update posts and Bob Wright kindly put himself forward.

AP37.3 Sandra to add Bob to Facebook admin.

The damaged information board needs to be replaced.

AP37.4 Sandra to order replacement information board between Rayne and Clap bridge

Next meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Monday 16 March 2026 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.