

**Friends of the Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands**  
**Notes from Committee meeting of Wednesday 30 August 2023, Rayne**

**Taking part:** Stan Davies (Vice-chair), Margaret James (Treasurer), Sandra Reynolds (Secretary), and Committee members Graham Dalby, Wendy Moss, John Moss, Bob Wright.

**Apologies for absence:** Tom Hamilton (Ranger), Alan Trigg (Chair)

The Vice-chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Margaret for being host.

**Approval of Minutes of 3 July 2023** - Agreed by all and signed by the Vice-chair.

**Matters arising and review of Action Points from last meeting.**

Closed actions:

AP 23.3 Discussed how to resolve the muddy area outside Rayne Station as the grass is struggling to recover. Josh has agreed to fund grass seed. Ideally rubber grow through mats are required

AP24.1 Alan will remind the scaffolder when he meets him on 12 July.

AP24.2 Margaret will make a Gift Aid application in August.

AP24.3 Sandra to get 6 A3 volunteer posters printed to help boost volunteer numbers.

AP24.6 Sandra to chase Tom for the supplier details whilst we have the parish councils on board.

AP24.7 Graham will take some photos of the sculpture installation and contact the Dunmow Broadcast to see if they will run an article.

AP24.4 Wendy has spoken with Tom and there is a draft work plan from September to December.

Carried forward from previous meetings and ongoing:-

AP11.1 Sue Wilson has asked Neil Jones about S106 funding for a bridge over the Blackwater (12/01620/FUL) and there is no response. Sandra has had contact with Witham town council asking for their assistance. Ongoing.

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

AP 22.2 Stan has had no success with local panel beaters to repair the Carriage. Sandra will put a post on Facebook.

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

New Actions:

AP 25.1 Margaret knows someone who has agreed to come and evaluate the work on the Carriage and will report back.

AP25.2 Sandra to discuss Santa ticketing with Josh.

**Alan Trigg - Chairman's report:**

Since our last meeting a few work parties have taken place including the arrival and placement of the new Mr Garnett statue. It was hard work getting the old concrete base out and positioning the statue in the resultant hole was a task in itself but as usual the Friends of the Flitch Way persevered and the revitalised Mr Garnett now stands proudly in place. Bob Wright has coated the statue with linseed oil to protect it.

The saga of the scaffold poles continues. I arranged for 4 poles to be left at my son's house by the scaffold team on site only for another team to remove the poles 24 hours later – I was not amused.

**Margaret James - Treasurer's report**

Our bank balance, as at 17 August 2023 is current account £3,128.26, and the savings account is £7,549.65 making an overall balance of £10,677.91.

In July we transferred £3,000.00 from our current account to our savings account as we get interest in the saving account, resulting in £6.44 interest this month. We also received £193.12 from HMRC this year's Gift Aid payment.

We continue to receive donation from the Carriage, so far this year we have received £360.72.

We have had a smart meter installed. Alan has negotiated a new contract with EDF, which has a 3 year term. We will be paying for what we use each month resulting in higher bills in the winter and lower in the summer.

### **Margaret James - Social Activities report**

Our trip on the 18 July 2023, to West Stow House in Bury St Edmunds was a great success and we all enjoyed the tour of the house and gardens, we then went on to the nearby Guinness Arms for our lunch which was enjoyed by everyone.

On the 2nd October 2023 we plan to visit Columbine Hall which is a medieval manor house rising from a spectacular moat. Followed by lunch in The Shepherd and Dog. We still have places available, so please contact Wendy or myself if you would like to join us.

Christmas lunch will be on 14 December at Weavers in Bocking and further details will be sent out nearer the time.

### **Sandra Reynolds - Secretary's report**

Online statistics – 1,039 web page visits and 1,798 page views in last month. Facebook has 2,779 followers.

Planning Applications and updates (west to east)

UTT/22/0267 Land at Tilekiln Green Start Hill as a depot for Wren Kitchens. A direct application to the Planning Inspector under Section 62a was refused on 27 July 23.

UTT/23/1470/OP Stansted Distribution Centre redevelopment including new buildings of over 10m high directly next to Flitch Way. Awaiting decision.

UTT/21/3272 The Squires 90 houses at Little Canfield. Permission for 90 houses refused on grounds of sustainability and historical illegal dumping nearby. I spoke at the Planning appeal on 1 August. Awaiting decision.

Former Winfresh banana depot now being used by UDC. I met with local councillor Geoff Bagnall and UDC are amenable to a safe route alongside the depot which will avoid the narrow lane. A site meeting is required in the autumn with Tom.

UTT/22/3013/OP A reworked application for 14 self-build sites at Highwoods Farm, Buttleys Lane has been submitted. An appeal to the planning inspector has been made. Awaiting decision.

UTT/18/0839/SCO No further formal progress on the approved Staggs Farm development. Local Councillor Susan Barker is quoting a date of 2025 for the associated new school.

Their S106 obligation includes the creation of the bridleway between Buttleys Lane and Ongar Road which runs parallel to the A120.

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 is due 10 November 2023.

UTT/22/3470/OP Land north of Baynard Avenue Flitch Green new application for 72 houses. Raised issues with road safety and asked for contribution as could be part of a Safe route to school. ECC Highways have raised a number of concerns and links and contributions to the Flitch Way have been suggested. Awaiting decision.

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

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.

BDC 23/01880/OUT Land south of Springfields and north of Flitch Way – 74 houses directly next to the Flitch Way. Objection made as this sits on land where planning has been refused previously by the Secretary of State. Mentioned in article in the Dunmow Broadcast and Braintree & Witham Times.

### **Wendy Moss - Work Party report**

Since our last meeting there is very little to report as we have only had a couple of work parties where we were completing the installation of Mr. Garnett and a work party with Tom on the Blackwater Rail Trail at Witham cutting back the verges. I understand from Tom that we will be resuming our activities on 12th September (to be confirmed) when we will be working with Tom in the Dunmow Cutting when we will be cutting the banks and raking them as usual. Following that we will move on to the Flitch Way for our usual clearance work. I will be sending out an email shortly to all our volunteers with the details of dates etc.

### **Stan Davies - Railway Carriage report**

The Carriage has been open to visitors on 26 days since the last meeting, comprising 25 morning sessions and 28 afternoons. 21 of those open days have been on weekdays to cover school holidays. Most visitors are seen at weekends, the peak being 79 one recent Saturday and 64 on the August Bank Holiday Monday. In addition, Brian and Richard have done 8 mornings, attending to maintenance on the model railway. There have been a total of 709 visitors since the last meeting with donations and sales of mugs and surplus rolling stock amounting to £159.07. Numbers of volunteers remain low with almost all the sessions covered by Derek, who covers most of the weekday sessions, Kevin French and myself. That doesn't bode well for the future and it is difficult to see where new volunteers will come from.

Efforts to find somebody to attend to the deteriorating bodywork of the Carriage have not been successful. A local bodywork restoration business owner responded to a request posted on Facebook but after visiting the Carriage to assess the work, the opportunity to do the repairs was declined in view of the amount of time the work was judged to take and the effect which that would have on his business. Contact with Colne Valley Railway and East Anglian Railway Museum has been made. The response from CVR was that their volunteers already had enough work to do at their base. A reply from EAR Museum is awaited.

On a positive note, the work done on the platform canopy seems to have done the trick and there has been no recent accumulation of rainwater despite the sometimes heavy rainfall which has occurred since it was done.

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### **Alan Trigg - Footpath group (P3) report**

July – Repairing bridges in Halstead, Sible Hedingham and Finchingfield, Footpath clearance in Harlow area, Footpath clearance at High Ongar, Install Way marker post and cut back at Runwell. August – Install 3 Way marker posts and clear footpath Writtle, repair 2 bridges at Gestingthorpe, clearance at Clavering, install steps at Little Canfield, 1 waymarker and clearance at Little Leighs.

### **Tom Hamilton - Ranger's report**

Most updates provided in other sections. Countryside have appointed Richard Cottis as the new lead for the work on the Blackwater Rail Trail. Sandra and Tom plan to meet him in December.

### **Any Other Business**

**Little Dunmow and Takeley bench replacements.** The parish councils have both agreed to fund a bench and they have been ordered. The supplier will deliver the four benches in September.

**Damage to the People Carrier.** The carrier was being stored at the Country Park behind a fenced area when it was vandalised. It has been reported to the police and the investigation is ongoing.

**Santa in the Carriage date.** Ticket sales normally start after half term (20-27 October) and school holidays start Thursday 21 December. Sandra has spoken with Josh from the Booking Hall café and they may not be open on the following weekend so we agreed to go for Friday 22 December. AP25.2 Sandra to discuss Santa ticketing with Josh.

**Rayne Village Hall Bollards.** Wendy has been approached for help installing bollards at Rayne and we agreed to add to the work programme when we work without a ranger.

**Charity Commission Accounts.** Stan has been unable to upload the latest accounts due to a system error at the Charity Commission. He will keep on trying to upload them.

### **Next meeting**

The next committee meeting will be Wednesday 8 November at 2.30 at Wendy and John's house.

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