

## Friends of the Flich Way & Associated Woodlands

### Notes from Committee meeting of Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

**Venue** Video conference  
**Present** Chairman Alan Trigg, Secretary Sandra Reynolds, Treasurer Margaret James, Committee members, Val Blamire, Stan Davies, Bob Lucas, John Moss, Wendy Moss. Guest, Bob Wright.  
Ranger, Tom Hamilton

#### Minutes of previous meeting of 14 February 2020

Agreed as a true record and signed accordingly by Chairman.

#### Matters arising and review of Action Points

No matters arising from minutes of previous meeting. Action points brought forward as follows:-

**AP7.4** Local Nature Reserve designation - Tom said the LNR has now been officially advertised and designated. ECC Public Relations was planned to happen prior to restrictions but unclear what the timetable is now. It has not yet appeared on the governments mapping system, Magic Map.

**AP7.5** Talking benches. Stan suggested remove from actions as not being actively pursued.

**AP8.3** Sites for new benches and info boards. Sandra to report progress. This is ongoing.

Update from Tom - Benches made in house will be around £100 each constructed of Siberian Larch, this is a rot resistant and stable wood that should have a similar life to oak. Richard B will be doing some for Notley so will be completely set up so would be easy for him to do more at the same time.

**AP10.4** Siting of telephone box at Rayne Station. Stan - ongoing.

**AP10.5** Installation of Nigel's sign at Gatewoods Pond. John to report. - Sign is ready to install with post as well unable to install due to isolation

**AP11.1** Opening up bridge at Langford Halt. Sandra – ongoing and Countryside Properties have committed to produce a costed plan which we could use to seek funding.

**AP11.2** Recruitment of new Ranger. Tom reported no movement at current, maybe next financial year

**AP12.1** Proposed walk organised by Community Rail Partnership. Stan reported date move to 26 July.

**AP12.2** Replacement of damaged gates. Tom reported on hold due to corona virus restrictions.

**AP12.3** Proposed work at Rayne Station area. Wendy/Val to report – Postponed - however primroses and stitchwort are starting to flower

**AP12.4** Provision of hi-viz vests for volunteers. Wendy/Tom to report. Postponed until after the period of isolation

#### Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the last meeting before our AGM.

Good news about the Gladman development appeal against the appeal at Flich Green being kicked into touch. Unfortunately, due to the corona virus outbreak all Work Parties have now been suspended and all Flich Way business is now being dealt with either by phone or online until further notice. The Railway Carriage Museum has also been closed on 17 March 2020 for the safety of visitors and stewards. Thank you to all volunteers for your hard work over the last year – stay safe.

#### Treasurer's Report

Margaret reported the current bank balance to the end of March to be £5,319 plus £3,209 which is in the savings account. The end of year figure may need adjustment when the final bank statement is received. All travel expenses have been paid and cheques sent out. The end of year figures have been completed and will be sent to the auditor for signing off.

#### Social

It is unlikely that the visit to Bardfield vineyard on 11<sup>th</sup> May will go ahead but Margaret has spoken to them and asked to keep the date pencilled in, if not money will be returned.

A provisional booking to visit Copped Hall near Epping on Mon 22 June with coffee, cakes, a tour of Hall plus time in the gardens, followed by lunch in a nearby pub. This is also under review and Margaret will keep us updated.

### **Secretary's Report**

Online statistics - 460 web page visits and 943 page views in last month. Facebook shows 1444 'likes', up 50 since the February meeting.

There were no new housing developments applications. The proposed 80 houses on land north of Canfield Drive, Great Canfield Road UTT/18/3538/OP has been refused on 13 March in part because it could set an undesirable building precedent south of the Flitch Way whereby the site comprises agricultural land. The Gladman appeal against the Planning Inspectors ruling covering 240 houses on land east of Station Road, Little Dunmow UTT/18/3424/OP was over thrown out on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

The Flitch Way Action Group have produced a summary report for the FWAG AGM which shows good progress particularly through the Redrow and Taylor Wimpey developments. Sandra has also been in further correspondence with ECC about the River Chelmer Crossing bridge. Their preferred solution is to build a new bridleway bridge but don't have any funding.

Brian Render has listed a number of items on EBAY to benefit the Friends. Once the item has sold and been paid for, following a cool-off period, the money is transferred to the Paypal Giving fund. They then transfer the money to the Friends Paypal account at the end of month. We have £86 of pending transactions.

Sandra has done a Contact Us audit about setting up a general postal address and to agree if we have the right level of exposure for people's personal numbers. Following discussions with Tom, Sandra has recently added the Rangers office number to the Friends contact page to help direct some of the queries direct to the ranger team.

**New AP13.1** Sandra to investigate setting up postal address in the old post box in the old wash room of the Station House

Philip Broadbent Yale has retired from Sustrans. There is no replacement yet but she been given the contact details of his manager Gwyneth McMinn in the meantime.

### **Flitch Way Work Party Report**

Since our last meeting our volunteers have been working along another section of the Flitch Way near Takeley cutting back and removing dead and overhanging trees and creating a large section of living hedge. It was almost finished when work was stopped because of the corona virus outbreak.

During this period a total of 8 work parties with 106 overall attending with an average of 13.2 each work party. One new volunteer Brendan Hand joined us during this period as well.

### **Railway Carriage Report**

Not a lot to report on. Prior to current closure, volunteers enabled carriage to be open from Thursday through to Tuesday on most weeks so thanks to all those volunteers involved.

Stan shared two estimates for work on the carriage roof, one for £3603, the other for £2144. Malins also indicated they would quote for a rubberised finish and Stan is waiting for that second quote to arrive. At the moment, although it is at a higher cost, Stan favours the quote from Martin Petchey as the preparatory work he proposes is more thorough.

So far as paying for the work on the roof goes, we wait to hear whether the promised refund of £1200 from James the roofer materialises. Whether or not it is received, Stan suggests we apply for a grant and pay part of the cost ourselves. He has spoken informally to Essex Community Foundation who would consider an application and he is happy to prepare an application if it is agreed.

Stan believes the rest of the carriage exterior could be re-painted by volunteers. The work needs to be done this year and Andy Horder has offered to do any work that is required on the bodywork before that is started. We already have some of the paint that will be needed.

### **Footpaths Group (P3) Report**

The work parties shown on Facebook to have taken place since the February Committee meeting as follows:

February - Opening up a footpath in Greenstead Green, two sessions at Blackmore End clearing a footpath and the opening up of a footpath at Skitts Hill, Braintree.

March - three sessions at Greenstead Green to clear byway before Corona virus restrictions stopped work.

### **Ranger's Report**

Firstly, Tom would like to thank all this involved in the winter work program this season, we've managed to complete, against the odds at times, three great projects in Garnetts Wood and on the Flitch Way. As you may be aware things are anything but ordinary at present. Great Notley Country Park was closed along with all other Essex CC country parks on Monday 22nd March until further notice, more info on this can be found at <https://www.explore-essex.com/about-us/coronavirus-information>.

We are currently only carrying out only essential site work but otherwise working from home. Please continue to report anything to Tom at this time.

The future Work Party programme is on hold at present because of the current situation with corona virus. The western end of the Traveller Site was vacated and has since been cleared and blocked off. This includes all plots that border the Flitch Way and the closest ones to Flitch Green. Future plans are for the Site are not clear as yet.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Emails had been sent out to all members, cancelling the face to face AGM meeting as it will be replaced by a video conference for the committee, set for Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020. An AGM report will then be distributed. Sandra reported that all 12 respondents so far had supported the Committees proposals. A further three have confirmed they will be paying by online banking.

### **Any Other Business**

The Committee discussed how to keep peoples spirits up as the social aspect was a key part of the group.

There was no other business.

There being no further matters to discuss, the Chairman brought the meeting to a close at 11.

### **Action points for next meeting**

Carried forward from previous meetings:-

**AP7.4** Local Nature Reserve designation. Tom to report on progress with publicity

**AP8.3** Sites for new benches and info boards. Sandra to report progress.

**AP10.4** Siting of telephone box at Rayne Station. Stan to report progress.

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From this meeting:-

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