

Flitch Way Action Group  
Annual Report  
February 2023

I would like to thank Shaun Pledger for his time and enthusiasm as our Chair and Co-chair. Due to pressure of work and other commitments he has stood down but remains a very valuable trustee. Following a vote, I have now succeeded Shaun as the Chair of the group.

As the Flitch Way project has evolved we have now amended our charitable objectives to include an active travel link between the Flitch Way and the transport hub and airport at Stansted. This link is fully supported by Essex Highways, East Herts Council and Uttlesford District Council and we are grateful to Cllr Lee Scott, Cllr Graham McAndrew and Cllr Louise Pepper for their help. We are especially grateful to UDC for funding an options and feasibility study of the routes from Bishop's Stortford to the Flitch Way and Stansted. This report should be available shortly.

Whilst exploring new routes around Bishop's Stortford I must thank Simon Thorpe and Stephen Skinner from VeloVoice and David Webber from Bishop's Stortford footpath association for their help and support (as well as a very pleasant evening in the Three Willows!)

Recently the Winfresh banana facility in Little Canfield was acquired by UDC for use as a waste depot and various offices. As the Flitch Way skirts around this site the FWAG have been suggesting that this is an ideal opportunity to re-route the bridleway along the side of the site. This would remove a very dangerous “on road” section of the Flitch Way with no pavement, poor visibility and a blind turning. After written representation and two site visits with Mr Ben Brown, Assistant Director Environmental Services UDC, we are hopeful that this may happen and demonstrate the council’s commitment to active travel.

In June last year the group had a very useful meeting with Cllr Lee Scott and Ms Helen Baker. Cllr Scott is fully supportive of the Flitch Way project but added that council funding was very restricted and most of the work on the Flitch Way would have to come via developers from s106 agreements. It was noted that ECC had recently received nearly £10 million for active travel and much of this has been spent in the major conurbations with little for more rural areas. In February 2023 the government announced a further £200 million for active travel, we hope that some of this money is used to redress the imbalance between urban and rural active travel provision. Essex highways are in the process of appointing a new officer who will have responsibility for the Flitch Way, this appointment has now just been made and we are waiting to be introduced.

I feel I must thank the planners at UDC and ECC Highways for including the Flitch Way when deciding on conditions and s106 funding during consideration of significant

developments. This element of funding may be particularly relevant for schemes such as Moors Fields which is obliged to provide a new bridleway bridge over the river Chelmer as well as other works. I note that from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 Active Travel England will be statutory consultees on any development of more than 150 residential units or any large industrial development.

Once we have had time to study the feasibility and options report and the new highways officer has settled in then we should organise a meeting to decide on a way forward. This meeting should include Essex Highways, East Herts Council, Uttlesford District Council and Stansted Airport as well as any other interested parties.

I could not end an annual report with giving heartfelt thanks to our friends and supporters at Essex Bridleways Association and the Friends of the Flich Way. I must also thank all the wonderful members of the Flich Way Action Group, without them none of the achievements so far would have been possible. Finally, a special get well soon to our finance officer Sandra Lloyd.

Dr Stuart Withington  
Chair  
Flich Way Action group

