

Flitch Way Action Group

Chairman's Report

February 2022

Years Activity

It has been another exciting and productive year for the group. I would like to formally welcome Stephen Skinner from the East Herts cyclists and Cllr Louise Pepper from Uttlesford District Council to the group, I am sure they will both prove to be valuable assets.

Due to pressure of work, the Covid pandemic and trying to run one of the largest businesses in Dunmow, Shaun Pledger decided to step down as Chair of our group. Rather than have his talents and influence fade away on the back benches the group decided to make him Co-Chair with his deputy Stuart Withington stepping up to Co-Chair and carry on with most of the day-to-day management of the project.

Despite the changes mentioned above the core members have remained solid and continue to do a fantastic job in driving the project forward. Their efforts and dedication are much appreciated. I should also like to pay tribute to Madeleine Jones, Senior Planning Officer at UDC and Katherine Wilkinson, Senior Transport Planner at ECC for their hard work and persistence in securing the s106 agreement for the route on the Stagg's Farm development.

The Project

The core project for the group remains, to connect the East and West tracts of the Flitch Way through Great Dunmow with a safe, off-road bridleway suitable for all non-motorised users. However, in recent years, both Hertfordshire County Council and Uttlesford District Council have hoped to piggyback their own plans to connect the Flitch Way to Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport in with the groups aims. It is hope that this symbiotic relationship will benefit all parties and result in a quicker resolution of the remaining obstacles. As part of this collaboration a bid for central government funding will be submitted once a new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been produced. In order to inform this plan a survey of needs is underway, this can be found at [Have Your Say Today – Uttlesford LCWIP – Commonplace](#) Please contribute to this survey.

The Route from West to East

Uttlesford District Council via Cllr Louise Pepper have funded a route options study to determine the optimal way to link Bishop's Stortford to the Flitch Way and on to the station and airport at Stansted. It is expected that the work will start in the next few weeks.

High Cross Lane

Uttlesford District Council have purchased the old "Banana Factory" on High Cross Lane and intend to use the site for their refuse lorries and other commercial activities. The site sits on the Flitch Way and UDC have agreed to allow the track to pass through the site and so remove the need to use the

road and obviate a blind junction. The group must ensure that this new track is designated as a Bridleway and not just a footpath as it stands now.

Buttleys Lane to The Brambles.

This section of the route is to be provided by the developers of Staggs Farm and will form an important route to the proposed new development of Helena Romanes School. Recently the s106 funding to secure this route has been agreed but the start date for the development has yet to be decided.

The Brambles to Maynard Park estates

The track has been completed and to a good standard including an upgraded section up to the bridge over the B1256 to New Street. We are grateful to the developers for fulfilling their obligations. Yet to be provided is a safe crossing of the B184 but we believe that Essex Highways are working on this.

Smith's Farm Development

Work on the Smith's Farm development stalled several years ago and is still awaiting a ruling from the European Courts. The Bridleway connection from Maynard Park estate is still in the plans but there are no dates yet for the continuation of this development.

Chelmsford Road Crossing

This crossing on the Flitch Way has been highlighted as dangerous on many occasions and indeed a recent accident has reinforced this view. A new crossing is part of the Smith's Farm development, but this has been in planning on for over ten years. As a result, a temporary solution of a pedestrian refuge has been put forward and is currently awaiting a decision from the Local Highways Panel.

"Cherry Garden" Bridge over the River Chelmer

The current bridge is wholly inadequate for a bridleway and needs to be replaced. Two quotes for a replacement have been received and are currently being considered by Essex Highways and the LHP.

Next Steps

Continue to forge good and collaborative relationships with Hertfordshire County Council, Uttlesford District Council and Essex Highways

Try and make the Flitch Way a top priority project for Great Dunmow Town Council in order to ensure that S106 money will be available for the project. As all councils have declared a climate and environmental emergency, active travel has been pushed to the fore and we should hope to capitalise on this welcome change in priorities.