

Flitch Way Action Group - Summary report

March 2020

This is a summary report of the progress on the Flitch Way connection across Great Dunmow, following the route from west to east.

Buttleys Lane to Ongar Road

Progress on this section of our route has proved challenging. We attended a meeting with Savills (agents for the landowner, Siemens Benefits) in April. ECC tried to allay the landowner's objections to the new bridleway and Savills seemed prepared to recommend that their client agree an alternative acceptable route. However, over the ensuing months Savills were very slow to respond to ECC and the land proposed for this route has since been sold. ECC still hold the option of reverting to their original route which is on Siemens' land and/or exploring the possibility of an alternative route with the new landowner.

Meanwhile new proposals for nearby developments at Staggs Farm and West of Buttleys Lane combined with the prospect of Dunmow's secondary school relocating to Buttleys Lane mean that we have an improved prospect of gaining our bridleway as part of the need for safe off-road links into and from Dunmow for students and residents. Our proposed route has already been identified by planners as a good solution and we are optimistic that this section of the link route will be in place within the next few years.

Ongar Road North Development ("The Brambles")

The bridleway through the development opened in early summer. We have been impressed with Redrow's commitment to the construction of this well-made track.

Ongar Road Crossing

This year's council elections mean we now have new councillor Rod Jones' support. A pedestrian crossing is to be provided by the developers of the Oaklands estate. At present the proposed crossing is poorly sited. It would make sense to move and upgrade it so that everyone wishing to cross the Ongar Road can use it. At the very least this crossing will slow traffic and make Ongar Road safer for pedestrians, riders and cyclists.

Ongar Road South Development ("Maynard Park")

Taylor Wimpey have completed the ramp from the estate down to Clapton Hall Lane to a high standard and the bridleway along the perimeter of the development is now

open. We have both the developer and ECC to thank for acknowledging our input and implementing improvements to the route.

Smiths Farm Development

Court proceedings have stalled development this year. Our bridleway is recorded on Crest Nicholson's plans and we are keeping a watching eye on this site to ensure our track forms a part of the development once work commences.

Chelmsford Road Pegasus Crossing

The road system is to be reconfigured to accommodate the Smiths Farm development and increased volume of traffic. As part of these works Crest Nicholson are committed to funding a Pegasus crossing to see horse riders, cyclists and walkers safely across Chelmsford Road.

Footpath 90 and Byway 57 and the Chelmer

Positive discussions have been held with representatives of the landowner (Bishop's Stortford College) and with ECC. Investigations are continuing into the best way to create a bridleway from the road and a safe bridge over the Chelmer to connect with Byway 57/Grange Lane.

Byway 57 was closed for several months at the start of the year for ECC to implement welcome improvements to the surface and drainage and in May we participated in a scheme initiated by responsible off roaders to place gabions next to the byway to deter rogue drivers trespassing on neighbouring land and damaging the river banks.

Foot/cycle route from The Brambles to town centre

Redrow's improvements to a section of the footpath that runs from The Brambles over the Dunmow bypass into New Street have been much appreciated by residents. We remain hopeful of further work to provide a safe walking/cycling route to and from Dunmow Town Centre.

Link route to Bishop's Stortford

We have started work on identifying potential link routes into Bishop's Stortford. Hertfordshire County Council have commissioned research aimed at improving connectivity and promoting cycling in the county. We have worked to ensure our views are heard and included in the report produced for HCC by Transport Initiatives.

Other

We were delighted to celebrate William Chastell's Great Dunmow Town award this summer. William has worked untiringly on this project for over 10 years. He was our first chair and he is still a very active committee member. The current political climate is turning in our favour as councils seek to address public health and climate change issues by encouraging people to leave their cars at home and choose active travel: namely walking cycling and horse riding.

Our vice-chair Dr Stuart Withington has written a comprehensive report highlighting the importance of our project as an essential part of a much needed cycle strategy linking Dunmow to Stansted airport (our area's biggest employer) and to Bishop's Stortford via safe off road multi-user routes for all non-motorised users.

Thanks to:

ECC and in particular the Public Rights of Way team for their commitment to realising this project.

The Friends of the Flitch Way who continue to provide support and inspiration.

Redrow, Taylor Wimpey and **Crest Nicholson** who have invested their time and money to realise our project.

Essex Bridleways Association whose work with Kevin Bentley the ECC cabinet minister for Highways has raised awareness of the importance of safe connected off road routes for horse riders, cyclists and walkers. Kevin Bentley has publicly announced his intention to support a more positive approach to bridleway provision in Essex. As multi-user routes open to all non-motorised users, bridleways like the Flitch Way and our link route are a key part of the network of off-road routes.