

## **Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook Annual General Meeting 2016**

Monday June 16 19.30

St Martins Church Hall, Suez Road, Cambridge

Present:

Committee: Sue Wells (Chair), Monica Frisch (Treasurer) , Jón Fairbairn (Webmaster), Shona Douglas, Nicola Fawcett, Stuart Newbold, Emmy Smart, Holly Anderson (Secretary), Wilbert Van Vliet. David Brooks, Berry Mulligan, Rebecca Jones

Veronica Greenwood  
Callum, Katherine and Andrew Nightingale  
Ray and Wendy Collet  
Richard Chen  
Julian Hickling  
Peggy  
Moir  
Bruce Waldron  
Victoria Wilkinson

Apologies: Jenny Sutton

Minutes of the last AGM, and this year's accounts and chair's report were available.

Sue Wells welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **1. Minutes of 2015 AGM and matters arising**

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising.

### **2. Chair's report (see attached)**

Sue Wells gave a brief run through of the year's activities, including those carried out under the grant from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.

### **3. Treasurer's report (see attached)**

Monica Frisch outlined the modest but healthy financial position of FCHB, describing how the grant we received from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership was administered by the Council and the Partnership rather than going through our books. She also thanked the Committee for the substantial amount of unpaid services provided. New signatories are now in place with the Coop bank: Sue Wells, Holly Anderson and Nicola Fawcett (replacing Nicole Robertson as membership secretary)

#### **4. Election of officers and committee members**

The following were willing to present themselves for re-election:

Sue Wells (chair) , Monica Frisch (treasurer), Holly Anderson (secretary), Jón Fairbairn (webmaster), Nicola Fawcett, Stuart Newbold, Wilbert van Vliet, Emmy Smart, Rebecca Jones, Shona Douglas, David Brooks (co-opted in 2015), Jenny Sutton (co-opted in 2015).

The following proposals were received for new committee members: Rebecca Jones and Berry Mulligan

Nicole Robertson, Darren Gillings and Rob Martyr of Rivercare, (co-opted last year) are stepping down from the committee and were all thanked for their hard work.

Nicole (who is moving away) was membership secretary and it was proposed that Nicola Fawcett now takes over this role.

Veronica Greenwood proposed that these changes be accepted, Monica Frisch seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

#### **5. AOB**

Veronica Greenwood thanked Sue Wells, Chair, and the committee for all their hard work.

#### **6. Date of next AGM**

This is to be confirmed.

The AGM business concluded at 8.00pm; we then had two very informative and enjoyable talks from both our speakers.

#### **7. Callum Nightingale (University Technical College)**

##### **An investigation into the health of Cherry Hinton Brook.**

Callum, a level 3 BTEC student, presented the fieldwork study he and other students had done this spring, looking at the water quality of Cherry Hinton Brook. Specimens were taken from 5 sites along the brook, from its source at Giants Grave to the stretch by Sainsburys. These included sites close to the flow deflectors.

Water samples were measured for ammonia level, temperature, nitrate and PH levels. Biotic factors were measured using methods such as kick sampling to look for the presence of invertebrate and other aquatic life. The overall results were very positive, indicating the brook is a healthy watercourse. Oxygen levels and biotic factors are all good. We were especially interested in two findings:

- The water quality was best near the flow deflectors, which seems to indicate that they are having a positive affect.
- Although there is a higher nitrate level close to the allotments (possibly due to the use of fertilizers) this is not an undue concern and Callum suggested ways to counteract this by

having buffer zones.

## **8. Victoria Wilkinson (Anglian Water)**

### **Pollution Watch**

Victoria's talk complemented Callum's, as this time the focus was about things that can go wrong with our watercourses, and what can be done. Challenges are mainly from private pumping stations, inappropriate items in lavatories causing blockages, and incorrect drainage connections. Over 70% of pollution flooding incidents are from sewage blockages.

Anglian Water has an emergency service with a call centre open 24 hours a day that has a free phone number for anyone to report concerns. Signs of smell, debris (toilet paper, sanitary products) or suds (from cleaning products) should be reported so that Anglian Water can investigate and intervene.

The motto is:

**SPOT IT REPORT IT STOP IT**

And the free number to call 03457 145 145

More details on the website [www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk)

Following the excellent talks there was a brief discussion about what our priorities for next year should be. It was agreed that, other than the regular litter picks, we should focus on:

- The mural
- Involvement with local schools
- Monitoring the water quality of the Brook

At 9pm, the meeting's programme being completed, the evening continued with refreshments and conversation.

# **FCHB Chair's Report**

## **AGM June 2016**

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook (FCHB) have again had a busy year. In addition to our usual activities, we have done further work to improve the brook as a result of a grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership. We have also had a particular emphasis on publicity and communications.

Activities that we have undertaken since the AGM in June 2016 are described below, under the headings of our objectives. We would like to say a big thank-you to all our supporters:

- The many volunteers who took part in the brook clean-ups and work parties;
- RiverCare, which provides the equipment, insurance and moral support for the clean-ups, particularly Rob Martyr;
- Sainsbury's Coldham's Lane store, particularly Steven Denston and Chris Dix;
- The Cambridge Wildlife Trust;
- Cambridge City Council, particularly Guy Belcher;
- Last but not least, FCHB's very active committee!

### **1. Maintaining the attractive appearance of the brook**

Litter picks: three events – 27 September 2015, with RiverCare to celebrate World Rivers Day (49 kg litter), 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016 (83 kg litter); and a “mini-litter pick” on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 when we cleaned up the short stretch of Brook bordering the railway opposite the Sainsbury petrol station (despite the small area, we collected a huge amount – 125 kg). A special thanks to Nicola Fawcett for leading these events and to RiverCare for equipment, insurance, risk assessment, and general advice.

In Feb 2016, at the suggestion of FCHB, the RiverCare project presented Sainsbury's with some long-handled litter pickers. With the clearance of the scrub vegetation along the banks of the sections of the Brook that run through Sainsbury's car park, the amount of litter that accumulates there had become very evident.

We continued collaboration with Cambridge City Council in its regular maintenance and vegetation clearance activities on the brook.

### **2. Raising public awareness about the importance of the brook for wildlife**

Newsletter: 5 issues (numbers 44-48); thanks to Monica Frisch, newsletter editor.

We now have our own display board, thanks to RiverCare, and have put up displays about our work and the wildlife of the brook (including a quiz designed by Monica) at:

- Cherry Hinton Festival – September 2015; our stand was much improved by the loan, from RiverCare, of sculptures made out of supermarket trolleys and a gazebo
- Mill Road Winter Fair – December 2016; a tricky event on account of the high winds.
- Cambridge Natural History Conversazione, June 2016.

Talks about the brook and our work:

- Holly Anderson - Edward House Residential Home, March 2016: Many of the 16 lady residents had grown up or lived in Cambridge and several knew the Brook.
- Sue Wells and Monica Frisch – talk at the Cambridge Natural History Society

Website and Facebook page: many thanks to Jon Fairbairn and Wilbert van Vliet for maintaining these.

Media: we made it into the Cambridge Evening News on 29 Sept 2015, with a short item and photos about the World Rivers Day clean up. There were also pieces on FCHB in *Cambridge Matters*, *Mill Road Newsletter* and the Cherry Hinton Residents' Association newsletter. Nicola Fawcett and Jenny Sutton talked about FCHB's work on Radio Cambridgeshire.

Sainsbury's mural: at the suggestion of Emmy Smart, we have been working with Sainsbury's on the idea of putting up a wildlife- and brook- themed mural on the wall of the store that runs alongside the brook. The location has been identified, Sainsbury's is providing £500 from their community fund to go towards costs, and Emmy has identified an artist. Work will start later this summer – we intend to involve FCHB supporters and Sainsbury's staff.

### **3. Improving the brook as a home for wildlife**

Following the grant of £3000 from Natural England last year, and thanks to assistance from Guy Belcher in preparing the bid, we received a grant of £2,000 from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership which was matched by £6,000 from the City Council. This new project is putting in place the suggestions for ecological improvements made by Cambridge Wildlife Trust in 2012. The project has involved the following:

1. Improving the water flow and channel diversity of the brook: improvements to the previous flow deflectors that had been installed and new ones installed; riffles created to provide self-cleansing gravel for spawning fish. This back-breaking work was undertaken by numerous volunteers who took part in the 6 working parties that were organised between Oct and March 2016.
2. Silt removal: the Sustainable Drainage Engineer and the City Biodiversity Officer arranged to remove some of the silt mechanically in March 2016. Some 50 tonnes were removed from the stretch between the car parks at Sainsburys, and at the downstream end of Burnside where the Tins cycle bridge and the almost-adjacent concrete bridge create a potential flood hazard.
3. Scrub clearance to increase light levels and reduce silt input from leaf fall: in October 2015 we cleared vegetation around Giant's Grave, the source of the brook. Around the same time, contractors for the Council did a major clearance of vegetation along the brook in Sainsbury's car park to remove trees that were falling into the brook and non-native species. This means that brook received much more light and visitors to Sainsbury's can now see it, and have an opportunity to watch the voles.
4. In September 2015 we had a small working party to put up the 24 nest boxes that had been made by volunteers at the Cambridge Woodworks workshop held earlier in 2015 outside Sainsbury's.

Later in 2016, the invasive water plant New Zealand Pigmyweed will be removed from the small area where it has become established in Cherry Hinton, using a contractor. In the summer, work will be carried out on the stretch of Brook running through Sainsbury's car park to improve the bank vegetation and make the footpath passable and in suitable locations, coir matting will be put in to narrow the channel and promote fringing vegetation,

Particular thanks to Emmy Smart and Wilbert van Vliet for co-ordinating these activities, to Guy Belcher and Vic Smith for organising and directing the work, and to the many volunteers who took part, from organisations as varied as Natural England, RiverCare, Cambridge Water, Anglian Water, the Community Service Volunteers and FCHB supporters,. We estimate that over 350 hours of volunteer labour have gone into the brook improvements over the last 12 months. Monica has provided a page on our website describing the work: <http://www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk/Stream-Management.html>

#### **4. Monitoring the wildlife of the brook**

Water voles: we had numerous sightings last year, but the consensus is that there are fewer individuals this year, although recently there have been a number of sightings along Burnside and the path to Sainsbury's. An article on the voles by Monica Frisch will come out in *Nature in Cambridgeshire* in 2016.

Other wildlife: this has continued to be abundant and tits have taken up residence in a number of bird boxes we have put up. Unfortunately there is still no sign of swifts showing interest in the nest boxes on Burnside.

Committee members have selected particular points along the brook, near the new flow deflectors, and are taking monthly photos to record the changes in vegetation and general appearance.

Some of the committee members will be participating in a Riverfly monitoring training course later in the summer, and there are plans to develop a more organised approach to monitoring of the wildlife.

#### **5. Liaison and co-operation with other organisations**

City Council Local plan and proposal for an urban country park for the lakes: We participated in the working group set up by the Council to discuss the opening of the lakes. Two meetings were held (July, November) and were attended by a number of Council officers, and representatives from the Anderson Group, the angling club, police community support officers, and the community groups with an interest in the lakes. The Anderson Group has undertaken feasibility studies, and through a consultant, ecological surveys. The Council carried out a health and safety risk assessment and there was much discussion about anti-social behaviour. The Council organised four guided walks around the lakes (plus one informal one for an interested photographer) in October 2015 for interested members of the public which allowed people to see the small amount of land that surrounds the lakes, the wildlife interest of the area, and the health and safety issues. Andersons displayed its ideas at the public meetings of the South Area Committee (5 October 2015) and the East Area Committee meeting (29 October 2015). FCHB committee members participated in all these events, but since early 2016, there have been no further developments.

Conferences:

- Rivercare and Beachcare winter conference, Cambridge, 25th February 2016; the Brook was one of the subjects discussed, and FCHB led a walk for participants.
- Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment Partnership Winter Conference, Bury St Edmunds, 10 Feb 2016

University Technical College (UTC) Water Challenge Project 2016: Cherry Hinton Brook and Hobsons Conduit were selected as study sites for the students. FCHB assisted by giving an introductory talk at the beginning of the course and providing information at the brook. We also attended the presentations made by the students of the results of their research.

Cam Valley Forum – FCHB collaborates closely with the CVF and is following the efforts of this group to address water management in Cambridge, given the high levels of abstraction from the aquifer. We took part in a walk organised along the brook by Cambridge Water in July 2015, and will continue to follow this issue.

Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall – FCHB took part in a scrub clearance and wildflower seed sowing in the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall along the brook area.

FCHB also collaborates with the numerous other “Friends” groups in the City that have been set up to safeguard our precious open spaces and the associated wildlife. We are also represented on the newly established Federation of Cambridge Residents Association which has recently become very active.  
Sue Wells, Chair, June 2016

## **Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook, Treasurer's Report**

### **Accounts for the year ended 31 May 2016**

#### **Income:**

<b>Membership &amp; donations</b>	<b>£65</b>	(£40 in 2014/15)
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<b>Expenditure:</b>	<b>£50</b>	
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Photography	£10	
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Meeting room hire	£25	
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Mill Road Winter Fair	£15	
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<b>Total</b>	<b>£50</b>	(£9 in 2014/15)
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The bank statement to end May 2016 shows a balance of £339.50.

Membership fees have remained at £2.00 a year. Much of the income from membership was paid in cash and not banked, but retained for petty cash expenses. Many members of the committee have not claimed expenses for printing, postage or telephone. We thank them for donating not just their time but also waiving expense claims. However, expenses, if claimed, would be low as the newsletter, Occasional Titbits, is distributed mainly by email and only a very small number of printed copies are produced.

FCHB received a grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership for improvement works to the Brook. The total amount was £8,257.92, comprising £2,385.18 from the Biodiversity Partnership and the remainder from Cambridge City Council. The City Council has been managing the funds on our behalf so this funding has not passed through the FCHB bank account.

The signatories on the bank account have been changed to reflect changes on the committee and are now Holly Anderson, Nicola Fawcett and Sue Wells. Bank statements and correspondence go to Monica Frisch.

***Monica Frisch, Treasurer, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016***