

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

Minutes of the AGM held on 7th November 2022

Present: Committee: Shona Douglas, Holly Anderson, David Brooks, Monica Frisch, Emmy Smart, Anne Rout, Sarah Bowden, Jon Fairbairn, Caroline Murray

Members: Stephen Tomkins, Ken ??, Mark Skipper, Margie, Violeta Munoz, Caroline Bone

Tim Chilvers from Andersons joined 20:00, with Colin Brown from Mission Street

Apologies Tom Maddox

1) Minutes of AGM 2021 and Matters arising

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising.

2) Chair's Report - followed by questions and discussion

Wildlife sightings and observations (presented by Holly Anderson).

This was a very good year for wildlife. Kip Loades and Geoff Oliver were thanked for the wonderful photos they send to us and allow us to use.

- The water vole survey done by Peter Pilbeam' demonstrated that we still have a healthy population
- Over a period of 1-2 days, a large dog otter was spotted on the brook, apparently fishing
- Bird sightings included: kingfisher (possibly 2 breeding pairs), water rail (breeding pair), little egrets (two regularly winter on the Brook); reed warblers (spring/summer visitors); swans -- this year two breeding pairs, one was successful raising two cygnets -- keep dogs under control!
- Grass snakes, and a nest, were recorded near the Burnside allotments
- Frog numbers continue to decline

Chalk stream restoration activities

With the Wildlife Trust, the City Council, and volunteers, and with funding from the Cambridge Water's Pebble Fund, we improved a stretch of brook near the Blacklands Allotments by removing silt and adding gravel. Two days after, Geoff Oliver saw a heron feeding in that area, which was encouraging. The longer term plan is to make similar improvements elsewhere

Litter picks: Since our last AGM, we have had our normal autumn and spring litterpicks, xx in 2023.

Raising public awareness: We produced 3 issues of *Titbits*; got media coverage (drought, trespassing, restoration work); and kept the website going. Facebook has resurged since Caroline has taken over - but she needs to be sent suitable material. We have 497 followers (32% male, 68% female); she will also restart our twitter feed; we are working on a mural. Newsletter Occasional *Titbits*: 3 issues

Media coverage: BBC Look East, Cambridge Independent

Mural

Riverfly Monitoring: Anne and Tom are restarting river fly monitoring. They take regular samples using standard techniques to look at 8 target river-fly groups, each with preferred requirements and sensitivities to pollution etc, allowing us to get a general sense of the health of the Brook. This is with the River-fly Partnership. We are recording on their national database -- took first sample last month. Once it's in full swing, we'll be advertising for general participation and sharing data on the websi

Other issues: These include drought and over-abstraction. By the time the Brook had got to Sainsbury's car-park it had completely dried out. Another problem is anti-social behaviour. We also get a lot of letters and email about Blacklands Allotment holders taking water from the Brook - the mayor came and had a look.

The Chair thanked everybody for their help and support, including volunteers and committee members; Rivercare; Cambridge City Council, the Cam Valley Forum and Rowan.

3) Treasurer's report:

Opening bank balance £1,023.51

Income £4,620 (first tranche of City Council grant for mural; £20 as a donation from Mrs Head

Closing bank balance £5,643.51

There was no expenditure this year.

4. Election of committee officers and members:

The following were proposed and elected:

Sue Wells (chair), Monica Frisch (treasurer), Shona Douglas (acting secretary), Jón Fairbairn (webmaster), Emmy Smart (membership secretary), Caroline Murray (communications), Stuart Newbold, David Brooks, Lucy Rhymer, Anne Rout, Tom Maddox, Holly Anderson, and Sarah Bowden.

5. Proposals for The Lakes

Tim Chilvers, Associate Land & Planning Director, Anderson and Colin Brown of Mission Street joined the meeting and provided an update.

Mission Street had acquired Parcel A (the area proposed for commercial development) from Andersons. Mission Street are a specialist developer of innovation life sciences real estate, with projects in Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol.

We explained Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook are most interested in the Lakes and what impact any development might have on the Brook. Colin said he's not clear how the site interacts with the brook, but happy to listen and find out. He'll be around communicating at various events.

Tim Chilvers explained that Andersons do retain a significant landholding and play a key role in bringing forward the masterplan. It will be a partnership with Mission Street. He said Andersons are committed to manage for the good of the community in a very responsible way. They had professional security in the school holidays (to help tackle trespassing). They are looking at defensive planting and other measures to help in the months ahead.

In terms of what the plans for the lake are looking like, how will they be delivered and management going forward, Tim explained there may be some amendments as part of MS's applications. But they think the proposals will be for relatively quiet recreation and passive focus on wildlife, not heavy paths and infrastructure. They will keep the Lakes area the good and tranquil place it is. They are duty bound to make sure the management operates in a robust way going forward, and will be signatories of a section 106 agreement. The objective is a country park that operates safely and effectively for the community.

Tim will be establishing a stakeholders group, a working group, ****steering group****. This will consider the mechanics of managing the Lakes area and will shape how it operates, understand the funding. Not just 25 years, but beyond.

They said that about 2 months ago, they opened a 50 acre park at Faversham Lakes, so they have a management plan for that, which they will be telling us about. Probably it at this stage, the emphasis is "we are listening", plans will be refined and improved.

David Brooks: what is there in the management of the lakes for Andersons?

Tim explained there are retained obligations to MS. Financials, section 106 covenant, conventional land-owner responsibilities of administering land responsibly. Sue: maybe this will become clearer as things progress. There is a management plan with clear costed figures etc.

Sue commented that the Wildlife Trust are interested in participating in the steering group, plus CPPF, Angling club, councillors.

Tim will add some other names. Also some general pragmatics in the lead-up to the final park.

Monica: what is the current status of the planning application submitted this year. What is the timescale for this?

Tim: no comments at this stage; previous comments are a matter of record

Colin: Mission Street are at a relatively early stage of communicating plans with Local Authority planners'; they've done due diligence, now they are owners; introducing themselves to local stakeholder groups. The use class order is a relatively similar use class - R&D, is in the same area; go back to the drawing board re detailed designs of schemes and buildings. The proposal is for a best-in class R&D part, not a logistics centre. They don't know whether they want to change the use class which would be "the same application", or a completely new application.

It will be quite a few months before they will have a drawn-up masterplan to point at.

Tim pointed out that there can be dialogue in the background re parcel C (the lakes), also management structures.

Sue: the master plan is different from the planning application for the development on parcel A. How does the parcel C thing go ahead? What is the process for taking the lakes planing forward? Is the plan tied to the MS application, or can it go forward independently?

Tim: probably a combination. The scheme as a whole is 3 parcels combined; area of major change; master plan area; the master plan for the Lakes in isolation won't be subject to as much change as parcel A. Refinement of the plans and drawings. We can start getting the detail of the management arrangement going.

Colin: the commitment to the lakes and parcel B will be part of the same section 106 agreement including parcel A. It's most likely that the major works to parcels B and C won't happen until there is a section 106 for A, and indeed a planning application agreement. So there will be a slowdown.

Monica sought clarification: As the land is now owned by 2 companies; MS owns parcel A, Andersons B and C, will there be one planning application, or two?

Colin: One application with a section 106 agreement to which they will be co-signatories.

Tim: For Parcel B the intention is as per current application, that is a biodiversity offset "invertebrate specialist breeding ground".

6) General discussion

Caroline: regarding extraction from the Brook: what would it take to reduce the amount that could be taken? Should we be trying to get something changed?

Sue explained that Peterhouse College owns the land so they are the riparian landowners. The Burnside allotment holders pay the council a fee. Peterhouse charges VERY small rent; it's private land, very hands off. Very few of those allotments have sheds, so no water butts. Peterhouse have no interest in putting in stand-pipes or anything. Recently we found there is a by-law saying they shouldn't be using a pump. We should be putting pressure on Peterhouse.

It was noted in summer months the number of people accessing the Lakes (illegally) was huge. Tim pointed out the logic that with the additional passive, "footfall" security of opening it up, people

OUGHT to behave better. Steering group -- is there an active form of management we can do, maybe even seasonal just in the summer?

Sue noted residents associations should be in the steering group -- access should be from the north, new bridge, whatever. This will continue to be major concern, and current plans do not allay this.

Tim suggested limiting Burnside as an access - it's only earmarked as angling carpark. Sue pointed out that access on The Tins WILL produce traffic on Burnside.

Tim suggested let's get a plan and some pens, and workshop it.

Ken had a last minute question: the metal blocking illegal entrance by Daws Lane has been bent really hard. The trespassers make great efforts to get in. He lives Sidney Farm Road - they park all the way down that road, walk down Daw's Lane and get in there. Tim suggested defensive planting rather than metal structures -- they just bring an angle-grinder.

CLOS OF MEETING