

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook AGM - Minutes
Monday 11th June 2018

St Thomas's Church Hall, Ancaster Way, Cambridge CB1 3TT

Present: Sue Wells (chair), Monica Frisch (treasurer), Holly Anderson (secretary), Jón Fairbairn (webmaster), Stuart Newbold, Emmy Smart, Rebecca Jones, Shona Douglas, Berry Mulligan, Anne Rout, Veronica Greenwood, Peggy Denholm, Bob Billingham, Dave Baigent, Jon McGrath, Collette Parker (Anglian Water Keep it Clear Project), Arnold Jopling (Cambridge and Peterborough Amphibian and Reptile Group), Lynsey Stafford (River Care, Keep Britain Tidy)

Apologies: David Brooks, Nicola Fawcett

7.30 Reports from the Chair and the Treasurer.

Sue Wells opened the meeting. 2017 AGM minutes were agreed. In matters arising it was noted that there has still been no contact with schools; more volunteers are needed on the committee to help with the range of projects. Collette Parker from Anglian Water offered to liaise with us about schools contact.

Chair's report – Sue Wells (attached)

During the past year we have had 4 newsletters, 3 litter picks, attended Cherry Hinton Festival and Natural History Festival (formerly Conversazione). The Pebble Fund has helped with improvements to the flow of the brook. Monitoring wildlife is ongoing – a live eel has been seen this year, and a cetti's warbler heard for the first time along the brook. It has been a good year for voles with many sightings. There has been ongoing monitoring of water purity (Berry briefly reported on this). We, in partnership with the City Council, have been involved with the Lakes project. In January a working party helped clear scrub and bush, and there have been 2 Open days (March and June) with 1,500 people attending. Sue concluded by thanking the committee for their hard work throughout the year.

Treasurer's report – Monica Frisch (attached)

We have nearly £1,600 in the bank plus petty cash. We spent £3,000 this year (Pebble Fund grant) on brook maintenance. Monica thanked the committee for their work, and donations (stamps etc), which means very little money is claimed in expenses. The meeting approved the report.

Appointments:

The following members of the committee were willing to present themselves for re-election:

Sue Wells (chair), Monica Frisch (treasurer), Holly Anderson (secretary), Jón Fairbairn (webmaster), Nicola Fawcett (but planning to step down as Membership Secretary), Stuart Newbold, Emmy Smart (will be in the USA next year but will stay on the committee), Rebecca Jones, Shona Douglas, David Brooks, Berry Mulligan, and Anne Rout. Jenny Sutton is resigning as she does not have time at present.

Holly proposed that this be accepted, Monica seconded and they were passed unanimously. The business part of the meeting was closed at 20.00

Presentations

8.00 John McGill gave an illustrated talk on the History of the Lakes, based on the report he prepared for the Mill Road Local History Society on the East Romsey Cement Works. In 1907 there were 2 cement works: Saxon (now TA site) and Norman (now Holiday Inn). The locality had a large clay belt which was used in making cement for the “new” housing in Romsey Town during a building boom in the late 1890s. The Atlas works (now Sainsburys) was added, and the Norman works rebuilt in late 1940s. The lakes were dug out to feed the works. Cherry Hinton Brook was part of an open industrial landscape with no trees or bushes. By 1973 only the Norman works were left, and by then Perne Road (the Ring Road) was also built, dissecting Brookfields. A group of “Burnside Rioters” objected to the pollution and in early 1980s the final cement work was closed. The land passed through various owners and is now owned by Anderson Group.

8.15 Dave Baigent, city councilor for Romsey for 4 years, gave an update on the plans to open the lakes.

A committee was initially set up to work with local groups and Andersons (the current owners) on opening the lakes to the public. Dave and an invited group of interested people had walked round the lakes to check that they were safe for guided walks for the general public, and this year there have been two open days.

The angling group is still sceptical about public access and it is important to ensure that wildlife and habitat are not harmed. As the lakes are close to the airport, large flocks of birds (such as geese) should not be encouraged. There is no plan to allow swimming/ boating/ cycling etc, no dogs will be allowed and there is no suitable site for picnickers. Access is for walkers only.

Decisions now need to be made about how best to proceed with access, and how to fund this. Sue suggested a meeting with all interested parties, including the anglers, to try to reach some agreement.

8.30 Arnold Jopling, from the Cambridge and Peterborough Amphibian and Reptile Group, gave an update on the work of the Group. Toads and frogs have been affected by the very cold weather (the “Beast from the East”) that coincided with their mating season. There are midwife toads off Mill Road, frogs and newts in the wildlife area by the Millennium bridge over the River Cam, slow worms at Wandlebury. A grass snake survey is being carried out and it is hoped to map garden ponds in the City.

Collette Parker from Anglian Water's Keep it Clear programme gave a brief talk on the work of the programme and outlined ways in which we can help prevent drains and sewers blocking (80% being caused by unwanted items being put down sinks and loos). She had distributed a number of “freebie” items to help collect fat/ grease/ food waste for recycling and to collect other items (eg tampons and condoms) for disposal in the waste bin rather than flush down the loo. She also had grills to place over bath and sink plugholes and a spray to use on loo paper to encourage the use of moist loo paper instead of wet wipes, which contribute to the “fatburgers” in sewers if flushed down the loo. Collette mentioned a master compost scheme happening in Cambridge, which Rebecca had already attended.

Sue thanked all the speakers for their very interesting talks and introduced us to Lynsey Stafford who is the new RiverCare Officer for Cambridge.

Veronica Greenwood thanked Sue and the Committee for all their hard work and the meeting

was formally closed at 21.00 for refreshments provided by the committee.

FCHB urgently needs new volunteers for the Committee – we are looking for a new membership secretary and someone to help the Secretary. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let us know.

FCHB Chair's Report

AGM June 2018

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook (FCHB) have once again had a very busy year. Activities that we have undertaken since the AGM in June 2017 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;
- Sainsbury's Coldham's Lane store;
- 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: Again we held three FCHB events: World Rivers Day Sept 24th 2017; autumn clean up 28th Oct 2017; and spring clean-up 3rd March 2018 as part of the Great British Spring Clean. The spring clean-up had a big turn-out and a record amount of litter collected. A special thanks to Nicola Fawcett for leading these events and to RiverCare for equipment, insurance, risk assessment, and general advice.

Maintenance and vegetation clearance: collaboration continued with Cambridge City Council, and we did some vegetation clearance along the banks during the Spring Litter pick.

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

Newsletter: 4 issues (numbers 54-57), with numbers 55 and 56 making a double issue. Many thanks to Monica Frisch, newsletter editor, for continuing to play this vital role.

New leaflet – this was produced thanks to the grant for the Pebble Fund and was distributed at the RiverCare conferences, Cherry Hinton Festival and NatHistFest.

Events:

- Cherry Hinton Festival – 16th September 2017; the rain was apocalyptic and we got soaked. So numbers were low but we made some new members, received some donations, children played the games, and several people simply stopped to say thanks for the work we are doing so we felt it was worth it.
- Cambridge Natural History Society NatHistFest, April 2018
- RiverCare Conferences: Sue attended the one at Milton Country Park where we met several other groups and learnt more about RiverCare – we hope eventually to starting collecting information about the litter we collect – types and any information on where the items come from.

Website, Facebook and Twitter: thanks to Jon Fairbairn, Rebecca Jones and Berry Mulligan for maintaining these.

3. Improving the brook as a home for wildlife

A grant from the PEBBLE Fund (Projects that Explore Biodiversity Benefits in the Local Environment), a grant scheme run by South Staffordshire Water PLC, which operates Cambridge Water, allowed us to undertake further restoration work. Under the direction of Rob Mungovan, and with the help of several volunteers who shovelled gravel, we raised the streambed in the section of the brook that runs alongside Sainsbury's, which has created much better flow in this part of the brook.

4. Monitoring the wildlife of the brook

Water voles monitoring has continued, and we have continued to record interesting wildlife sightings. Eels have now been confirmed in the brook itself.

Fixed point photographs: Nicola and Holly have taken monthly photos at specific locations along the brook to record the general changes in vegetation and appearance of the brook near the flow deflectors and riffles.

Riverfly monitoring: This is continuing thanks to Vic Smith of the City Council - monthly monitoring at a location in the brook near Sainsbury's.

5. Liaison and co-operation with other organisations

City Council activities in relation to the lakes and proposal for an urban country park:

- Supported the working party organised by the Council to undertake scrub clearance on the north bank of the lakes, in order to expose bare chalk suitable for solitary bees and wasps, and open up glades to encourage the development of chalk grassland
- Supported the Council during the two open days that were held for the public, by providing marshals.

We continued ongoing liaison with other organisations including Action for Swifts, Cam Valley Forum, Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment Partnership, Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall, Federation of Cambridge Residents Association (FeCRA), and RiverCare.

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook – Treasures Report, 2018

Accounts for the year ended 31 May 2018

Although the accounts for the year show a deficit of £844.40 this results from spending on brook works which were partly funded by the Pebble Fund grant of £1,700 received in 2016-17. These items are shaded in the table below. There is an outstanding invoice of £350 which leaves £281.29 of this grant unspent.

Membership and donations are sufficient to cover general running costs.

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, where claimed, are low as the newsletter, *Titbits*, is distributed mainly by email and only a very small number of printed copies are produced.

Income:	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Membership & donations	£64.60	£117.15	£65.00	£50.00
Wildlife Trust BCN	£2,271.60			
Sainsbury's		£500.00		
Pebble Fund		£1,700.00		
Sustrans		50.00		
Total income	£2,336.20	£2,367.15	£65.00	£50.00
Expenditure				
Brook works funded by Wildlife Trust	£2,271.60			
Brook works funded by Pebble Fund	£864.00			
Printing leaflets		£169.71		
Meeting room hire	£36.00	£25.00	£25.00	
Mill Road Fair/Cherry Hinton Festival	£9.00	£15.00	£15.00	
Photography			£10.00	
Batteries and velcro		£11.00		
Renewal of website domain		£13.50		£9.00
Bank charges		£6.00		
Total expenditure	£3,180.60	£240.21	£50.00	£9.00
Surplus/(loss) on year	(£844.40)	£2,126.94	£15.00	£41.00
Bank balance	£1,573.79	£2,473.79	£339.50	£347.50
Cash balance	£64.25	£8.65	£16.00	
Total funds	£1,638.04	£2,482.44	£355.50	

The bank statement to end May 2018 shows a balance of £1,573.79 and the petty cash was counted to give a figure of £64.25.

Monica Frisch, Treasurer, 10th June 2018