

# Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

## Occasional Titbits, issue 62, February 2020

[www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk](http://www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk)

**Water vole survey: Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March** As last year, Peter Pilbeam of the Cambridgeshire Mammal Group, will survey the brook to see how the vole population is doing. You are welcome to join him to learn how to look for voles, and hopefully see one. Meet at 10.00 am by the allotment gate at the end of Burnside.

**Great British Spring Clean: Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March** As part of the Great British Spring Clean, Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook will be collecting litter from along the Brook. Please come and help. We will provide litterpicks, rubbish bags, rubber gloves. Meet outside the dentist at 97 Burnside at 10.30 am. All welcome! The following week, on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00 am there's a litter pick at Cherry Hinton Hall.

**NatHistFest, the 101<sup>st</sup> Conversazione: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> & Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April** Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook plan, once again, to have a display at the Cambridge Natural History Society's annual exhibition on the wonders of the natural world. Held in central Cambridge it provides an opportunity to promote our activities and to network with other organisations. Please get in contact if you can help prepare or look after our display.

**Water resources meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> April** CPRE Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is organising an all-day seminar focusing on water resources in the East of England in the context of the climate emergency – what this means for our region, possible solutions and how we can work together. Keynote speakers include former musician and rock star chalk stream campaigner Feargal Sharkey OBE, representatives from Water Resources East, PlantlifeUK, and the Middle Level Commissioners. Do get in touch with Tracey Hipson, CPRE East of England, [office@cprecambs.org.uk](mailto:office@cprecambs.org.uk) if you would like further details or to register to attend.

**The local plan** It may seem as if the local plan has only just been agreed, but consultations have started regarding the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options. These will start the conversation about the kind of place we want Greater Cambridge to be in the future. It will explore the 'big themes' – climate change, biodiversity, social inclusion and great places – that will influence how homes, jobs and infrastructure are planned, and where growth might go. The consultation, "the big debate" continues to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Please see [www.greatercambridgeplanning.org](http://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org) for more information.

### In the media



Our autumn litterpick featured in the *Cambridge News* on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019, with this picture (left) and an article which explained that “despite heavy rain being forecast, 32 people turned out. We don't always have time to read the local press carefully, so please let us know if you spot mention of Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook in the press.

We could use a volunteer to help us with Facebook and Twitter, so if you are familiar with social media please do get in touch.

### Birds along the Brook January 2020

The mild weather has encouraged birds to sing, proclaiming territory and seeking a mate. Robins sing throughout the winter and recently have been joined by Song Thrushes and tits. Green Woodpeckers are “yaffling” and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers drumming, all making a walk along the Brook a delight of sound.

The most welcome news is that it seems we now have at least two Kingfishers showing regularly, near the Blacklands allotments and near Sainsburys. They were absent along the Brook for almost a year (after the “Beast from the East”) but now are an almost daily sighting. As kingfishers have a patch they inhabit and fish in, hopefully the distance between the birds seen means that there are two pairs again on the lakes which will breed.



The Little Egret (left) is evident most days too, either perched up in the tall trees by the lakes (where it roosts) or fishing in the shallower water of the Brook. Little egrets crossed the channel from Northern France in 1989 and began breeding in the UK in Dorset in 1996. They are now a common sight across the south of the UK. Smaller than herons, with a black bill and yellow feet (which can look brown with mud!) they can be spotted paddling in shallow water to stir up small fish which make up their diet. For many years this was the only egret to be seen outside mainland Europe but in the last few years Great White Egrets, Cattle Egrets and Spoonbills have all made the journey across the North Sea. (photo © Jon Fairbairn)

Great Whites, which are the same size as our Grey Herons and have a large yellow bill, can be seen regularly across Cambridgeshire. They need large open waters; Fen Drayton and Wicken Fen now have several. They may well become part of our breeding bird population, just as Little Egrets have done, so could be a sighting on our Brook in a few years.

Spoonbills are now breeding in Norfolk. These large white birds are easy to recognise as long as they have their heads up to reveal their long bills with large circular tips. Cattle Egret are also now seen during the Winter near the coast in Norfolk. Stiffkey Fen and Burnham Norton are good places to go in search of them. These are the same size as Little Egrets but have yellow bills, and are usually found in damp pastures close to livestock rather than in water.

So it looks as if birds in the heron family are benefiting from the warmer winters we are having, though sadly many of our smaller farmland birds are not so fortunate and many are in serious decline.

**Holly Anderson**

Please do email your sightings of interesting birds, mammals or other species, for our records. We also welcome your photos for use in the newsletter.

## Membership

While we do not have many expenses, we do appreciate the £2 members pay. If you haven't renewed since the AGM in July please do so. You can give cash to a committee member or send £2 to the treasurer, Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook, 7 Tiverton Way, Cambridge CB1 3TU. Please make cheques payable to Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook and remember to include your name. Please let us know if you change your email address. Thanks.

## Data protection

To ensure that we comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, we inform you that you are able to withdraw your consent to be on the Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook mailing list should you wish. Your email address and contact details are currently held in our database to receive our email newsletter and other occasional messages about our activities and your membership. We do not sell or share your details with anyone outside the committee of Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook. Should you have any concerns whatsoever about the way we use your data, or wish to withdraw from our database, please let us know.



**JOIN US!** See [www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk](http://www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) for our aims and activities.

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To be taken off email list, please email [membership@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk](mailto:membership@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk)

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