

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

Occasional Titbits, issue 69, October 2021

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Autumn litter pick: Sunday 17th October

Please meet outside the dentist (no. 97) on Burnside (CB1 3PA) at 10.30 am. We'll aim to finish by 12.30. Equipment will be provided; please wear suitable clothing. To help with planning, please let Sue Wells (chair2019@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) know if you are likely to attend.

An otter in the Brook!

In August we were excited to receive several reports of sightings of an otter and Geoff Oliver sent a couple of lovely photos, adding *"It was great to see how the brook was being cared for and to see an otter present is I think proof of work well done!"*

While otters are carnivores, their preferred food is fish and they are unlikely to go for the water voles. Peter Pilbeam, from Cambridgeshire Mammal Group says *"Water voles would be a very very last resort, after fish, eels, mussels and the like."* We think the otter was probably just passing through.

Otters are a native species and strictly protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and cannot be killed, kept or sold (even stuffed specimens) except under licence. More information about the life of otters can be found at <https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-otter/> and at <https://ukwildottertrust.org/the-otters/>

Monica Frisch



Please send reports of your wildlife sightings to: wildlife@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

FCHB Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held via Zoom on Monday 21st June this year. The Committee officers and members were re-elected, apart from Nicola Fawcett, who resigned as Litter-pick Co-ordinator, and Holly Anderson who stood down as Secretary but has remained as a committee member. The Committee urgently needs some new volunteers, so please get in touch if you are interested and we can explain the help needed.

Guy Belcher, City Council Biodiversity Officer, very kindly gave a talk about the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project, and the work that is being done on Cherry Hinton Brook as part of this (see previous newsletter). The timing of the AGM, during the public consultation on the Anderson planning application, led to a lively discussion at the end of the meeting. Minutes of the AGM will shortly be available on the website.

Land south of Coldham's Lane

There were over 500 objections to the planning application for a commercial distribution hub south of Coldham's Lane and the associated proposals for recreation and wildlife management around the lakes. At the beginning of September the developer withdrew the application, having noted the feedback, and will be revising the proposals for the commercial development in particular. Residents will be notified of the resubmission.

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook support the idea of the lakes becoming an urban country park, as laid out in the 2018 Local Plan, provided that this respects wildlife, and that access and security issues are fully addressed. We submitted a detailed objection to the proposals in the planning application for the lakes, as insufficient information was provided, the plans did NOT respect wildlife, and access and security was not covered adequately. We also spoke on BBC Radio Cambridge in June, to make our views clear on this. Our response is on our website at:

https://friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk/Publications/ConsultationResponses/FCHB_objection_to_Coldhams_Lane_planning_application.pdf .

Ancaster Way stall



On Saturday 28th August Monica and Shona had the stall at the street party in Ancaster Way. They talked to a number of people about the Andersons proposal and the Brook and gave away some of the items (carrier bags, toilet rolls, paper waste bags) that Anglian Water had donated to FCHB.

Wildlife along the Brook: Summer 2021

Many of the summer migrants have now left. Swifts by August (sadly none having nested in the swift boxes along Burnside again this year) and the last of the swallows and martins are now also on the way to Africa. Several late brood swallows were still being fed in September and sadly may not be strong enough to make the long journey down beyond the Sahara.

With leaves still on the trees festooned with fruits and berries it is mainly the calls of birds that attract attention. Our small resident birds flit along the Brook and the trees and hedgerows are full of their contact calls. Feeding parties of tits (great, blue and long-tailed) work their way along the vegetation. It is worth looking carefully as occasionally they are joined by tiny goldcrests and even treecreepers. The larger corvids noisily call to each other in open spaces and treetops. Crows and jackdaws are gregarious and shout to each other as they play in the wind, magpies and jays seem more quarrelsome and make sure they are still defending their territories from rivals.

The only bird that stays singing throughout the winter months is the Robin, so any melodious slightly wistful song will be from them. Unlike many birds, both male and female robins sing. Their plumage is the same too, they are monomorphic, unlike blackbirds which are dimorphic (in this case the males being black, females brown). The year-long song and its confiding manner may be why the robin is one of the nation's favourite birds – it keeps us in touch with nature throughout the winter months ahead.

Holly Anderson

Please help us keep Cherry Hinton Brook clean, for the benefit of the wildlife whose home it is, and so we can all enjoy it looking attractive and litter free.

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 for our aims and activities.

Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/FriendsOfCherryHintonBrook and follow us on Twitter @cambridgeFCHB

To be taken off our email list, please email membership@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 2nd October 2021