

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook AGM 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 (full transcript to be sent separately)

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 (full transcript to be sent separately)

We have £16,000 in the bank plus petty cash. We spent £3,000 this year on brook maintenance. The deficit shown is the pebble fund overlap from last year.

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 committee, as indicated below, were willing to present themselves for re-election

Sue Wells (chair), Monica Frisch (treasurer), Holly Anderson (secretary), Jón Fairbairn (webmaster), Nicola Fawcett (1), Stuart Newbold, Emmy Smart (2), Rebecca Jones, Shona Douglas, David Brooks, Berry Mulligan, Jenny Sutton (3) and Anne Rout.

- (1) Nicola Fawcett is stepping down as membership secretary, (2) Emmy Smart will be on sabbatical as she is moving to USA for a year) and (3) Jenny Sutton is resigning.

Holly proposed that these changes be accepted, Monica seconded and they were passed unanimously.

The business part of the meeting was closed at 20.00

8.00 John McGill gave a short illustrated talk on History of the Lakes, based on the report he prepared for the Mill Road Local History Society on 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 about the plans to open the lakes.

A committee was initially set up to work with local groups and Andersons (the current owners) but, although Andersons gave permission for the lakes to be opened to the public, nothing happened. Dave and an invited group of interested people walked round the lakes to check how suitable they were to be opened to the general public. This year there have been two open days for the public.

The angling group is still skeptical 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 are 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 their work. The 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 and Anglian Water's Keep it Clear programme gave a brief talk and discussed 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 a number of “freebie” items on display 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 instead of wet wipes/ moist loo paper which add 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 with the Secretary's position – if you know anyone who might be interested, please let us know.