

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

Occasional Titbits, issue 59, Christmas 2018

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Cherry Hinton Festival

Despite a disappointingly damp day our attendance at the Cherry Hinton Festival was productive, resulting in eight new members, as well as over £20 in donations. RiverCare brought a water vole made from a shopping trolley which was eye-catching. The damp discouraged people from lingering, but nevertheless we had some good conversations about the Brook and about the Lakes. Very many thanks to Lynsey from RiverCare who stayed all day to help, and to Sue Wells and Peggy who both turned up and looked after the stall so that Lynsey and I could have breaks. Special thanks are due to the organisers of the Cherry Hinton Festival Day who were very well organised and helpful and cheerful despite the weather. **Monica Frisch**



World Rivers Day litterpick - Sunday 23rd September

On 23rd September we had our World Rivers Day litterpick. Despite the rain we had a good turnout with 16 people and we managed to collect 96.51 kg of litter. We even saw a large healthy-looking vole enjoying the rain and munching through plenty of leaves before swimming off.

Invasive weed removal

Cambridge City Council have commissioned CGM Ltd to undertake removal of the invasive non-native *Crassula helmsii* weed from the lake and watercourse at Cherry Hinton Hall. This work has required the daily draw down of water levels using pumps, so that the weed can be removed by hand from the lake bed. Nets were installed downstream to prevent any *Crassula* fragments escaping. The works were completed in early December. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the plant, it is unlikely we will have completed eradicated it. So we will be looking to design a long term management strategy for the future that keeps the *Crassula* in check and limits negative impacts on the brook. The pumping resulted in fine natural silts being mobilised downstream but this is expected to settle out and clear quite quickly. <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=1017>

Non-native species pose a real threat to our streams and everyone should be aware of the potential to aid their spread through introducing water or plants from garden ponds or on pond dipping nets, wellington boots etc. *Crassula* can easily be confused with the submerged leaves of the similar looking native Water Starworts <http://plant-identification.co.uk/skye/callitrichaceae/callitriche-stagnalis.htm>. For this reason we would request that members do not seek to remove suspected *Crassula* themselves but report it to the City Council (parks@cambridge.gov.uk), with a photograph and location. **Guy Belcher, Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Officer**

Winter has arrived – December 2018

After a quiet Autumn the Brook now shows all the signs of Winter, with few leaves left on the trees. The small birds tend to be seen only when they are foraging for food, calling to each other as they fly from bush to bush. Blue tits and great tits usually move in flocks (as do long-tailed tits which are seen less frequently), but robins and wrens are more solitary, still guarding their territory, and making alarm calls to ward off intruders. Wrens are one of our smallest birds and are much shyer than robins, which can come right out onto the path as you pass in the hopes of some crumbs. Wrens are usually spotted as they flit across the path into the undergrowth whereas robins attract attention by their song. Unlike most smaller birds they continue to sing throughout the Winter, although it is a more melancholy mournful song than in the Spring. The other bird still singing is the song thrush, piping its variety of phrases, each repeated twice, in the branches of the trees. The larger birds are easier to spot and pigeons, collared doves, magpies, rooks, jackdaws and even the very colourful jays are all in the trees along the Brook. The little egret moves between the Brook and the lakes but sadly there have

still been fewer sightings of the kingfisher. Once the work has been completed on the lakes at Cherry Hinton Hall it may fish more frequently again on the Brook and give us a thrilling glimpse of its intense blue as it flies along the water. **Holly Anderson**

Giant's Grave

The springs at Giant's Grave, on the corner of Cherry Hinton Road and High Street are the source of the Brook. We are pleased that a new interpretation board has been erected to explain the history of the area. Michelle Bullivant, who researched the area, is now working on a board for the lakes in the Cherry Hinton Hall grounds.



Land south of Coldhams Lane

The Anderson Group who own much of the land and the lakes south of Coldham's Lane, up to the edge of Cherry Hinton Brook, is intending to submit a planning application for the area some time in 2019. They have engaged JTP, an urban design and architecture company, to help draw up plans for the area. The Community Planning Weekend (23 - 27 November 2018) was held as part of this process, and FCHB committee members, along with many others, attended some of the workshops and events, including a further open day for the lakes.

JTP summarised the results of the discussion groups at the end, and have produced a leaflet that summarises the weekend, on a new website landsouthofcoldhamslane.co.uk. There is also a fuller report (113 pages long but largely pictorial) that can be downloaded, which in general reflects many of the views of the participants, although inevitably there were differences in opinion. Most people felt that the ecological importance of the area should be recognised in the planning for both north and south of the railway. There was much discussion on transport, the importance of cycling and walking, need for more north-south access routes, the narrowness of Snakey Path, and the question of parking. The proposed uses for the lakes were at the 'quiet' end of the noise spectrum. JTP included in their report some comparisons with other developments in Cambridge such as the prize-winning Accordia housing development off Brooklands Avenue.

It was pointed out by the participants that much further work is required on the financial aspects of the plan, and that a sustainable, funded organisation will be needed to manage the area. Some of the ideas being put forward differ from the proposal for this area in the Local Plan (Policy 16, page 66), and these will need further consideration. JTP proposes the following next steps: Feedback to Council; Engage with landowners & stakeholders; Further testing of vision & management strategy; Design development; Further consultation; Planning application (possibly summer 2019). The FCHB will aim to keep members and supporters informed as the process goes forward. For many, "this is a golden opportunity for Cambridge to show the world what can and should be done".

SEASONS GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2019

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.



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Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 28th December 2018