

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

Occasional Titbits, issue 61, Autumn 2019

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

World Rivers Day Litterpick: Sunday 29th September

To mark World Rivers Day, 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! A few years' ago we found a bath – what will we find this year?

Annual General Meeting

As well as the usual business, Steve Boreham gave a very informative report about water abstraction. We are gathering further information on how this affects Cherry Hinton Brook in particular and are working on text for a webpage on the subject.

In the meantime, for more on the question of water abstraction we commend the Manifesto produced by the Cam Valley Forum, <https://camvalleyforum.uk/river-cam-manifesto/> which highlights the problems of exceptionally low flow rate in the River Cam and associated streams such as Cherry Hinton Brook.

Minutes of the AGM will be posted on the website in due course.

Green Flag status for Cherry Hinton Hall

Cherry Hinton Hall has been awarded Green Flag status, marking it out as one of the best parks in the country. Cambridge mayor Gerri Bird, was present at the ceremony on Thursday, 19 September, to raise the flag (right) near the Hall and the tumbler's statue.

The Green Flag scheme is run by the charity Keep Britain Tidy. Parks must reach a sufficiently high environmental standard, as well as demonstrating active local community involvement in their care, maintenance and environmental development. The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall (FCHH), who work closely with the Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook, have been instrumental in meeting these criteria; including helping write the Green Flag application.

The FCHH, now in their 10th year, has been engaged in the design and delivery of a masterplan vision for the park, working alongside the City Council. This masterplan has seen about ¾ of £400,000 funding spent on various improvements, including a large sum on dredging the pond, enhancing the wildlife areas behind the watercourse, and improving the brook as it emerges from the pond and travels through to Snakey Path.

A condition of the award is that a new 10-year management plan must be in place, and the FCHH is now working with the council to deliver more improvements including new toilets and concessions facilities along with additional biodiversity work, which is overseen by the council's nature conservation officer, Guy Belcher.

More information on FCHH can be found at <http://www.cherryhintonhall.com/>.

Stuart Newbold

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Wildlife along the Brook

Many birds have had successful breeding seasons – the cheeping contact call of young tits (mainly blue and great), robins, dunnocks and blackbirds can be heard all along the Brook. When glimpsed these fledged juveniles look particularly smart in their new bright plumage, whereas the adults tend to skulk in the foliage as they rest during their yearly moult. The moorhens too have had several broods; there are still some black fluffy “ping pong” sized babies to be seen swimming with their parents and duller grey older siblings.

The highlight though this summer has been the sighting of a kingfisher along the Brook beside the TA area. Last spring, during the clean up, a body was found on the bank in the same spot (presumably a casualty of the “Beast from the East”) and for over a year few have been reported. Kingfishers used to be seen regularly, both near Sainsbury’s and close to Blacklands Allotments; hopefully they are now starting to recolonize the Brook.

Water voles have been much in evidence, and people with gardens near the Brook have been delighted to see that hedgehogs have returned after several years absence.

This year’s climate extremes (the heatwave in February, and subsequently Cambridge hitting the records with the hottest recorded temperature in the UK) fortunately did not have a visible impact on the mammals and birds – but the dramatically low levels of the the Brook over the last few months are a major cause of concern for the future.

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. A new member, Vanessa Willis, took this lovely photo of a water vole.



Membership

While we do not have many expenses, we do appreciate the £2 members pay. Some people renewed at the AGM but if you didn’t 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. If you change your address or email please tell us. 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.



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Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 23rd September 2019