



Cambridge City Council Meeting – Thursday 28 February 2013

1. Background

With the integration of most of the former propagation centre area into the hall grounds, Cherry Hinton Hall now has more space available for Folk Festival activities and entertainment than ever before. However, notwithstanding this, the 2012 Folk Festival saw new areas being adopted for use, both onto and beyond the brook and into the wildlife area. As 2012 ticket-holders ventured over the bridge by the weir and onto the wildlife area side, for the first time ever the path to the east of Cherry Hinton Brook was fenced off and the public prohibited from walking in the one area previously available to them via the lower Daws Lane gate.

2. Incremental Encroachment

To protect this last area of refuge for the wildlife and the public, the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall believe that there should be no further development, permanent or temporary (apart from habitat enhancement), to the east of a line drawn along the west side of the path from Daws Lane to the pond and along the south side of the vegetation on the left bank of Cherry Hinton Brook upstream of the pond to the boundary of the park. (In the map below, the path referred to is shown running north-south to the west of the most western waterway.)



The Friends' position has been debated and agreed at public meetings, and a vote in 2010 supported, by a substantial majority, the continuing presence of the Folk Festival in the hall grounds. Continued success will naturally include change and development. But given changes in 2012 and earlier (for example the loss of the tennis court before and after Festivals) our members have voiced their genuine concerns about incremental encroachment. We therefore suggest that to the best way of addressing these concerns is to establish the principle of the west bank 'red line'.

3. Wildlife

We are thankful to Guy Belcher for his 2012 report and commitment to ongoing wildlife monitoring, and accept that the impact from the 2012 Sky Arts recording studio was, in the event, minimal, despite our concerns. However, the incremental encroachment issue remains a worry. The Friends welcome Sky's proposed presence again in 2013; however we do not share the view that the desired television effect can only be achieved by building the platform over Cherry Hinton Hall lake. For instance, the Folk Festival could set up a recording and interview platform somewhere to the west of the brook, with the lake and the wildlife area forming a magnificent backdrop through the glass walls.

4. Partnership working

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall came into existence in 2009 because of concerns over establishing a "natural play area" in what was viewed as part of the wildlife area, with no resident or park-user consultation beforehand. We have since formed an excellent working relationship with Cambridge City Council and are now working in partnership, not least in trying to secure funding and delivery of the excellent Cherry Hinton hall master plan. On this as well as other initiatives we will seek to accommodate the Cambridge Folk Festival as best we possibly can, with give-and-take part of the process, including we trust the adoption of the proposed 'red line'.