

Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Meeting, Wednesday 18 May 2011
The Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton

MINUTES

28 people were in attendance at the Baptist Church Centre, Cherry Hinton. Apologies were received from Caroline Mills, Paul Holmes, Mark Ashton and Robert Dryden.

1. Welcome / introduction

Bob Daines welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded those present that the next meeting, on Wednesday, 18 July, will be the AGM when the group will be two years old.

2. Minutes and matters arising from 16 March Meeting

The minutes were agreed, there were no matters arising.

3. Anthony French, Cambridge City Council

Anthony French gave a thorough update of various issues and also talked through the latest Cherry Hinton Hall Bulletin, the second he has produced, **reproduced at the end of these minutes for reference**.

- City Farm

Anthony emphasised that the biggest area of concern for the group right now is, of course, the former propagation centre area and the question mark as to whether this may be used to site the Cambridge City Farm project. The final draft of the report from consultant Phil Back, which looks at potential locations for a Cambridge City Farm, is now with the City Council and is with the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation. The report will be released to all stakeholders very soon – all stakeholders will receive a copy at the same time. Anthony will then be writing a further report to go to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 30 June, accompanied with Phil Back's report. This second report will contain a recommendation from the Executive Councillor regarding the siting of the City Farm, which members of the Scrutiny Committee will then vote on.

- ParkFit

The use of the Hall grounds by ParkFit has presented a number of challenges, and the issue of use of council open spaces in this way has even made the national news including breakfast TV. The City Council has a system in place for the approval or otherwise of one-off events on open spaces, but not for ongoing commercial use such as this. The only other example of this sort of use has been British Military Fitness, which has made use of Coldham's Common. BMF has been charged £300 per quarter in this respect, and so the same offer was made to ParkFit for the use of Cherry Hinton Hall grounds. However, ParkFit declined the offer. It was some time after this that a member of the public who was enrolled on the ParkFit programme sent an email to the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall asking about access to the public toilets, thereby alerting the City Council to the fact that ParkFit had gone ahead and were making use of the grounds without paying the £300 fee and without permission. The £300 seemed quite reasonable given it is understood that ParkFit has up to 40 people

attending up to 3 times a week, with people being charged £8.50 per session. ParkFit were re-approached, and this time agreed to the £300 per quarter fee. Initial use has been limited to a 6-month trial. This gives time to assess the impact of the ground's use by parkFit. The City Council expects to have a policy in place for ongoing commercial use by the time 6 months is concluded.

Jim Davison mentioned use by the City of David Church, who use the Hall grounds every Tuesday evening for football training including the setting up of cones and goalposts and use of stud boots. The Church also drives a minibus across the grounds to do so. Anthony said he would contact the Church, including about driving and parking on the grass. In essence the park is for all to use and informal sport use is encouraged. But there is a desire to avoid formalised matches with studded boots.

Bob Daines mentioned that during periods of hot weather, the car park is often full and visitors tend to drive across the grounds. Anthony said he would arrange for signs, specifically –

No Unauthorised Access
Speed Limit

Anthony mentioned that the City Council also has a team of Enforcement Officers. Although they have been very busy in the city centre, there may be an opportunity to redeploy them to Cherry Hinton Hall.

- Paddling Pool

Cambridge has had very hot weather in April and early May, including Easter, for the second year in a row. Anthony agreed it seems a shame therefore that the outdoor paddling pools – not just in Cherry Hinton Hall but across the city – are not available for use. This is down to cost considerations, including safety and chlorine checks every morning when they are in use (although a member mentioned that they had seen children wading in the duck pond, so perhaps there are health and safety issues surrounding not opening the pool too). The Friends had emailed Anthony asking what the additional cost would be to open the pools e.g. for Easter, but the City Council hadn't been able to work this out yet. Anthony will get back to us with some figures.

- New Works and Events

The Community Action Day on 26 March was very successful. The wildflower meadow hasn't really 'taken off', thanks to the very dry weather (some members have taken to bringing watering cans into the Hall grounds to try and water the meadow with water from the duck pond). The event received good press coverage.

Bob Daines asked where the double-slide was. Anthony agreed to check with Ian Ross. Bob said he was pleased to see the disabled swing back in place – we just need the other one to go in now too. Bob also asked about the two benches that have sat in the former propagation centre area for the last year. Can't we have them put in the park? *Anthony agreed to have these moved right away and installed along the Daws Lane side of the Hall grounds.*

'Quick Hits' have been the interpretation panels and themed benches, both of which appear to have been well received and well used. A balance has been achieved in keeping these away from the main wildlife area. A new piece of play equipment has

been installed, as has the disabled swing. The two benches mentioned by Bob will be installed shortly. The Master Plan also allows for more benches, however, decisions on location and installation are pending whilst the decision on where the City Farm is located is made.

Bob Daines mentioned we would like to see a tree board with names of the various species, perhaps by the car park. People thought this was a good idea. Anthony mentioned that as they were going to put in more trees, it would have to be something they could alter.

Sandra Day mentioned that the interpretation panels / rubbing boards are too high for younger children to reach. *This has been mentioned to Vicky Hathrell who said she would arrange for the installation of 'chunky steps'.*

- In Progress

The Folk Festival organisers have asked if they can make temporary use of part of the old propagation centre for a youth tent (for soft drinks, etc) during the Festival. This means clearing some scrub and laying turf, so permission has been granted (it will save costs for Active Communities department). A fence panel will be removed but will be replaced immediately afterwards.

Bob Daines mentioned that there are now seven fence bars which have been removed along the Daws Lane stretch.

- Future Work

Much will depend on the 30th June decision, but there is funding available for autumn bulb planting and tree planting (another Community Action Day therefore). Bluebells and snowdrops have been suggested. The City Council will ensure people's views into the park are retained. In respect of tree planting – the City Council has £50,000 to spend over 4 years to plant in parks and open spaces. Cherry Hinton Hall will receive some of this funding. I will develop plans over the summer, including species and locations for both trees and bulbs.

Other Feedback:

Bob Daines mentioned the disabled See-Saw, it was removed after it was vandalised. The Friends are not happy with this just being left as an empty space for such a long time. The Hammer is also missing. It would make sense, given that the intention is to have a disabled play area, for all of these pieces of equipment to be replaced.

David Taylor asked Anthony if he could visit some of the properties adjacent to the Hall grounds, especially at the end of Forest Road. These may look exposed from the park, but in reality they're not. *Anthony agreed to visit along with the Tree Officer, and gather feedback.*

Mention was made of the heron which has taken all of this year's young water birds. Herons are territorial – please can the City Council install a plastic/mock heron in the pond area? *Anthony agreed to talk to Guy Belcher and said he would try to arrange something.*

4. Events

Sandra updated members on forthcoming activities:

- ChYpPS Nature Trails Family Fun Day
 - 12.00-3.00 pm, Saturday, 28 May
- Michelle Bullivant History Walking Tour
 - 3.00 pm, Saturday, 25 June
 - Picnic thereafter
- Community Groups Fair
 - 1.00-5.00 pm, Saturday, 15 October
- Photograph Competition
 - This is being organised as we speak. We hope to involve all the local schools. Prizes to be awarded at the Community Groups Fair.

Details of all events will be on the notice board and on the Friends website.

5. Plans for 2011 Cambridge Folk Festival

The Friends stall will be in the same place as 2010 – on the approach to the wristband check area (we had 90 people join at the stall last time). This year we really need more volunteers for the FCHH stall – it was unfairly left to just three or four people to cover the whole weekend last year. Volunteers will receive a free pass to the campsite (but not the music) area.

PLEASE CONTACT SANDRA TO HELP: IT IS FRIDAY 28 - SUNDAY 31 JULY

6. Membership Secretary's Report

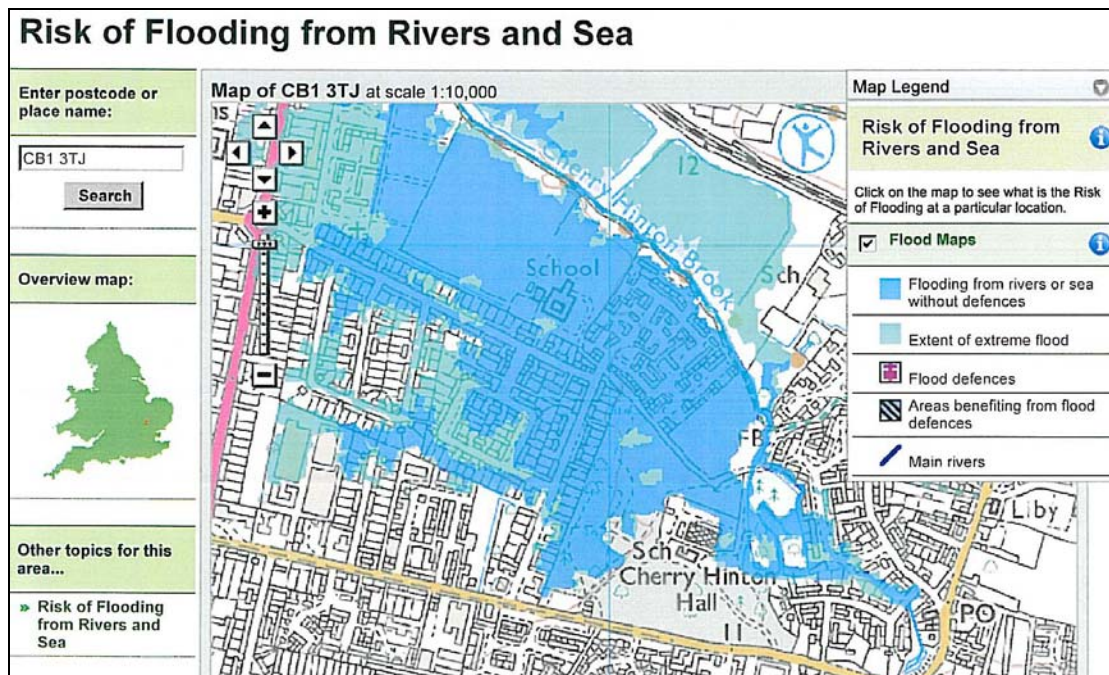
Sandra reported that Cartridge World, on Cherry Hinton Road, had been extremely helpful and are keen to support us as a 'community group'. They have put posters up, and will print various items including membership cards for free, providing there is a 'Printed by Cartridge World' imprint. This seems acceptable. *Sandra asked whether we should get 2-year and 5-year cards printed. David Taylor suggested adding a life membership for e.g. £25. This was agreed and Sandra said she would organise this in time for the Folk Festival.*

7. AOB

Bob Daines mentioned that a lady from Angla Ruskin had taken down a bird box while he was in the park last week, Inside there were 11 blue tits, which were then all ringed.

Judy Webb asked whether we could have another bat walk at dusk. Cambridge Bat Society was suggested as guest speakers for July. *Stuart Newbold agreed to contact them.* David Taylor suggested we also contact Peter Carter, the last fenland eel catcher, who has given his talk "Eels, Punts & Willows – A Life on the Fens" to the Cherry Hinton History Society.

Stuart Newbold mentioned that the City Council has recently re-modelled the flood risk for the area and that much of the area around Cherry Hinton Hall had been deemed high risk. Risk profiles can be found by typing in your postcode on the Environment Agency website.



7. Close & Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 20 July, at 7.30 pm, at the Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton. As ever: Please bring along a raffle prize!

Cambridge City Council Cherry Hinton Hall Bulletin May 2011

The Cherry Hinton Hall Bulletin is designed to keep visitors to the park informed of any recent, current and up and coming works, any events which may be happening as well as other interesting information about the park.

Latest News:

City Farm feasibility study

At the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 14th October one of the approved recommendations relating to the masterplan for the grounds was;

- To accept the principle of a City Farm and to instruct officers to work with the City Farm Project to prepare a feasibility study for the hall and to consider other possible sites across the city that may be suitable to site a City Farm.

Since the February bulletin, the consultant engaged by Cambridge City Council met with the key stakeholders including the Friends Group, City Farm and the Folk Festival management. This was to ensure each had the opportunity to input and that the report could be prepared as fair and balanced as possible taking into account all the views.

The recommendations from the study report will be taken forward by Officers at Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 30th June 2011 for a decision. The decision will either enable the masterplan to be developed in its current format or re-visited to incorporate a City Farm.

The feasibility report is in its final stages and will be available shortly in the public domain. A further report will then be prepared by Streets and Open Spaces Officers for committee, this available for public viewing two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Please visit www.cambridge.gov.uk

Parkfit fitness classes at Cherry Hinton Hall

You may have seen recent national press stories relating to fitness businesses using parks across the country to host their classes.

Cambridge City Council have received an approach from a Hertfordshire based fitness company – Parkfit who requested to run their classes in the Hall grounds.

This use has been permitted on a trial basis of 6 months in return for a quarterly fee. The classes run on a Tuesday and Thursday evening and on Saturday mornings. If you are interested in partaking please contact Parkfit directly.
www.parkfit.co/cambridge.php

Paddling pool operating dates

Each year the hall paddling pool is open from late May Bank Holiday Monday to the second Sunday of September, this year is this is Monday 30th May to Sunday 11th September.

The City Council are often asked why the pools can't be opened earlier, particularly if we have a spell of good weather, as has been the case this year.

To open the pools requires detailed preparation work as well as incurring daily running costs in terms of maintenance visits. This has to be programmed in order that the facility is open on a pre-planned. Unfortunately it is not a straightforward task to fill pools up overnight with the forecast of good weather. Each year there is considerable variance and the decision to open in the last weekend of May presents the best the chance of serving users during the peak summer months including the summer school holidays when the facility is extremely busy.

The following summarises the completed, current and forthcoming projects;

Work recently completed

- The first community action day was held on Saturday 26th March 2011 and was a great success. Approximately 30 people of all ages undertook various tasks including seed sowing and plug planting a new wildflower meadow near the pond area as well as setting new Coir plants in the water close to the pond-dipping platform.
- A new piece of play equipment 'The Explorer Dome with a double slide' This innovative piece of play equipment has replaced the old tower play piece that was vandalised.
- A series of interpretation panels funded by The Big Lottery Grant were installed around the pond area giving information on the various flora and fauna which can be seen. A special pond dipping board and tray holders has been installed near the new platform to enable dipping trays to be placed and the invertebrates identified using the interpretation panel incorporated.
- Bespoke wildlife themed benches have also been installed near the natural play area.

Work currently in progress

- In the former propagation area, currently inaccessible to the general public, a small area of scrub has been cleared to facilitate a new area for youths at the Folk Festival. It is likely that this area will be put to grass before the festival.
- Fencing improvements along the weir section of the channel running along the rear of Forest Road boundaries. There is currently a gate being manufactured gate and until installation there is a temporary fence enclosing the site to ensure public safety.

Forthcoming work:

- Planning will continue throughout 2011 on elements of the masterplan that are deliverable outside the former propagation area, this until such time as the previously mentioned committee decision is known.
- Bulb planting forms part of the masterplan and the intention is to work with the friends group to arrange another community action day during the autumn to help plant some bulbs
- Tree planting is an important structural part of the masterplan and the Council has been allocated money specifically for city wide tree planting for the next four years. Cherry Hinton Hall has been provisionally scheduled during the first phase this winter.

Anthony French
Green Space Officer
Cambridge City Council
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18/05/11