

**Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Minutes, 7.30 pm, Wednesday, 19 September 2012**  
Cherry Hinton Village Church Centre, Colville Road, Cherry Hinton

*Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall is a group that is concerned about the usage, environment, welfare and future of the Cherry Hinton Hall grounds for the benefit of those who use it*

20 people were in attendance at the Village Centre, Cherry Hinton. During the evening we were joined by Cherry Hinton PCSO Marie Bailey. There were apologies from Mark Ashton, Robert Dryden and Bob Daines.

1. Election of new Chair

David Taylor was unanimously elected as Chair, replacing Bob Daines who stood down shortly after the July AGM.

The news that Bob Daines had stood down was greeted with great sadness and some surprise, although there was also relief in hearing that Bob would continue as a FCHH member.

*It was noted that Bob had been a founder member of the Friends, and that much of what had been achieved, and the esteem in which the Friends are held, is to a very large part due to Bob's efforts. It was requested that the minutes reflect the gratitude the Committee, and that whenever Bob felt able to do so, he would be especially welcomed back.*

2. Minutes of 18 July meeting

The minutes of the 18 July AGM were accepted as accurate. It was decided that formal minutes retained and also posted on the Website would in future be signed as being accurate.

Matters arising:

Security:

It was suggested we might consider an application to use one of the City Council's mobile CCTV units should it be deemed appropriate. Stuart also mentioned that the City Council is currently asking residents and groups for bids from its 'Safer City' fund, of which £50,000 is available. *It was decided that the Committee should submit an application to cover automatic closure of the main and/or driveway gates to prevent ASB problems in the car park and the danger of drivers accessing the Hall grounds by car.*

Sandra mentioned that when the band was playing the other weekend, there were 80-90 cars parked on the grass. PCSO Marie Bailey said she would check the legal position of parking in the Hall grounds, although it was suspected that parking in the Hall grounds was not prohibited by law / bylaw.

### Sky Arts Studio:

It was agreed that there seemed to be little benefit, including from viewing on TV, for the recording studio to be over the water, rather than alongside. The wildlife impact appears to have been less than first feared. Paul Holmes commented that the removal of the studio after the event was speedy and efficient. It is a pity the rest of the Folk Festival operation couldn't be dismantled and taken of site so efficiently.

It was agreed that FCHH would be content for the studio to be present again, but that it should preferably not be over the water. For instance, not far from the stream there is a concrete area in the former propagation centre which could be ideal and still provide the backdrop required for TV audiences.

Guy Belcher was thanked for providing a report on the environmental impact of the recording studio.

### Green Line:

Ian Simmons mentioned the gradual encroachment of the Festival into other areas of the Hall usually available to the public or protected. For instance, this year the Festival organisers had included a plan to partly close the path near the left bank of the brook, to the east of where the hedge has been removed, running from Daws Lane to the pond, between the brook and where the hedge used to be. People using the access that is maintained from Daws Lane to Cherry Hinton Road, past the pond, would have needed to cross one bridge over the brook and then back across the other bridge within the park. Apparently Eddie Barcan justified this encroachment as being necessary to replace land lost due to recent planting of trees and hedges. Recently of course, access to and use of the tennis court has been curtailed, including by minor damage.

*Ian asked whether the Friends should adopt a policy of accepting the Festival as far as the nearside brook path, but no further. There was some debate as to this proposal and this 'Green Line' was unanimously agreed.*

It was noted also that Stuart Newbold had discussed with Guy Belcher the possibility of the brook and the area to the east of it being designated as a local nature reserve. However, rules specify a minimum site size (bigger than this area), and that there must be full public access, which is not currently the case with the wildlife area to the back.

### 3. Guest Speaker

Unfortunately Simon Bunn, Cambridge City Council Sustainable Drainage Engineer was unable to attend due to illness. However, Ian Simmons kindly stepped in to present the topic at the last minute.

Ian started by mentioning that he and Sandra Day had accompanied Simon when he visited to investigate re-establishing some water flow earlier in the week. Simon had brought with him some detailed maps and surveys.

Ian proceeded to draw a map of the brook and pond areas. The main issue which we need to focus on is the quality of the backwater. The good thing is that the water is spring-fed, which means there is a great opportunity for habitat to thrive as the area is not subject to storm flows which accompany river areas etc. However, this also brings its own problems – in particular that as a normal stream is subjected to flooding and run-off, this process will freshen the area, sweetening the water with each cycle. But this does not happen with spring-fed Cherry Hinton Brook, with levels of mainly stagnant water remaining constant. Meanwhile the ditch from Malvern Road to Daws Lane, which runs along Daws Lane boundary up to the bottom of Birdwood Road is not used to drain the stream or backwater.

It should be noted that the addition of the gravel in the stream is also a positive measure as the gravel will also act as an additional filter to clean the water. However, the gravel does need to be better graded – different grain sizes will fit into each other and provide a more effective filter. Guy is looking into this.

But back to the backwater; when Guy was adding the gravel to the stream he discovered the end of a pipe pointing towards the backwater. Could this be unblocked? Although we didn't find the other end of this pipe (the area is covered with weed and sycamore), we think that it might be possible to use this occasionally to draw water from the backwater into the stream. We would need to be careful, as if it were just opened and left, we would then lose the water flow currently running over the weir. In effect we would use a sluice gate to occasionally flush the backwater.

So one item for the Friends might be to start by clearing the weed and sycamore, coppicing the hazel, and whilst finding the other end of the pipe, allowing more light in. Guy has suggested putting in more coir rolls, pumping some of the silt out, and creating more of marsh area, which would add a new dimension in terms of habitat and wildlife.

Finally, Simon agreed to the removal of the grille on the Hall side of the Daws Lane bridge. Rubbish accumulates here quite quickly, spoiling the effect and submerging the gravel. The grille is not being used as part of flood prevention measures – the low-lying area nearer Sainsbury is much more of a risk.

Jim Davison asked if the work to re-establish flow and would definitely go ahead. Ian replied that it was not certain – we would have to find the other end of the pipe, and be able to guarantee flow over the weir.

Stuart mentioned that further down Cherry Hinton Brook there are a number of what look like overflow pipes which run from the Brook into the old quarry pits. These may provide a safety valve if needed.

The Friends thanked Ian for a great presentation and explanation at such short notice.

#### 4. Media Communications

Sandra Day opened discussions by suggesting that the Friends really need someone to take on the role of Press Officer, i.e. someone who then is able to

legitimately speak on behalf of the whole group. This idea was agreed, and *the Committee were then charged with drawing up some terms of reference, which can be brought back to the November meeting for endorsement and adoption, and with the appointment of someone to the role.*

## 5. Folk Festival, Master Plan and Maintenance issues

### Folk Festival Environmental Impact Assessment

Guy Belcher had produced a report of the impact of the Sky Arts recording studio, copies of which were available at the meeting. This was a very useful audit, and provided some reassurance on the effect on wildlife. For 2013 Guy will be producing a more comprehensive environmental study covering the whole Festival including the Coldham's Common campsite. This development was welcomed, and members expressed their gratitude to Guy for this year's work and beyond.

### Other Folk Festival issues, logistics

Guy and Anthony were thanked for keeping the Friends informed about what work was being undertaken. On each occasion, what they said would be done was accomplished, e.g. opening the space, the new beech hedge, ivy removal, brook work etc. There was a query as to whether the giant redwood trees were definitely to be felled. Gill Palmer had given Bob Daines contact details for an arboriculturalist at the Woodland Trust, but we were unsure whether contact had been made. *It was suggested the Committee produce an email to members setting out the issue and asking for their views on felling or not.*

## 6. FCHH Volunteering

- Brook maintenance and clean up. Guy has suggested a date of *Sunday, 4 November, from 10.00 a.m.* This will be confirmed by email to members and also via notices in the grounds.
- Jubilee tree planting: This was agreed for *Saturday, 10 November, from 10.00 a.m.* Currently the plan is to plant a number of trees – 420! which are currently housed behind Colville School on the Recreation Ground, with additional planting in the Hall grounds as required. Anthony French will supervise proceedings. Sandra is also offering saplings to Cherry Hinton schools and St Andrew's Church.
- Winter bulb planting. Anthony has been offered bulbs at a very reasonable rate and may commence planting soon, although he has promised to liaise with the Committee on exact locations.
- Removal of self-set saplings in bird sanctuary, cleaning of old bird boxes, and possible tour from Guy, for either Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December.
- Native species planting in April. Again, dates to be confirmed.

## 7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 7.30 p.m., on Wednesday 21 November, at Cherry Hinton Village Centre. Anthony French has agreed to come and provide an update including on master plan delivery, timetable and funding issues.