

Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall meeting, Wednesday, 19 May 2010

MINUTES

41 people were in attendance at the Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton.

Formal apologies were received from Catherine Mills, Bob Hall and David Wilson

1. Welcome / introduction

Bob Daines, chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising from 24 March meeting

The minutes were agreed; no matters were arising.

3. Update on Master Plan for development of former propagation centre area / beyond

Copies of the Master Plan were made available and Michelle Bullivant outlined the various proposals by Robert Myers Associates. As had happened at the March meeting, the feeling was that the proposals had managed to reflect the feedback offered by the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall and other stakeholders in the preceding months and that what was envisaged was welcome.

Stuart Newbold informed members that the proposals had been endorsed by Cambridge City Councillors at the 13 May Cambridge City Council South Area Committee. Councillors were also content to accept amendments that may come from the final round of consultation during June, although it was accepted that fundamental changes may need to be referred back for Councillor approval once more.

The next steps in approving the plans and commencing work are expected to be:

- Consultation to a wider audience during June 2010. This will include on site as well as web based consultation, both via the Cambridge City Council and the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall web pages. The consultation will then be considered and the Master Plan refined if required to reflect any changes.
- It is anticipated that the project will then go to Community Services Scrutiny in September 2010 and, subject to approval, officers will consider submission of projects for funding to *Improve Your Neighbourhood Scheme* in autumn 2010.
- These projects will be in addition to prior approved section 106 projects for Cherry Hinton that fit the Master Plan.

- The Children's and Youth Participation Team (CHYPPS) already have a Big Lottery funding allocation to deliver certain elements of the Master Plan around the lake area. Project delivery for this funding will need to be commenced before the end of March 2011.
- A full project appraisal will be considered by Community Services Committee during the first quarter of 2011.

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall and the City Council are likely to use the same survey (online and print) for the June 2010 exercise, and the City Council has suggested that it would be appropriate if an independent third party construct the survey. Phil Back, who wrote the 2008 report into the future of Cherry Hinton Hall and grounds, has been suggested as a possible candidate.

It is the intention of the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall to also produce a A5 flyer to households in the immediate area (perhaps as many as 5,000 in Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's, Coleridge and Romsey) alerting people to the survey's existence.

4. Maintenance, ASB, activities, general issues

a) ASB / vandalism

Bob Daines introduced the item pointing out that there is a desperate need for the City Council to commit more resources to enhanced security *before* any of the new development work takes place. The City Council need to demonstrate they are keen to protect what is currently in place. But what would help? A City Farm; CCTV; having the gates locked every evening; better Police presence?

[NB a show of hands indicated a large majority in favour of more CCTV]

Michelle Bullivant: We need to have better relationship with local schools – local children have to have a sense of ownership that it's 'their park' too.

Bob Daines: In Bournemouth they use 'stinger' mobile CCTV units around in parks to try and keep on top of problems.

Robert Dryden: Cambridge City Council uses mobile units too, but there are probably insufficient in number.

Barbara Oxley: We could still do with a Warden. *Can Anthony French also arrange for new 'Please Keep Dogs on Leads' and 'No Fishing' signs by the Duck Pond ASAP?*

Bob Daines: The other item of note is the lack of response to vandalism to / replacement of play equipment. *The City Council is just not responding – how many other parks are left without a slide for a year? Or when a disabled swing is taken down why is it not put up again? It is just not good enough.*

b) Litter work / Ivy Clearance, others

Stuart Newbold mentioned that he had purchased four sets of aluminium litter-pickers. Anyone who wanted to make use of them should get in touch. The City Council was also going to provide some red bags for use when more concerted litter-picking events are taking place e.g. at weekends.

Stuart also mentioned that there would probably be two ivy clearance days – one before the Folk Festival in July and one later in September time.

There was also a request for fluorescent jackets / sashes e.g. with 'Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall' so the group would be noticed by other park-users when we were e.g. litter-picking.

5. 'City Farm' Proposal

Bob Daines introduced Andrew Varley, from Forest Road Cherry Hinton, who is advocating the use of the former propagation centre as a 'City Farm'. Andrew was also joined by Rowan Wylie from *Transition Cambridge* (see www.transitioncambridge.org).

Andrew:

The 'Cambridge City Farm' idea is backed by a number of local groups, including local Youth Groups, Churches, etc. Andrew mentioned that he had been working alongside City Council Officers to explore the concept of a City Farm and Community Garden in Cherry Hinton Hall. Benefits could be extensive including –

- Educational
- Bringing children to the park
- Digging, composting
- Looking after animals
- Encouraging local people to volunteer
- Providing employment
- Providing activities for e.g. children / people with learning difficulties
- Showcasing environmental issues (there are many examples of successful UK City Farms)

The Farm would be administered by both staff and volunteers.

Rowan:

Rowan mentioned that she had done quite a bit of work on the Spitalfields City Farm (see www.spitalfieldscityfarm) near Liverpool Street in London, mainly on the horticulture side of things. BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) contributed quite extensively to the Spitalfields City Farm project. The Spitalfields City Farm (1.3 acres) includes –

- A sensory garden for partially-sighted children
- Events for children to get involved with e.g. sheep shearing

The area around Spitalfields did benefit with the addition of the City Farm. If a City Farm was incorporated into Cherry Hinton Hall we would need much better CCTV e.g. to protect the livestock etc. A City Farm can also generate revenue – for example Corporate Groups may want to do away-days / team building and pay for the privilege. The proposed café in the revamp plans would tie in very well with a City Farm project.

Feedback

“The concept is excellent but we have quite a bit of vandalism at Cherry Hinton Hall e.g. burnt shrubbery, swans eggs stolen, birds killed, etc. The Farm would need a Full-Time Warden in order to combat this.”

Rowan: “Our experience suggests a combination of a guard dog plus CCTV should be adequate.”

“Would you keep the existing balustrade / security fencing?”

Rowan: “Yes.”

“There is a problem at the moment with the wildlife being poorly-treated – a baby duck was killed recently and also a goose. I’m unsure whether adding animals might create a bigger problem.”

“It would be noisy at night.”

“Would other sites closer to the centre of Cambridge not be more appropriate? I’m not sure Cherry Hinton Hall is the best site we could choose. For instance we already have cattle e.g. on Coldham’s Common; surely this would be ideal?”

“If we end up retaining the compound and the fencing then we detract from the concept of returning the Hall and grounds to its Victorian splendour.”

“It was a walled-garden in Victorian times which was a sort of mini-farm. Wouldn’t adding this concept in in some way be in keeping with the idea of returning the site to much of its original character and use?”

“We should either choose to go along with the current redevelopment plans or go for a City Farm. It appears that there will not be space to do both as well as could be hoped – one will constrain the other.”

“How would a City Farm fit in with running the Cambridge Folk Festival?”

Andrew: “We would rent a field each year and move the animals away.”

Andrew:

We will be meeting again with Anthony French and Alistair Wilson from the City Council’s Active Communities team to look at some of the constraints there may be in making use of the old propagation centre site.

6. Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Logo

A selection of the best entries from local schoolchildren was arranged and members marked ticks on the rear to vote for their favourites. A number received a quite a few votes. *Runner up was Sophie Emma Crook; the winning entry was from **Claudia Casciano**, age 9, from the Spinney Primary School in Cherry Hinton.*

7. 2010 Folk Festival stall, Changes to Membership and Membership Fee

Stuart announced that the City Council has arranged for the Friends to have a stall at this year’s Folk Festival. The stall will be outside the main event area, by the entrance (close to the Samaritans and St John Ambulance).

The Committee has agreed to hold the next Friends meeting at 4.30 pm on Saturday, 24 July at Cherry Hinton Village Centre. The intention is to have a number of local organisations / groups all be present for the public to visit (Friends of Cherry Hinton

Brook, Cherry Hinton History Society, Wildlife Trusts, etc etc) during the afternoon (12.00 to 4.00) – and then hold our meeting at the end of the event. One aim of the 24 July meeting is to draw up a roster for people to man the Folk Festival stall during the Folk Festival.

Stuart will provide a gazebo and table to use. We should also have promotional material e.g. stickers, 3-fold leaflets, etc available for the public.

The Committee had also discussed the introduction of a nominal membership fee for the Friends - £2.00 per year was suggested. We could run the membership year to run from July-July – so returning Folk Festival people could renew their membership. We would try and put together a ‘welcome pack’. If people filled out a joining form they could also indicate preferences for what any surplus should be spent on – and the Friends would be able to report on progress each summer.

Members were asked for their view as to whether we should introduce a £2.00 membership fee and a July-July year. A motion was moved, seconded, and it was agreed to adopt this proposal.

8. Promotional literature / flyer

As mentioned, the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall will produce a A5 flyer to households in the immediate area alerting people to the online survey on consultation on the plans for redevelopment.

Sandra Day had expressed an interest in taking the vacant Committee place and was happy to help with getting something printed, as well as helping with the 3-fold leaflet to use long-term. Sandra was duly elected to the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Committee.

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall has £500 left in the account for such purposes from the Cambridge Community Foundation Grant.

9. Arrangements for future meetings

In addition to holding an afternoon meeting in July, it was suggested and agreed that the remaining meetings take place every two months on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Baptist Church Centre, the next meeting after July being 15 September 2010.

10. AOB

Judy Webb mentioned that a number of Friends had accompanied CHYPPS staff to take a look at the ‘Wildlife Area’ out of public access, being the duck pond area. The area was less wildlife like than had been anticipated, with trees cut down to make a clearing, with logs to sit on and an open fire in the middle. More like a campsite than an idyll.

Could Stuart ask Guy Belcher whether we can have owl boxes put up again?

Michelle mentioned that there used to be a operational network of culverts and underground streams – including those which fed the duck pond to keep the water fresh. Could we see if these could be re-established? This may have a great long-term benefit to the area and the wildlife.

Could we make use of / spruce up the Notice Board at the entrance? If there is a key, perhaps Anthony French could organise for the Friends to have a spare one cut?

Meeting notices. We will try to ensure future meetings are advertised and Sandra Day kindly volunteered to laminate any posters and put them up for the week prior-to a meeting and also remove them afterwards.

11. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Saturday, 24 July, at 4.30 pm, at Cherry Hinton Village Centre.

12. Close