

Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Meeting, Wednesday 17 November 2010
The Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton

MINUTES

34 people were in attendance at the Baptist Church Centre, Cherry Hinton.

Formal apologies were received from Bob Danies, Bob Hall and Robert Dryden.

1. Welcome / introduction

David Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising from 15 September Meeting

The minutes were agreed, there were no matters arising

3. Feedback on 14 October Community Services Scrutiny Committee and 17 November City Farm 'Scoping' Meetings

▪ Master Plan Approval

Stuart reported that the Master Plan was formally approved by Community Services on 14 October. The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall were represented at the meeting by Bob Daines and Stuart, with other members and committee members amongst the public audience. Advocates of the City Farm, Andrew Varley, Rowan Lawrence and Ian Hoskin, were also present to press the case for an alteration in the Master Plan design so as to incorporate the farm idea.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the funding and works included in the Master Plan. Things will be split into two stages - Stage 1 is anything outside the former propagation centre footprint and will start immediately. Stage 2 works are dependent on the outcome of the Feasibility Study to investigate siting a City Farm, including possibly in the former Propagation Centre area in the Hall.

▪ Feasibility Study to investigate best location for City Farm city-wide (and including Cherry Hinton Hall)

The Community Services Scrutiny Committee was also being asked to also fund a Feasibility Study to see if the City Farm could be accommodated in Cherry Hinton Hall as part of the Master Plan. An amendment to this was tabled by one of the Committee members, requesting that the Feasibility Study for the City Farm be broadened so as not just to look at Cherry Hinton Hall, but to look city-wide in establishing the ideal location. The amendment was accepted and this too Committee voted unanimously to approve.

▪ 17 November City Farm 'Scoping' Meeting

Stuart, Sandra Day and Bob Daines met with representatives of the City Council and Cambridge City Farm to agree criteria for successful siting of

a City Farm, and also current limitations with respect to Cherry Hinton Hall – in particular in accommodating both a City Farm but also retaining the Cambridge Folk Festival. It became clear quite quickly that a City Farm would provide a number of logistical difficulties for the Folk Festival as e.g. a significant part of the former Propagation Centre will be required each year (this also has implications for Master Plan delivery too); Wood Green Animal Shelter has advised the City Council that they would want to see all animals moved off site each year for the Festival; raised beds could not be accommodated, etc.

The following major principles for identifying the most suitable location for a Cambridge City Farm were identified as being:

- In a highly populated area
- Within walking distance of large number of schools
- Accessible by public transport, by bike and on foot, and with sufficient car parking space
- Availability of other facilities nearby/within the site (play equipment, toilets, etc)
- Large, local volunteer and support base, including if possible nearby schools
- Land designation – i.e. if common land the law may dictate that a change of land use would not be permissible
- Non-contaminated land
- At least part of site secure for animal use and with access to water
- Land not earmarked for housing/transport development (i.e. long-term lease)

As a result of the meeting, Anthony French will be putting together a ‘Feasibility Study Brief’ to guide decision making on identification of the optimal location for a City Farm in Cambridge.

- *For Decision: Formal Position of Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall regarding City Farm Project*

Paul Homes, along with Ian Simmons formally proposed that the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall adopt a position whereby the Friends:

‘Support in principle the idea of a Cambridge City Farm, but are firmly opposed to the Farm being located within Cherry Hinton Hall grounds’.

The proposal was seconded by David Wilson, and was passed unanimously.

4. Police Report, Cherry Hinton PCSO David Jackson

PCSO Jackson reported that there continue to be ongoing and infrequent episodes of young people mistreating the Hall grounds and Playing Areas. Quite recently a youth had been caught and arrested for antisocial riding of a mini-moped in the grounds.

- ASB issues including at Heatherfield

Youths have been climbing over the fence to spend time very late at night / early in the morning in the back gardens of this sheltered housing scheme on the corner of Cherry Hinton and Walpole Roads. Vandalism to the gardens had occurred as a result. PCSO Jackson has made visits to residents and this area has also been prioritised for Patrols. Stuart is investigating raising the rear cast-iron fence to 2 metres and adding better lights in order to increase security.

Please call 0345 456 4564 to report ASB etc problems.

- Lead thefts etc

There have been thefts of lead from the roof of the Hall – made easier by workmen’s scaffolding being in place during the school holidays. The Hall windows have also been broken once again.

PCSO Jackson said that the most effective measure in reducing antisocial behaviour around the Hall and protecting the building would be to reduce the amount of trees and shrubs in front of the Hall itself, which is providing cover for these sorts of activities. Indeed, this measure is included in the Master Plan.

5. Update on Maintenance issues

- Pond Dipping Platform

Sandra Day mentioned that the Friends had asked Anthony French if the City Council could try and stop encroachment along the banks (which we previously inaccessible) either side of the pond-dipping platform. We had recommended installing fencing but also turning the platform into a hide by erecting wicker or other hide-like screens inside each fence. This would be ideal for bird watching. Anthony agreed to look into this although he could not promise on the screens.

- A Wildlife Board by Platform should be in place shortly.

Jim Davison mentioned that thanks to the platform dogs could now access this part of the pond which previously had been fairly free from disturbance. There were also concerns about rod-fishing.

Mark Ashton suggested we ask Anthony for a statement about the platform and surrounds so we could put something on the Notice Board & Website to reassure people about how the final platform and area will look.

- Fitness Points

The Fitness Point has been installed by the Tennis Court. Bob Daines had mentioned to Anthony about the ground being worn away and the area becoming extremely muddy; Anthony has arranged for rubber matting to be put down.

- Brook Clearance Work

Two trees have been lifted out and this has exposed a lot of litter. *Stuart agreed to liaise with Anthony to make sure the detritus and litter is cleared.*

- Arrival of replacement Play Equipment

The new slide and equipment is on its way! The Active Communities Team has found the money for a new double-slide by the bank towards the Tennis Courts. Work will have to be done to raise the bank for installation. The play equipment is due to be delivered on 16 December, with installation works taking place in January.

- BMX / Basketball plans for Cherry Hinton

Bob Daines had asked Anthony about two items included in an "Improve your Neighbourhoods" scheme for Cherry Hinton. One mentioned 'Improvements to skate/BMX provision in Cherry Hinton'; the other mentioned installing an outside basketball court. Anthony had replied that both these ideas were likely to relate to the existing Recreation Ground in Cherry Hinton and *not* Cherry Hinton Hall grounds.

- Tree / Plant Labelling

Bob Daines had suggested the idea of plant and tree labelling in the Hall Grounds, using name plates. Members were asked if they thought this was a good idea and the reaction was one of full support.

- Bulb Planting

We are too late for this season. *Stuart agreed to write to Garden Centres and at the same time liaise with Anthony French to get agreement on what could be planted. We would like to involve local schools in this initiative.* Paul Holmes: Please mark where planting takes place so we're able to plant again the following year if necessary.

6. Update on Membership and Finances

Sandra Day: We have 137 members who have paid their 2010/11 subscription. A further 170 members remain unpaid, but will remain members certainly until the AGM. After receiving a donation for £20, we have £387.31 in the bank. As mentioned previously, we will be looking to use Direct Debit facilities going forward as this is offered with the Cambridge Building Society.

Mark Ashton: *We should consider offering £10 membership for 5 years or even lifetime membership for an appropriate sum. Members though this was a very good suggestion.*

7. Ivy clearance / group activities

It was agreed to hold an ivy-clearance at 10.00 am on Sunday, 12 December. We will try to liaise with Guy Belcher (Conservation Officer) and Kenny McGregor (Arboricultural Officer).

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 19 January, at 7.30 pm, at the Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton. As ever: *Please bring along a raffle prize!*

9. AOB

Judy Webb mentioned that she had purchased 29Kg of duck food for £37.55, just in case we have a harsh winter again.