

Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Meeting, Wednesday 19 January 2011
The Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton

MINUTES

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

Formal apologies were received from Alan Bailey, Chris Baines, Philip Barnett, Jane Calvert, Jill Durne, Robert Dryden, Bob Hall, Ralph Hawtrey, Richard & Agnes Hunt, Barbara Oxley, Sue & Francois Reverchon, John Rider, Jim Schwabe, Maureen & Jack Sharkey, Zoe Stockwell, David Wilson.

1. Welcome / introduction

Bob Daines welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising from 17 November Meeting

The minutes were agreed, there were no matters arising

3. Chair's Announcements

Bob Daines firstly mentioned that, due to a current heavy workload, Bob Hall had decided to step down from the FCHH Committee. It was hoped that Bob would still be available to help us with his extensive wildlife (in particular birdlife) experience, though; especially in liaising with Guy Belcher and others at the City Council. Michelle Bullivant has also recently stepped down from Committee duties. However, Michelle has agreed to remain as the group's 'Historical Advisor' to give input into historical/archaeological aspects of the park.

Bob also mentioned that since the AGM in July, we had had no contact at all from one of the elected Committee members – no emails, Committee meetings or even appearances at Ordinary meetings. Bob asked if the group thought he should write to the person, informing them that the Friends considered their Committee membership withdrawn. Mark Ashton suggested that Committee members should be expected to attend approximately 75% of meetings, and the Friends agreed that Bob should write to the person concerned.

4. Brief Update on Master Plan Delivery and Timetable

- Pond Dipping Platform
Some sort of fencing and planting will go in along each side to try and prevent encroachment along the banks of the pond.
- =Tree Labelling
The City Council are considering this; it's not something they normally do, but they are open to the idea.
- Fitness Point
We had observed the mud and mess created around this and requested rubber matting, which has been installed.
- Brook Clearance

The majority of this work has been done, and Anthony assures us that the remaining debris will be cleared from the brook, including right up to the Daws Lane bridge. *Sue Reverchon asked if Anthony could let us know when we can expect to see this cleared.*

▪ **Bulb Planting**

The City Council are keen on this idea, including working with local schools and producing an ongoing plan of what is planted where and when. We'll be able to get going on this as soon as it is planting season again later in the year.

Sandra Day mentioned that Anthony French would from now on be providing a monthly or bi-monthly Bulletin on works and delivery of the Master Plan. Sandra read some additional extracts from the November Bulletin:

- *Pond dipping platform: There is still work to be completed to compliment this installation including planting in and out of the water and improvement in the bank to enable better access.*
- *Installation of a chain link fence along the weir section of the channel running along the rear of Forest Road boundaries.*
- *A series of interpretation panels are due to be installed around the pond area these will give information on the various flora and fauna which can be seen in and around the pond and natural area behind. A special pond dipping board and tray holders will be installed near the new platform to enable dipping trays to be placed and the invertebrates identified using the interpretation panel incorporated. These are still in proof stage at present with anticipated installation before the end of March 2011, this again funded by the Big Lottery grant.*
- *The final part of the Big Lottery grant is to locate a wildflower meadow area with wildlife themed bespoke benches. This will involve creating a small area of space near to the pond clearing some Hawthorns, some of which have fallen of there own accord, some which have been suffocated by ivy. One of the fore mentioned interpretation boards will be tailored to the species you may be able to see in the meadow area.*
- *The City Council and Cherry Hinton Hall Friends Group (a key stakeholder in the masterplan process) are intending to have a community day in which the public will be invited to help plant and sow. Work to create the area will take place in the next few weeks dependant on weather conditions and the community day in March 2011.*
- *A new piece of play equipment 'The Explorer Dome with a double slide' is currently on order and due for delivery before Christmas. This innovative piece of play equipment is to replace the old tower play piece which was vandalised and as far as possible will occupy the same footprint. Installation will be as soon as the ground conditions permit in the new year.*

- *A Beech tree will be planted as a replacement for the one which was removed near the pedestrian crossing entrance on Cherry Hinton Road. This will be planted during the winter period.*

5. Alternative Site for Cambridge City Farm

Stuart Newbold mentioned that he had visited a potential alternative site for the proposed Cambridge City Farm, a field at the southern corner (but not part) of Coldham's Common, diagonally opposite Sainsbury. The site had first been mentioned by City Council Officers at the meeting with Friends and City Farm representatives on 17 November 2010. In many ways the site fits the criteria identified for assessing what would be an ideal location: The field is quite large, giving room for 'organic growth'; there is a brook running alongside; it is adjacent to the currently expanding Abbey Meadows Primary School; parking may be available across the road at the Horizons Training Centre; it is situated in a relatively deprived area, etc.

Mark Ashton, who has volunteered to join the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall Committee following the resignations of Bob Hall and Michelle Bullivant, agreed to contact Rev Barry Linney, as the site is owned by St Andrew's Church in Cherry Hinton.

Stuart mentioned that consultant Phil Back, who was engaged prior to the development of the Cherry Hinton Hall Master Plan, has been appointed by the City Council to undertake the exercise in identifying the best site for a Cambridge City Farm.

6. Cambridge Folk Festival

For Decision: Formal Position of Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall regarding staging of Folk Festival in Cherry Hinton Hall

Bob Daines introduced the item, noting that the Friends had been misrepresented in the past as being an 'anti-Folk-Festival group'. Since the Friend's formation, the increased liaison with the City Council has meant we have been able to ameliorate the sorts of damage to the grounds seen at previous Festivals. It was also appropriate to seek clarification on the group's position, as continuing to stage the Cambridge Folk Festival in Cherry Hinton Hall grounds may significantly impact the decision on the location of a Cambridge City Farm.

The following was proposed:

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall support the continued presence of the Cambridge Folk Festival in Cherry Hinton Hall grounds in its present form.

The proposal was supported by 28 people present, with 3 against. A further 13 members had sent emails in support of the Festival remaining in Cherry Hinton Hall, with four emails against the Festival remaining. *The proposal was therefore carried.*

Michelle Bullivant: 'The Lost Water Mills of Cherry Hinton'

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Michelle is a landscape archaeologist and is currently the parish archaeologist & local historian for Cherry Hinton. Michelle grew up in Cherry Hinton Road and attended nursery school at Cherry Hinton Hall; she still visits the grounds regularly – to take her children, to walk the dogs. It is a historic park, different to all the other Cambridge parks.

The search for the water mills of Cherry Hinton Hall started with 15 exceptionally bright pupils at St Bede's Primary School in 2001-03. The group were given the name '2XL' and they were keen to study outside of school too – and a history and archaeology programme was proposed with Michelle: "Let's go and look for the mills".

The area has a rich water history. Giant's Grave (also known as 'Spring Head') was in the past part of Cherry Hinton Hall grounds, and was incredibly important. It was bequeathed to the people of Cherry Hinton by John Okes, who built Cherry Hinton Hall and established the estate in the 1830s.

The school project started by taking a look at the entry for Cherry Hinton in the 1086 Domesday Book, the idea being that the children would start to get an idea about research. At that time the area was just known as Hinton; Cherry was added about 1500 (Incidentally, the local Cherry Lodge on the corner of March Lane was for many years the 'Grantchester Orchard' of its day). The derivation of 'Hin' meaning land on high ground or place of the monks the 'ton' being a Saxon place name ending. The Domesday Book entry mentions that there are four mills in Hinton. These should be water mills, as wind mills only came in 100 years or so after the Domesday Book.

But what were the four mills? Were there really four mills? Or one mill, with four millstones? At the time, there were two settlements – Church End, and Mill End (1511 spelling 'Myl Hende'). Daws Lane and Fulbourn Old Drift were well known and date back as prehistoric routeways. Tottenhoe way was a public right of way. The brook, running from Spring Head, was a tributary of the river Cam. Looking at plans of the area – they do suggest a series of mill ponds and leetes.

The project speculated that the Daws Lane crossing of the brook could have been an old ford – which would have added more water power to the mill. In the corner of the lake area stood Netherhall Manor. The area can be seen as square – suggesting a moated manor. This fits in well with water mills being present as manors were usually nearby to give close control of any mills (mills = money!). A village manor would have control of all the land around it.

Netherhall Manor seems to have disappeared around 1700-1750, and was eventually demolished. But further research showed that there were actually four local manors –

Netherhall Manor

Rectory Manor

Cherry Hinton Hall

Uphall Manor (plus a tiny satellite manor, Malletts Manor, where the old play area was at the top of Church End – go and take a look at the bumps)

St Thomas's Hospital owned much of the land in Cherry Hinton in the 1500's.

The project's big break was finding a Totternhoe stone Clunch Block on the island. Around 1300, Cherry Hinton began to be quite famous for its Clunch Blocks (the local chalk was considered very high quality).

But where would the water mills have actually been over the years? (NB windmills came in about 100 years after the Domesday Book – 1150 or so; they were cheaper, and much more efficient).

Cherry Hinton Hall was built in 1835. Before this the site was called Bridge Field, and Peck's Homestead stood close by. If you walk up the driveway to the Hall today, you'll notice two rises - Peck's Homestead was in the middle of the two. "Peck's Homestead" is actually an occupational name – it means someone who deals with weights and measures, particularly corn (in the US, apples are still sold by the peck).

[Remember "Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers? If Peter Piper Picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked" ?!]

Cherry Hinton Road was formerly known as Long Drove (one of a number of ways into Cambridge across the marshy fields to the east). But the 1806 Act of Enclosure completely changed the landscape. Where previously there had been many small landowners and plots, suddenly everything changed to big enclosed plots. Before the Act, Cherry Hinton had seven largish fields, separated into open strips and farmed by the peasants. One map at the time shows a 'Ford Way'. From the Homestead to Hills Road was basically moorland. One definite mill (a paper mill) at this time was the building opposite the football ground on Newmarket Road. This indicates how powerful the water must have been at this time in order to power a mill so far away.

The 1806 Enclosure map shows four buildings on the Netherhall site, one of which was over water (surely a water mill?). An 1814 record details that Robert Rickard, a local herdsman, sold all his stock. A later 1830 document shows that a blacksmiths (the old smithy) was erected using 'materials of the Rickard estate'.

An 1837 record notes that the old mill by Spring Head had burn down, and is now in the possession of John Okes. John Okes, after returning from India, lived on Trumpington Road, Cambridge before purchasing the Cherry Hinton Hall site. Work was done to widen the brook to add ornamental lakes.

In the 1850's, the Cherry Hinton Water Act and the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company, which John's brother, Richard Okes, A pumping station was built on Cherry Hinton Road. John had 4 weirs built in the Hall grounds.

A significant consequence of the Waterworks Company and pumping station was to greatly lessen the supply and volume of water in the area. It's only because of this that we can walk around the Hall grounds today! In 1871, John Okes died and the estate

was sold for £5,400. Two, now less boggy, fields to the north of Cherry Hinton Hall were bought by a Mr Rigeon. These later became Walpole Road.

Questions:

Could we unblock the one lake that has no flowing water and is stagnant? Would it be worthwhile? Michelle – yes, this is something that needs to be done. It needs to have flowing water again. Interestingly, Cherry Hinton Hall has a stream running underneath it – if you go down in the cellar you can see it (and the cellar regularly floods).

Should we try and use English Heritage, Lottery Funds, etc to try and preserve some of this heritage, to preserve and educate? Michelle – what I would really like to see as part of the development is to get a Community Museum on site. But, yes, there are other sources of funding which we ought to explore.

Bob Daines thanked Michelle for her excellent talk. Michelle offered to do a second talk on the Hall itself, which was gratefully accepted. Michelle also offered to do a history walk for members one summer evening.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 16 March, at 7.30 pm, at the Baptist Church Centre, Fisher's Lane, Cherry Hinton. As ever: *Please bring along a raffle prize!*