

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 35, December 2013

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Please forward or print out and pass on to anyone else who may be interested.

November litterpick

This went very well, with nearly 20 people helping. In addition to 17 bags of rubbish from in and around the water, we recovered a child's bicycle (now handed over to the Cambridge police in the hope that it will be re-united with its owner) and unfortunately a syringe. We are grateful to all who helped, as well as to RiverCare, a programme set up by Keep Britain Tidy, which originally provided us with our equipment and which continues to support us and pay for the insurance. This time we were pleased to welcome Luther Phillips, who is the RiverCare Project Officer for this area and lives on a boat on the Cam. He also took some photos for us – thanks!



Photo by Luther Phillips

We hope that as people experience a cleaner, better environment they will be moved to put their litter in the bin and start to take more care of the brook and its banks.



Photo by Sue Wells

Update on litter by Sainsbury's

The Sainsbury's store manager and community liaison officer have both been keen to work with us on what seems to be an ongoing problem of litter dropped along the path that runs alongside the store and over the fence onto the banks of the brook. Since our initial discussions there has been less rubbish along the path as the area where the lorries deliver the goods is now being swept on a regular basis. This means rubbish generated by deliveries is being collected rather than blown onto the path. Excellent news. However, clearing the large amount of rubbish that ends up on the bank of the brook alongside the store is proving more difficult. As the land is privately owned, the city council has no responsibility for clearing the litter and although Sainsbury's get contractors in to clear the banks twice a year this does not seem to be adequate; even after one of our litter picks the rubbish quickly builds up again.

continued

What is a real pity is that much of this rubbish seems to come from snacks and drinks from the store – presumably some from staff on a coffee/cigarette break. Someone has hung a carrier bag on the fence (to put rubbish in?) so maybe having a litter bin in this area might help keep the rubbish down. Whatever solutions are tried, the area needs to be cleared more frequently.

At the last litter pick in November we were joined by two Sainsbury's staff who saw for themselves the high amount of rubbish found in the small stretch of the Brook by the store. We were delighted to have their help (and the refreshments provided) and want to continue to work with Sainsbury's to find ways to minimise the litter that is generated by goods from the store. (Holly Anderson)



Photo by Holly Anderson

Tree work and shrub clearance along the Brook

As mentioned in *Titbits 34*, the city council, having consulted their Nature Conservation Officer, Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook and others, are carrying out work on shrubs and trees along the banks in order to maintain the health of the Brook. Inconvenience to cyclists and pedestrians is being kept to a minimum, although work was temporarily halted when the contractors were needed elsewhere to help clear up debris across the city caused by the high winds in late October. These winds brought down more of the willow branches along Burnside (fortunately not blocking the road this time) and were tidied up by contractors after we contacted the agents acting on behalf of the Anderson Group. Following the consultation about lowering the crowns of these willows, contractors have now started this work. This will rather dramatically change the appearance of the brook along Burnside, but regrowth of willows is known to be rapid. More information about this, and photos of the results, in the next newsletter! The resulting work, plus our November litter pick and the sunny late autumn weather we have had has meant a walk along the Brook has been even more enjoyable. (Holly Anderson)

Keep your eyes open!

You never know what you might see. In mid-November the Wildlife Trust passed on the following report: "I was walking along the path then heard a loud rustling in the reeds; an otter poked its head then glided away through the water. Although it was at night I could see its body glistening quite clearly in the light of a nearby lamp. The grid reference where I saw it is TL4774357232". That is near the end of Burnside by the northern end of the school playing fields. Otters are large, about the size of a dog – much larger than a water vole, or even a mink. The Cambridgeshire Mammal Group website says for otters "Scattered distribution mainly linked to the Cam, Ouse and Nene river systems" and I know signs have been seen recently on the Cam at Paradise (Newnham).

Please report wildlife sightings to us, with details of what you saw, when (date and time) and where – the lampposts along Snakey Path are numbered so can be used to help locate sightings. (Monica Frisch)

***With best wishes for the festive season and the new year.
May you continue to enjoy Cherry Hinton Brook, its surroundings and its wildlife.***

JOIN US! The aims of Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook are

- Maintaining the appearance of the Brook, for example, by removing litter
- Raising public awareness about the importance of the brook for wildlife
- Improving the Brook as a home for wildlife
- Observing and monitoring the wildlife of the Brook and surrounding area
- Working with other organisations with similar interests

Please email membership@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk to register your interest.

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Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 4th December 2013