

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

Occasional Titbits, No. 46, November 2015

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

This will be our last newsletter for 2015, and we would like to thank all our many supporters for their help over the year. It has been a particularly busy time for the group and we would not have been able to achieve so much without so many enthusiastic volunteers. With best wishes for the festive season when it arrives, and we look forward to seeing you all next year!



Biodiversity Partnership Project

With funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and the support of the City Council and Sainsbury's, we are undertaking various activities to improve the appearance of the brook. We have already made some very good progress.

Scrub clearance at Giant's Grave

On a beautiful Saturday morning, 10th October, the Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook worked together with the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall to clear scrub and overhanging branches at Giant Grave: the source of our beloved brook near the village high street. Under the skilful leadership of Guy Belcher (City Council), we let in more light and improved the access to this special place. The work is part of the restoration project funded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.

Wilbert Vliet

Members clearing scrub © Wilbert Vliet



Vegetation clearance and flow deflectors at Sainsbury's car park

Guy Belcher co-ordinated with Sainsbury's to bring in contractors who cleared the vegetation along the part of the brook that runs through the store car park. It may look rather bare at the moment, but there was an urgent need to remove some of the trees that were starting to fall into the brook, as well as non-native species. There is now a much better view of the brook and better opportunities to see the water voles that are present in that section.

We have also been installing flow deflectors (made of logs and gravel) and strengthening the ones that were put in last spring. These narrow the channel and improve the flow of the brook, making it a better habitat for wildlife. Three work parties have taken place (right) and four new deflectors are now in place along this stretch of brook. Volunteers came from Natural England, RiverCare, Cambridge Water, Anglian Water, the Community Service Volunteers and FCHB supporters, and all nobly braved the inclement weather. We are most grateful to everyone who has taken part so far and to Sainsbury's for providing welcome refreshments.



Work party in the rain © Sue Wells

There will be another work party on Saturday 28th November, and then two next year: Saturday 30th January and Thursday 4th February 2016. Everyone is encouraged to lend a helping hand. Skills of all sorts are welcome: from heavy duty gravel moving to arranging refreshments or providing general encouragement. Meet us at 10.00 at the Sainsbury's car park (parent parking). Tools and refreshments will be provided. Just dress warmly.

Wilbert Vliet & Emmy Smart

Mill Road Winter Fair: Saturday 5th December

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook will have a stall at the Mill Road Winter Fair. We'll be outside Bharat Bhavan, on the access road to the Council depot. Do come along and say hello, or even better come along and lend a hand. If you can help on the stall please contact us immediately as we are arranging a rota. Sue Wells

Revised master plan for the lakes available for comment

The revised plan for the lakes, produced by the Anderson Group and incorporating feedback from the consultation events earlier this year, is now available on line:

<http://www.lakesrecreation.co.uk/masterplan>.

You can send comments on this revision via the website. The revised plan was also on display during the October meetings of the South Area Committee and the East Area Committee, with a team of Anderson Group staff present to answer questions. A meeting of the Lakes Working Group, which has been convened by Councillor Dave Baigent, will take place in November. Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook sits on the group and will keep its supporters informed about further developments. Sue Wells

Nest boxes along Cherry Hinton Brook

The 24 nest boxes and the insect hotels that were made at our workshop outside Sainsbury's in March 2015, with the support of Cambridge Woodworks, were installed on 8th September. Guy Belcher, City Council Wildlife Officer, advised on the locations along the Brook, with several placed in the trees by Sainsbury's and on the grassy patch opposite the fuel station. Others are near the recreation ground between Sainsbury's and Burnside, and another group are along the stretch between the Burnside allotments and St Bede's Crescent. We plan to monitor nesting activity next spring. Sue Wells

World Rivers Day litterpick

On Sunday 27th September, World Rivers Day, we organised a litter pick along the brook. Twelve volunteers collected 49 kg of litter along the stretch of brook from Sainsbury's to Burnside before retiring to Sainsbury's for coffee and cakes. A photographer from the *Cambridge Evening News* came and took photos for an article published, with a photo, on 29th September. Many thanks to everyone who came along. Nicola Fawcett

Wildlife along the brook – Autumn 2015

The colour of the leaves on the trees and bushes has continued to be spectacular right up to November, but finally the leaves are dropping and it is becoming easier to spot the mixed flock of blue tits, great tits and long-tailed tits as they flit through the branches to feed. The kingfisher has also been more evident on my walks along the brook towards Sainsbury's, as has the water vole (currently often seen just beyond the children's playground).

The highlight on November 2nd was a grey wagtail quite close to Sainsbury's. They can sometimes be seen in the brook at Cherry Hinton Hall so it is good to find them walking on another stretch of the shallow mud and stones in our stream. Less common than the black and white (Pied) wagtails, they are often mistakenly identified as yellow wagtails. This is because both yellow and grey wagtails have bright yellow breasts and grey backs. Grey wagtails though are much more common, being resident in this part of the UK. They live and breed close to running water, feeding on insects caught on quick flowing streams, such as our brook. They also have a black throat which helps identify them. As the name suggests, all wagtails bob up and down wagging their long tails as they walk about the ground. Holly Anderson

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Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 18th November 2015