

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

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www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Spring litter pick 13th March

Join us for our 2016 spring clean of Cherry Hinton Brook! Sunday 13th March. Meet outside the dentist, 97-99 Burnside at 10.30 am. We will finish about 12.30, and Sainsbury's is offering tea/coffee and a cake in their café to all participants. Gloves, litter picks and other equipment will be provided. Wear suitable clothing according to the weather. We look forward to seeing you.

RiverCare donates clean up equipment to Sainsbury's

On 12th February 2016, Anglian Water's RiverCare project presented Sainsbury's with some long-handled litter pickers. With the clearance of the scrub vegetation along the banks of the sections of the Brook that run through Sainsbury's car park, the amount of litter that accumulates there has become very evident. This comes partly from customers and partly from the back of the store where there is the loading bay and the on-line distribution service (this is the source of the grey Sainsbury's bags that have been seen in the Brook). We have been discussing the need for more regular cleaning with Sainsbury's and learnt that the store lacked equipment that would enable them to easily reach rubbish in the stream. RiverCare came to the rescue, and as a result we are hoping that the area will start to look better.



Rob Martyr (centre) of the RiverCare project hands over the equipment to Steven Denston (left) of Sainsbury's, with David Brooks (right) of Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook, looking on.

Rivercare and Beachcare winter conference

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook were represented at the Rivercare and Beachcare winter conference which was held in Cambridge on 25th February 2016. The participants came from many of the 39 Rivercare/Beachcare groups across East Anglia. Rob Martyr introduced their work and enumerated the benefits, summed up as Healthy Rivers, Happy Volunteers. Then Fiona McKenna, the new Rivercare and Beachcare Project Officer for Lincolnshire, introduced herself, describing some of the projects she has worked on.

Victoria Wilkinson, Pollution Manager at Anglian Water, described their latest initiative to encourage people to spot and report pollution of water by sewage. They have set up a 24 hour telephone line: 03457 145 145, for reporting sewage pollution and are producing all sorts of publicity material. Her colleague, Jenny Cooper, is responsible for coastal waters and outlined many of the sources of pollution which affect bathing water quality.

Guy Belcher from Cambridge City Council talked about the improvements to Cherry Hinton Brook, a "rather nice chalk stream" and mentioned plans for improvements to a ditch on Coe Fen and Sheep's Green which it is hoped will make it easier for fish to move up and down the river. Finally, Cliff Carson described the many improvements being made on the Middle Levels of the fens, including constructing 79 artificial otter holts, putting up barn owl boxes and drilling holes for kingfishers.

After lunch there were short workshops on biodiversity, the pollution watch project and using the media, before some participants went for a walk along Cherry Hinton Brook. We saw quite a lot of rats around Sainsbury's, some moorhen, but no water voles – the consensus was it was too cold. Several people expressed an interest in coming back to see the Brook in the summer.

Monica Frisch

UTC Water Challenge Project

In February Holly Anderson gave a talk about the Brook to a group of young people at the University Technical College on Long Road. Year 12 students there, studying for both A level and BTEC, also participate in short “hands on” projects. We were invited to be involved with the Water Challenge Project, in which students look at 2 water courses in Cambridge: Hobson’s Conduit and Cherry Hinton Brook. Having researched aspects, such as invasive species and rainfall data, the students then walk both watercourses to carry out basic sampling techniques. Holly’s introductory talk gave an overview of the Brook, including its history, and she illustrated the talk with photographs showing the diversity of flora and fauna found on and around the Brook. As FCHB are also planning to monitor aspects of the Brook such as riverfly and macrophytes, we look forward to hearing about the students’ findings.

Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment Partnership Winter Conference

I represented FCHB at the Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment Partnership Winter Conference (www.cameopartnership.org) on 10th February in Bury St Edmunds. The purpose of this was to celebrate the achievements of CamEO’s member organisations over the last year, and to look at their work in relation to the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD, an EU piece of legislation, requires that the quality of all waterbodies (rivers, lakes and estuaries) must reach ‘good ecological status’ as soon as possible (with an absolute deadline of 2027). River Basin Management Plans have been developed to identify issues to guide catchment management and provide evidence of success and failure to implement the WFD. At present, Cherry Hinton Brook, along with some other water bodies in Cambridge, is not meeting the WFD requirements.

Participants at the meeting included businesses, farmers, water suppliers and people like us who actually do something! The focus of the conference was on how the government, Water Framework Directive, Defra, catchment based approaches, and even the little guys like us, can all tie up to get the most out of water. It was nice to get the bigger picture about water, and ideas were forthcoming about what we should do. For example, Kathy Hughes from WWF UK, who works on the Waterlife project which helps communities to contribute to water management, pointed out that we have no idea what waste disposal of bleach does to water and its wildlife. We have a long way to go before all the necessary links are made and all stakeholders are working together, but the Conference went some way towards achieving this.

Emmy Smart

Brook restoration update

Work to restore the Brook, funded by the City Council and the Cambridge and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership, is continuing. A volunteer work party put the final touches to the flow deflectors (see photo) at the end of January.



During the week of 7th March, the Council will be vacuuming silt out of the Brook in the vicinity of The Tins bridge. Later, the invasive water plant New Zealand Pigmyweed will be removed from the small area where it has become established in Cherry Hinton. In the summer, work will be carried out on the stretch of Brook running through Sainsbury’s car park to improve the bank vegetation and make the footpath passable. Volunteers will be needed for this, and we will publicise the dates nearer the time.

Sue Wells

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Monica Frisch (editor@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk) 7th March 2016