Agenda item 0424.205

Alconbury Brook Flood Group *Some of what's happened during April 2024*

Alconbury Weston Pond: We are delighted that at last work is well underway on the large biodiversity and flood storage pond behind Sallows Farm. Top-soil has been removed and work has started on removing the layers of clay below.

- The archaeology has been signed off, a small number of 5000 y.o. pot sheards were found and are now held by the Cambridgeshire Museum's Service.
- The pond is designed to take water diverted from a major ditch that runs down Vinegar Hill and previously flooded Hamerton Road. Up to 15,000m3 of water can be diverted into the large pond and then slowly released. The pond will store water from nearly 70 hectares of heavy clay agricultural land.
- It will have a slightly undulating bottom designed to trap sediment and improve water quality.
- When complete the site will include new hedgerow, and wildflowers. The design includes an island wildlife refuge.
- The Flood Group want to thank Anglian Water who have funded the majority of the project. We also want to thank the Baker family who have very kindly allowed us to convert their field into the pond and who have lent massive support throughout.
- In the long term we are interested in monitoring the carbon cost/benefit of constructing the pond.

Deeper Roots Project: Our experiments are intended to see if deeper rooted plants enable the soil to hold more water.

- We are collecting the data from the experiment using a phone ap called Soilmentor. We are delighted that in addition to Cowpasture Farm, 4 other farms are collecting data about soil health using the ap.
- As well as using deeper rooted varieties of plants, we are using recent research to see if plants can be encouraged to produce more roots. To do this we are using soil microbes, and tiny amounts of chemicals that switch-on root growth.
- Our experimental plots have now been sprayed and inoculated with microbial and stimulant additives.
- In order to keep a track of the microbes growing in the soil, we have successfully extracted microbial DNA from the test field. All of the DNA is currently being sequenced to give us a list of all of the microbes, and how much there is of each type. We will be setting out to increase the amount of beneficial microbes in the soil. We have found a way of growing some of these.
- We are also looking at how our plants can make better use of phosphate in the soil. This could mean less pollution in the brook and less fertiliser cost for farmers.
- Our thanks again goes to Cow Pasture Farm, to Natural England who have funded subscriptions to Soilmentor, to farmer partners, to Anglian Water for significant support, to Unium Bioscience who have donated the biostimulant chemicals and provided valuable advice and of course to our volunteers who have collected/processed samples.

Alconbury Flyover: National Highways have sourced funding for the area under the flyover on the left hand side opposite the brook. Their design team are in the process of putting together a plan. The area in the meantime has been cordoned off with barriers to help stop too many vehicles parking there as this has compacted the surface so water does not drain away.

Downstream Collaboration: A group consisting of the Brampton Holiday Inn, The Racecourse, the Flood Group and others affected by flooding downstream of the villages is meeting for the first time on April 30th , a meeting which will include walking from the Holiday Inn to the River Ouse to look at how flow along that stretch of the brook could be improved. We continue to value the support that the Racecourse and the Hotel give to our other projects.

EA flood alleviation Scheme (FAS): Data from the consultants who are doing the option modelling has started to be sent back to the EA team working on a FAS for the Alconbury's. There should be a little more news by the AGM (see below). One of many good reasons to attend.

Flood Group AGM 2024. Please attend our AGM at 7.00p.m. on May 31st at the Memorial Hall. We will provide and update on our work over the last year. There will be a chance to ask questions and make suggestions. Look forward to seeing you there!!

Contact us to volunteer at info@alconburybrookfloodgroup.uk

Donate if you can to www.justgiving.com/thealconburybrookfloodgroup

Agenda item 0424.206.

Cllr Ian Gardener report Alconbury Parish Council Meeting – April 2024

I attended the Fire Authority meeting to discuss the proposed closure of Kimbolton Fire Station along with Cllr Maclennan from Alconbury. The meeting was held on the 19th March at the Mandeville Hall in Kimbolton and was organised by Kimbolton PC and myself, as an opportunity for Parish Councils to give their views and thoughts on the proposed closure. Over 35 Cllrs were in attendance from the various Parishes across my County Division.

The FA have identified an opportunity to redistribute Operational resources to guarantee the services minimum resource requirement at times of high risk and demand. Initial analysis identifies the re-distribution could improve operational resources in higher risk areas of the county and enable enhancements to be made to the prevention and protection activities of the FA.

As a result, the FA is considering the potential impacts of re-distributing operational resources from the identified three low risk areas of Kimbolton, Manea and Sutton, to the higher risk areas of St Neots and Ely, by increasing the number of wholetime firefighters to provide guaranteed fire cover during the daytime seven days a week (St Neots & Ely are currently day -crewed Monday to Friday only).

All those that attended made it clear that they did not want Kimbolton Fire Station to close.

I think it is fair to say that the meeting was concerned about –

1. The potential lack of Fire Cover in the Rural area as it could take 20 -25 minutes for an appliance to reach this area.

2. It was pointed out that the area around Kimbolton Fire Station, did have some high-risk activities such as 5 schools, Boarding Houses, Firework factory, the A14, Little Hay Prison, Grafham Water Residential Centre, and the water itself etc

3. There was concern that the FA would not meet its own target of getting to fires in rural areas on average within 12 minutes.

4 The FA was asked about recruiting additional on- call firefighters, to ensure the station had its max compliant of firefighters, which is 12. The FA was also requested to look at extending the time allowed for firefighters to reach the station as this would expand the catchment area and hopefully increase the number of volunteers. The FA agreed to investigate this as Councillors mentioned that volunteers had been rejected because they lived more than 5 minutes away. Even if the volunteer Firefighters (On Call) took 7-8 minutes to get to the Fire station, the appliance could still be on the scene quicker than an appliance from St Neots or Huntingdon

Following the meetings with Parish Councils, Briefings with County and District Councillors, the FA will be bringing a paper to the Fire Authority in June on its proposals. I will keep the Parish updated and if required will ask for a public meeting.

I would like to reminder all residents that when you go to the polls on May 2nd for the Police & Crime Commissioner Election you will need to bring with you photo ID such as a Passport, Driving Licence, Bus Pass funded by UK Government to enable you to vote. This will be the same for the upcoming General Election later this year and the County Council Elections next May 25.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Business Plan for 2024/25 and the Refreshed Strategic Framework was published on the 01 April and is available on the County Council website. The plan was approved

by Full Council in February and provides a summary of our long-term vision and ambitions for Cambridgeshire and planned activities for the next 5 years, as well as key budget allocations and new savings and investments for this financial year.

The Green Waste Subscription Service has now come into effect. The cost is £57.50 per annum for the first bin the second bin will cost £30 per annum. Approximately 40% have signed up for the Green Bin Subscription Charge (Tax)

If residents have a query regarding Green Bins, they should call 01480 388584 or email wasteminimisation@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Alconbury PC is eligible for 10 Garden Bins which must be kept at a central location, to enable residents to bring garden waste for disposal free of charge. As HDC are not providing the village with a Saturday Freighter Service. The problem with this as I see it, is how does the PC dispose of any excess garden waste disposed of.

I continue to work with the Alconbury Flood Group, on issues such as flooding under the A1M viaduct, The weight limit on the B1043, which I am pleased to see that the PC are obtaining evidence regarding the number of HGV's using this route.

The County Council will be repairing the footpath outside Maritime and putting in bollards to prevent parking by HGV's after receiving monies from National Highways.

HDC's Director of Finance & Corporate Resources & S151 Officer is retiring at the end of June this year. Recruitment for this vacancy has already commenced.

HDC has allocated £350,000 to support the growth of Rural Businesses with a Grant from the Combined Authority (Mayor) following an award from the Government's Department For Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

HDC will fund 50% of the capital value of projects costing up to £150,000. The minimum award will be £5,000 based on a project value of £10,000. The maximum will be £75,000 based on a project value of £150,000.

For more information regarding the grant program, eligibility criteria and the application process please visit the Rural England Prosperity Fund page or contact the Rural Grants Team at HDC at ruralgrants@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

The Chair & Vice Chair and I visited Crown Gardens on the 17th April along with Jon Collen from HDC where we met the new Service Site Manager Amy Goodson.

There have not been many changes to residents recently. The Shed on the side of the property to Bell Lane is about to be installed, which will precent access to the rear of the properties on Bell Lane for Ball Games. Places for People are also looking into a new front door to prevent slamming and the associated noise. Professionals are being invited onto the site to provide support to residents and to keep them busy.

Cllr Ian Gardener

County & District Councillor for Alconbury

Alconbury Parish Council

Prepared by: Alison Brown (Clerk & RFO) Date: 8th April 2024

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: Cllr Tracy Gilbert (Chair) Date: 30th April 2024

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2024			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023			68,389.00
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024			47,626.64
				116,015.64
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024			45,450.04
A	**Cash in Hand 31/03/2024** (per Cash Book)			**70,565.60**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	31/03/2024	0.00	
	Unity Trust Bank Current T1	31/03/2024	34,365.45	
	Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	31/03/2024	36,200.15	
				70,565.60
	Less unpresented payments			
				70,565.60
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**70,565.60**
	A = B Checks out OK			

Created by Scribe