Agenda item: 0724. 046 Alconbury Brook Flood Group *Some of what's happened during July 2024*

Alderman's Pond/Alconbury Weston Pond: The last week has seen finishing touches including further removal of spoil and the restoration of the banks prior to sowing with deep rooted wild flowers, and native hedging. We have added a connection to another ditch so that the pond now collects rainwater run-off from over 100ha. Additional inlet and outlet culverts have been added. The inlet dam is also complete. Final touches such as a lifebuoy, safety signage, and an interpretation board to help users of the nearby footpath to understand how the pond works both for flood mitigation and wildlife habitat.

We were very pleased to host a visit by members of the Regional Flood and Coast Committee. The main function of the committee is to advise the Environment Agency on the use of funds to prevent flooding and coastal erosion. From our point of view, the visit was an opportunity to demonstrate how we as a group are serious and can competently provide excellent value and benefit. In addition the scale of flood management interventions in an impermeable catchment generating 4 million cubic metres (December 2020) of run-off in a few hours need to be BIG!

We have applied to the Huntingdonshire Futures grant scheme for restorative planting which will provide an environmental benefit, a volunteering opportunity and contribute to the flood mitigation provided by the site. (Fingers crossed).

Vinegar Hill east. It seems unlikely, given the advice we have received, that there will be archaeological or planning complications for this project since we plan to restore the ridge and furrow structures and restore the pond to it's original dimensions. We now have concept drawings ready to present to the landowner and hope that given their permission work will be able to take place in the spring.

Vinegar Hill rainwater capture gardens: We are pleased to say that Chelsey and Jared from our construction partners Silver Fern have completed their Streetworks training which means that we can now apply for the necessary permit for work to occur. The permitting is time consuming so it seems likely that work will be delayed until late autumn at the earliest.

New experiments: Cowpasture Farm have drilled another special deep rooted seed mix for us. This time 'winter wild bird' mix which is found in corners of many of the catchment farms. The objectives are much the same: to find if we can increase soil porosity and yield at the same time along with other measures.

Our Herbal Ley experiment at Cowpasture Farm has now been cut. We are in the process of analysing stacks of data. One thing that stands out is that where the soil is compacted, yields are smaller both above and below ground. The same small scale version of the experiment at Alconbury Allotments is demonstrating porosity differences between treatments.

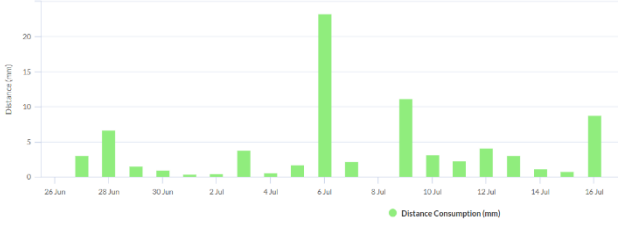
We are also looking at the widespread problem of leatherjackets which are the root eating larvae (not helpful if you want deep rooted plants). We will be trying a type of bacteria which attacks the larvae as a means of control. Our DNA works shows the bacteria are already there but only in small quantities.

Following our collaboration on sediment, **Rothampsted Research** (RR) have applied for £1.9 million to continue the work. In this catchment there is evidence that top-soil is being washed away. The RR bid if successful will include opportunities for some farmers in our cluster to have demonstration sediment capture approaches constructed on their land.

The **microplastics trap** funded by Mott Macdonald is now installed thanks to hard work by volunteers. Apart from checking that it's still there, it will be several months before the trap contents in analysed.

Thank you to everyone who visited our stall at the **village fete** and the wonderful volunteers who spent the afternoon talking non-stop, answering questions, and signing up new volunteers. (We look forward to working with you soon).

Our new **rain gauges** are working well. As can be seen here the beginning of July was pretty wet. If the same amount of rain had fallen on saturated soil we would have seen a very full brook.



Contact us to volunteer at info@alconburybrookfloodgroup.uk

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

Agenda item 0724.048.

Cllr Gardener report Alconbury Parish Council Meeting – July 2024

The final decision on this year's LHI Bid's for Huntingdonshire will be made at the 3rd September meeting of the Highways & Transportation Committee for both complex and non-complex schemes.

The County Council has launched its Active Travel Hierarchy consultation. This looks to introduce a way of prioritising maintenance activities to better reflect the use of the highway network by walkers, cyclists, and other non-motorised traffic. This will support the Councils Active Travel Strategy and its ambition to make walking or cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys, which in turn would reduce traffic congestion, improve journey times, and contribute to carbon reductions across the county.

The consultation is open until Monday 16th September, the consultation can be accessed via the website https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/active-travel-hierarchy

I have reported the damaged fence adjacent to the slip road and the A1M and reiterated the dangers as it is a bridleway to all users if a horse was to bolt. The situation will be raised at the next Operations meeting and hopefully I will obtain a timescale for repair.

The County Council is working with partners on a Poverty Strategy Commission to look at poverty across the County and what the system can do to overcome it. If you have any ideas on where we need to focus our efforts, have your say via the online survey on the CCC website or email povertycommission@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Coffee Pod recycling has arrived at the Cambridgeshire Recycling Centres. The new coffee pod bins offer residents an environmentally friendly way to separately dispose of both aluminium and plastic coffee pods.

Collected pods are cleaned, shredded, and made into new products, whilst the coffee grounds are used to help create renewable energy and soil improver.

The County Council has produced a new mapping tool to help you identify watercourses across Cambridgeshire. Which is colour coded to help you identify who is responsible for their maintenance. You are also able to find out further information about each watercourse by clicking on them.

To find out more about watercourse management, including consent, guidance, and enforcement, visit the County Council Website.

The Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is offering funded holiday scheme places for children in Cambridgeshire who are eligible for free school meals this summer. Any child receiving benefit related free school meals is eligible for the programme, which will run from 23rd July to 30 August.

As part of the programme eligible children will be able to access fun and entertaining opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge and at least one meal a day.

The District Council is looking to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement in Huntingdonshire. As I get more information as to when it comes into effect, I will of course let the PC know.

The Shop Front Grant Scheme is now available for our independent Rural businesses, after lobbying by rural councillors, which was previously only available for our Market Towns. Businesses can apply for a grant of up to £5000.

The scheme will close on the 1st September 2024 all independent businesses are encouraged to apply. For more information, eligibility and how to apply go to: Shop Front Improvements Grant - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Examples of improvements, but not limited to are: Repairs, repainting, signage, external lighting, window display equipment and lighting, repair of external stonework and brickwork,

Residents can now return their unwanted Green Bins and HDC will remove, residents need to complete the online form. HDC will only remove bins from residents who have requested for them to be removed. If you would still like to sign up to the Waste Subscription Service you can do, but you will pay for the full year £57.50 up to the 1st April 25. When you will be required to renew your subscription.

HDC, Cambridgeshire Police and Cambridgeshire Fire have joined forces to undertake a trail using Hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel in our refuse vehicles and some vans, sweepers, and mowers. This is significantly better for the environment than diesel or bio-diesel. The use of this fuel has already reduced the combined services carbon footprint by 72 tonnes of C02 compared to standard diesel fuel.

With regard to the possible Closure of the Kimbolton Fire Station, under the project exploring the relocating of the FA Operational resources.

The FA have open discussions with parish councils and have met with them to talk through ideas and listened to concerns. In particular the concerns around understanding the vital role of an On -Call firefighter and how the authority can recruit more people from the local community. The FA have taken this on board and will be implementing a plan to try and recruit more people to join.

Last month the FA started a trial to have two additional fire engines available at weekends using on call firefighters. So we can prove the concept of our initial proposal. We will evaluate the trial at stages along the way, but we would like to run the trial for a year before making any definite decisions about relocating resources.

As a result, the FA is unlikely to make any final decision about the future of Kimbolton Fire Station until at least the summer of 2025.

In the interim the FA will continue its recruitment drives to try and boost numbers further, The FA will also communicate wider across the county the challenges the on-call duty system faces, so that residents have a greater understanding. The FA will also be holding drop-in surgeries at Kimbolton Fire station, so that residents can get a greater understanding of the issues and impacts. It is hoped to run these in the new year once the authority has six months of trial data.

I will keep the PC updated on the situation.

Cllr Ian Gardener

County & District Councillor for Alconbury

Alconbury Parish Council

Prepared by: Alison Brown (Clerk & RFO) Date: 15th July 2024

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

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

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2024			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2024			70,565.60
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2024 - 30/06/2024			33,759.50
				104,325.10
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2024 - 30/06/2024			16,167.73
A	**Cash in Hand 30/06/2024** (per Cash Book)			**88,157.37**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/06/2024	0.00	
	Unity Trust Bank Current T1	30/06/2024	51,709.03	
	Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	30/06/2024	36,448.34	
				88,157.37
	Less unpresented payments			
				88,157.37
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**88,157.37**
	A = B Checks out OK			

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