Agenda item 0725.043.

The Alconbury Brook Flood Group

A little of what we have been doing during July 2025

Plants can reduce flood risk

The line of poles across the field in the photo separate two versions of a similar crop. Both versions were planted on the same day using the same drill. Our volunteers tested the soil from both test areas after 6 months. The same volunteers took identical samples on the same day.

The test strip on the right hand side of the photo is 6% more porous in other words has more space for water. More than 90 samples were taken so that we can be pretty certain that the finding was true.

Also the test strip on the right allows rainwater to soak into the surface more easily and rapidly.

Our analysis suggests that plant varieties with more sideways spreading roots and larger leaves may be helpful in improving porosity and infiltration.

It may be that partly at least larger leaves have an umbrella effect and protect the soil from compaction from heavy rain drops. We are repeating the experiment to investigate further and to check that this wasn't a one off result. We also want to see if the effect lasts. Cowpasture Farm are leaving the trial in place for another year.

6% greater porosity could mean up to 60 cubic metres of extra water storage per hectare, good news for flood prevention and for farmers whose crops depend on soil space for water and air.

Bid for NEW PONDS to improve water quality.

Unfortunately the quality of water in Alconbury Brook is only moderate at best. For example during the rain last month levels of pollutants were high enough to kill fish.

We are in the process of putting the finishing touches to a bid for £97,000 for 8 new ponds from LWEG (Local Water Environment Grant). Thanks to generous landowners we have 15 new projects in the pipeline. We will be choosing ones which best match the grant criteria which include: 'Working towards a 'good' water quality status' and 'Producing new high quality wetland habitats'. In addition we will be looking for projects that reduce flood risk.. which usually coincides with the grant criteria anyway.

The range of possible new projects include:

- **2 large ponds at Winwick**
- **2 pond restorations and a new pond at Thurning**
- **A sediment trap on the outflow from a reservoir. Sediment often carries pollution and blocks flow downstream.**
- **A cascade of leaky dams at Alconbury Weston**

We look forward to announcing the final list of projects for 2025/26 in the next bulletin. By then we expect to have applied for planning permission and watercourse consents for at least 2 new schemes. Many thanks to Mike Nunns who is the EA officer working with us to achieve the new funding.

Microplastics and T shirts- thank you!!

Tom has changed the microplastics trap for the fourth time

April has organised acquired excellent polo-shorts with our logo on. Great to see so many of these in evidence at the village fete.

Agenda item: 0725.044 - County & District Council Report – July 2025

The County Council Lib Dem Led Administration decided at the Full Council meeting in July to increase members allowances by 11% from 15th July.

The Administration has now reinstated the Health Committee, which is something Conservative Councillors have been calling for, for the last 4 years since its abolition by the previous administration.

The Government admits that it has a very ambitious timetable for LGR in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, with Shadow Elections to the new Unitary Authorities in 2027, with the new Local Government structure coming into effect in 2028.

The Leaders of the Seven Local authorities in Cambridgeshire have come up with 3 proposals for 2 Unitary Authorities, which will undertake all services currently provided by the County & District Councils.

The Proposals are –

Proposal A – Unitary 1 - Peterborough City, Huntingdonshire & Fenland

Unitary 2 – Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire & East Cambridgeshire.

Proposal B - Unitary 1 – Peterborough City, Huntingdonshire, Fenland & East Cambridgeshire.

Unitary 2 – Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire.

Proposal C – Unitary 1 – Peterborough City, East Cambridgeshire & Fenland

Unitary 2 - Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire & South Cambridgeshire.

Business Plans for each of these proposals are being drawn up to see if they are viable as per Government's requirements.

The two Labour MPs for Peterborough and NW Cambs are proposing an alternative solution for LGR which would see Three Unitary authorities, with Huntingdonshire split in two with the Alconbury ward going into the Greater Peterborough Unitary. The other two would be Mid Cambs Unitary covering Fenland, East Cambs and South Hunts including St Neots and a Greater Cambridge Unitary – South Cambs and Cambridge City.

The existing Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority could become an established Mayoral Strategic Authority from March 2026.

The Mayoral powers would cover –

Transport & Infrastructure, Skills and Employment Support, Housing & Strategic Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration, Environment & Net Zero, Health & Well Being and Public Service reform and Public Safety.

The Bill will empower Mayoral Strategic Authorities to take on Crime & Police Commissioner Functions and Fire & Rescue Functions.

It is proposed from May 2027 that the next Mayoral Elections will be by Supplementary Vote, this system was in place for the 2021 elections. Under this system voters are allowed to select a second preference candidate. If no candidate gains a majority of Fist Preference Votes, then the two candidates with the highest number of first preference votes enter a run off, (with all other

candidates eliminated) in which their second preference votes are added to the totals of the remaining two candidates to determine the winner.

Regarding HDC's Local Plan update, the Preferred Options Draft of the Local Plan should be out for Consultation in October. The Consultation period will be 6 weeks; Brampton Cross could be included in the Draft.

It is hoped to reopen the Sawtry Swimming Pool in Spring 26, following surveys of the pool structure in June 25, Tender preparation and procurement process during the Summer of 25 and the appointment of a Contractor to undertake the works in Autumn 25.

From the 28 July Huntingdonshire will become a Civil Enforcement Area. While this does not change where people can or cannot park, it does mean that powers to enforce existing parking restrictions will be available to HDC. The Council will employ Civil Enforcement Officers who will be able to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) for offences such as parking on double yellow lines or in disabled parking bays without a valid blue badge. This change is aimed at improving traffic flow, boosting compliance, and ensuring parking spaces are used fairly and safely

From August 25, HDC will begin carrying out enforcement of CPE. An initial period of 4-week warning period will be in place, during this time HDC will issue warning notices to vehicles observed to be in contravention of on street parking restrictions. This approach is intended to encourage compliance and promote positive parking behaviours. Following this period, Penalty Charge Notices will be issued to vehicles observed to be in contravention.

The Police will retain powers to enforce dangerous or obstructive parking, parking on pedestrian crossings and zig-zag lines and moving traffic offences such as speeding and driving through no entry zones.

Mike Gildersleeves has been appointed as the new HDC Deputy Chief Executive, he will also continue in his role as Corporate Director for Place

Weekly Food Waste Collections will commence by the 31st March 2026, this is a statutory service and must be provided by the Council. New Vehicles have been ordered to undertake the service and are expected in October 25. Two Caddies for each household are on order, these are 7ltr and 23ltr Caddies, these will be rolled out to residents from January 26.

The 7ltr Caddy is for use in the Kitchen with the 23ltr caddy being used to put out your weekly food waste for collection.

Cllr Ian Gardener

County & District Councillor for the CCC - Alconbury & Kimbolton Division & HDC – Alconbury Ward

Alconbury Parish Council

Prepared by: Alison Brown (Clerk & RFO) Date: 8th July 2025

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: Cllr Tracy Gilbert (Chair) Date: 29th July 2025

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025			76,745.24
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/06/2025			24,791.29
				101,536.53
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/06/2025			15,801.31
A	**Cash in Hand 30/06/2025** (per Cash Book)			**85,735.22**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/06/2025	0.00	
	Unity Trust Bank Current T1	30/06/2025	48,338.36	
	Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	30/06/2025	37,396.86	
				85,735.22
	Less unpresented payments			
				85,735.22
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**85,735.22**
	A = B Checks out OK			

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