Agenda item 0126.137

Alconbury Brook Flood Group

A little of what we have been doing during December 25 and January 26

Overland flow intercepted by pond restoration

- During January 26 we restored this medium sized pond near Old Weston, A significant amount of silt was removed.
- A mostly successful attempt to reconnect field drains to pond was made. Some more thought and tweaking needed though.
- This pond was previously eutrophic and is now an excellent new freshwater habitat. One 24hr bird-song recording completed as part of our environmental monitoring.
- Many thanks to Russ and Messrs DJ Tebbit

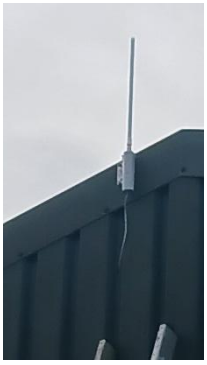
The curious case of the hilltop bog

- On the edge of the Brook catchment there are numerous hilltop ponds which probably served as watering holes along the ancient drovers roads… that's right on the top of hills!
- We have investigated an area of boggy ground which produces a lot of run-off. See satellite photographs.
- In the future this test site will hopefully become a new pond helping land drainage and rainfall storage.
- We dug 6 deep test pits all of which filled within 24 hours
- Many thanks to Sarah and Tim Brawn for their permission to carry out this investigation.

New land drains take water into pond

- Our work along Winwick brook has continued during January.
- New culverts and field drains now capture water from a 18ha field into a previously mostly dry pond (orange).
- We plan to create a new small pond (red) during February. This complements the large pond at Palfrey Field which we created in October (purple) and a large pond at Valley Farm, also created during October, further downstream. Many thanks to Russ and Messrs D J Tebbit . Thanks also to Silver Fern for their hard work on this project.

Remote sensing extension



Thanks to Danny Lister at Valley Farm, Winwick we have a new data transmitter on his barn. This captures data from nearby sensors and sends it to an internet server in Cambridge. Our gateways now cover nearly all of the catchment.

Storm Reports Our ability to gather accurate rainfall and flow data combined with publicly available Environment Agency information has been put to good use. Our reports on Storm Claudia and Goretti (plus 1) are attached.

Results confirm our previous assumptions about the amount and intensity of rainfall likely to cause flooding. They also suggest that conveyance from the villages could be speeded up.

Underground investigation shows no signs of archaeology

- We commissioned a 'Time Team' like investigation to check a potential pond site for archaeology using magnetometry.
- The machine in the picture can detect if the polarity of soil magnetism has changed.
- Preliminary findings suggest no archaeology, so we have moved to get permits to build a large pond next to a ditch which drains 1.6 square kilometres.
- Many thanks to the owners Milton Estates, tenants Craig and Ryan Baxter and Sumo Geophysics

Phosphite may save homes, money and fish!! Wow!!

Plants need a phosphate to grow and get it from the soil. On our heavy clay soil 98% of phosphate is chemically locked up so that plants find it hard to get. As a result, farmers add phosphate to soil to help plants. A medium sized field may require over £1000s worth of phosphate. Unfortunately, when it rains, much of this fertiliser is washed away into ditches.

We have been measuring phosphate levels in ditches and in the brook. After heavy rain it sometimes reaches levels which are dangerous for fish.

We have been working with three farms in the Alconbury Brook catchment who are using phosphite instead. Small amounts are sprayed onto plants in the autumn. It stimulates plants to grow more roots so they can search for the locked-up phosphate. The plants with better roots are more drought resistant in the summer too. Phosphite only costs £250 for a medium sized field.

In ditches next to fields where phosphite has been added rather than phosphate, our measurements so far show that levels of phosphate in the water are lower.

- Farmers get better plants for less money
- Fish get less phosphate
- We, the Flood Group get better root systems and more porous soil

Many thanks to Matt, Matt and Russ for letting us test their ditches and to Unium Bioscience for phosphite.

Agenda item: 0126.138.

Cllr Ian Gardener

Monthly Report January 26

Local Government Reorganisation

All the Local authorities in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough have submitted their preferred options to Government regarding Local Government Reorganisation, which has resulted in four options being submitted

The Options put forward to Government are Option A, by the County Council, which is for 2 unitaries, made up as follows -

Option A – Unitary 1 - Peterboro City, Huntingdonshire & Fenland

Unitary 2 – Cambridge City, South Cambs and East Cambs

Option B has been submitted by Cambridge City, South Cambs and East Cambs, which is again for 2 unitaries, made up of -

Option B - Unitary 1 – Peterboro City, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambs

Unitary 2 – Cambridge City & South Cambs

Option D has been submitted by Peterborough City and Fen; and Fenland District Council; which would split Cambridgeshire & Peterborough into 3 unitary councils which are:

Unitary 1 – Greater Peterborough - Peterborough City & North Hunts including the Kimbolton Ward which includes Catworth

Unitary 2 - Mid Cambs – Fenland, East Cambs and South Hunts including St Neots, Godmanchester, St Ives, Ramsey & Great Staughton Ward

Unitary 3 – Cambridge – Cambridge City & South Cambs

Proposal D sees Huntingdonshire split in two

Option E has been submitted by Huntingdonshire which would also be 3 Unitaries with Huntingdonshire as a Unitary Authority in its own right

Unitary 1 – Huntingdonshire

Unitary 2 – Peterborough City, Fenland & East Cambs

Unitary 3 - Cambridge City & South Cambs

So now it is Options A, B & D and E that government will have to consider.

Consultation on the 4 proposals will be undertaken between Jan and May 26.

Government will then announce its proposal for LGR in Cambridgeshire/ Peterborough in July 2026. With the necessary legislation being put before Parliament to approve in Autumn 26 recess

With Elections to the new Shadow unitary Authorities taking place in May 27. The new Unitary Authorities will take over running all services on 1 April 28.

BUISNESS PLAN & BUDGET PROPOSALS 26-27 to 28-29

Cambridgeshire County Council will present its Business Plan and Budget Proposals for 26-27 at the meeting of the Councils Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee on Thursday 29th January following comments on the draft plan at Budget proposals at committee

The County Council's Business plan and Budget for 26-27 will be debated at the Full Council meeting on 10th February.

The County Council is proposing an annual investment in our roads of £58.2 million this will see increased spending on Highways maintenance and would enable resurfacing, preventative treatments, upgrades to bridges, footpaths and cycleways as recommended by the draft asset management strategy.

Other proposals include the development of a draft lane rental scheme to improve management and co-ordination of streetworks, this will be subject to consultation and the decision-making process. This will allow the council to charge companies for the time that roadworks occupy the highway and therefore help to reduce disruption on the County's roads.

There will also be increased fees for streetworks and changes to the enforcement of car parking to include bank holidays, this is again subject to consultation etc

Guided Busway

Fencing is being installed to separate the Busway from the Maintenance track/the active travel route that runs alongside the busway. This is a commitment to Health & Safety on the Busway. Travel times on the Busway have increased whilst this work is implemented. People are reminded whilst this work is proceeding, they should keep to the maintenance track and only cross at formal crossing points.

Solar powered EV Charging points are now available at the St Ives Park & Ride site. Nine Chargers 22kw chargers have been installed, 8 of which are available for everyone to use with the ninth charger designated for disabled drivers. The chargers use renewable energy produced by solar panels mounted on canopies over the Park & Ride Site.

Highways

A New Highways reporting system went live on 22nd September

The new system known as Aurora reporting system introduces several improvements that will enhance the customer experience.

All Highways defects should be reported on the County Councils Highways Report It tool so that all faults are logged and can be processed according to severity.

Highways defects include potholes, blocked gullies, flooding, trees, overgrown hedges, obscured signs etc

LHI Bids for 26/27 have now closed.

20mph scheme applications will open on 26 January 26 and close on 27th March 26. With the prioritization programme being undertaken between April and July 26. With the successful schemes going for approval at the October 26 Committee meeting.

The County Council is currently preparing its Asset Management Strategy which will set out the approach to managing and maintaining each asset to secure best value, safety and asset longevity going forward. It is expected to present the final plan to committee in Spring 26 i.e. the March, Highways & Transportation Committee meeting.

Missing out on Pension Credit

In Cambridgeshire up to one in three people who are eligible for Pension Credit are not claiming it. The average Household could get around £186 per month.

Pension Credit is extra money to help with living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Claiming Pension Credit can also unlock other benefits including the Winter Fuel Payment, help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and hospital transport costs.

You can check eligibility and claim Pension Credit on the GOV.UK website.

Flooding

The CC has launched a New Flood Kit Grant to improve flooding resilience for our communities. The Grant is available to Community Flood Action Groups or Parish Councils; these kits are designed to help purchase essential items that support local response to flooding events.

Grants of up to £1000 are available to help local groups respond effectively to flooding and protect homes.

Go to the CCC website and type in Flood Kit Grant which will take you to the application form. Grants are on a first come first served basis, so the earlier you apply the better your chance of being successful.

District Council

The District Council, at its Special meeting on 14th January voted overwhelmingly for the District Council elections to go ahead in May 2026. All Councillors including myself, voted for the elections to go ahead, except one independent councillor who abstained. The Government has decided that the election in Huntingdonshire on May 7th can proceed

The Parish Council elections were unaffected by this decision as they will go ahead as normal.

The cost of the election to Parish councils will be reduced as they are occurring at the same time as the District Elections.

Delivery of the new food waste bins has commenced to households, with the new service commencing on 30th March 2026. You will receive 2 bins a 7 litre Kitchen Caddy and a bin to put out each week for collection. You can use biodegradable bin liners in your caddies. HDC will not be providing liners for these bins. HDC will be informing residents of their weekly collection dates in due course.

The Garden Waste Subscription Service is open for renewals from 01 April 26 to 31 March 27,

The cost per year is £57.50 for one green bin and £30.00 per additional bin up to three additional bins. If you subscribed by Direct Debit last year you won't need to do anything as your subscription will renew automatically. If you paid by card, you would need to renew your subscription for 26-27. If you have not subscribed to the Garden waste service before you are able to sign up for the service from 1 April 26 to 31 March 27.

Local Plan to 2046 update Preferred Options Consultation. The Preferred Options Draft Local Plan consultation closed on 17th December. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed and reviewed and further at technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

It is anticipated that the council will consult on the Proposed Local Plan submission in Summer 26. You can view the responses to the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 and the Sustainability Appraisal on HDC's Online Consultation Portal.

HDC would like to thank Parish Councils who helped to publicise this consultation with their communities.

The District Council has completed litter picking on the northbound A1 between Brampton Hut and the B1043 including the slip roads, following a request from myself, as your District Councillor.

Following my meeting with the CCC Drainage Team, the PC and the Flood Group on 21 Jan regarding the collapsed outlet on the Village Green. The CC now agrees it is their asset and their responsibility to repair rather than the PC who they originally claimed were responsible as the Riperian owners of the brook. The drainage team have instructed Highways to undertake the repair.

National Highways have informed me that all the damaged fencing adjacent on the northbound side of the A1M between Brampton Hut & the B1043 will be replaced by the 31st March 26

Cllr Ian Gardener – CCC Alconbury & Kimbolton Division & HDC Alconbury ward including Alconbury.

Alconbury Parish Council

Prepared by: Alison Brown (Clerk & RFO) Date: 12th January 2026

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: Cllr Tracy Gilbert (Chair) Date: 27th January 2026

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/12/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025			76,745.24
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/12/2025			50,150.44
				126,895.68
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/12/2025			38,142.34
A	**Cash in Hand 31/12/2025** (per Cash Book)			**88,753.34**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	31/12/2025	0.00	
	Unity Trust Bank Current T1	31/12/2025	50,937.13	
	Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	31/12/2025	37,816.21	
				88,753.34
	Less unpresented payments			
				88,753.34
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**88,753.34**
	A = B Checks out OK			

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