

Girton Parish Council

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The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of the meeting of Girton Parish Council held via video conference on Tuesday 20th October, 2020, at 7.00 p.m.

Residents were invited to submit written statements on issues of concern to any Councillor or the Clerk for presentation at item 20/109.1, with video-conference details for the public open session available on request from the Clerk.

Present: (Cllrs) Williams (Chairman), Cockley, Dashwood, de Lacey, Griffin (until the end of item 20/112.5), Kettle, Rodger, Thorrold,
Cllr L Harford (Cambs County Council) (until the end of item 20/112.5), Cllr T Bygott (South Cambs District Council) (until end of item 20/112.1)

Mrs A Bonnett (Girton Town Charity) (until end of item 20/112.1)

In attendance: S Cumming (Clerk), L Lawrence (Assistant Clerk)

20/106 Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

20/107 Apologies and Reasons for Absence. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Buckler, Godby, Hickford and Mitchell and the Chairman accepted their reasons for absence.

20/108 Members' declarations for items on the agenda. None.

20/109 Public Participation session on agenda items and matters of mutual interest:

1. Members of the Public. Written representations to be verbally presented by Councillors. There were no members of the public present at the meeting, and no written representations made to Councillors or the Clerk.

2. County Councillor's Report (*Appendix A*) Cllr Harford had nothing to add to her report but was happy to answer questions. She has a meeting with the Farm Estates Officer to talk about a link for equestrians to Manor Farm Road. Road-narrowing after Manor Farm Road has been discussed with John O'Donnell which would cost in the region of £8-£10k and would have an impact on traffic speeding before hitting the 20mph limit round the corner. John O'Donnell has suggested this could be a third-party-funded project as there is no programme of works to put this on. Cllr Harford asked what the Parish Council would like her to do and it was requested that this should be progressed. The narrowing of the bridge would allow the shared footbridge to increase in size and an appointment with Officers will be arranged to discuss options. Cllr Harford was thanked for her support with rectification and reinstatement of verges and footways following work being done by Cadent in Woodlands Park and the High Street. Cllr Harford is keen that agencies will be more involved after their works, with ad-hoc developers being made to pay for such

repairs. Cllrs. Harford and de Lacey agreed to speak together about this. The Chairman thanked Cllr Harford for her report.

3. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix B*) Cllr de Lacey said he had nothing to add to his written report but was happy to answer questions. The Chairman asked about progress in replacing the Girton village signs at the City boundary on Huntingdon road, and whether this had been raised with the University who have been reluctant to replace them. Cllr de Lacey believes that the signs will be on the verges of the road so will be a County Council issue. He will follow this up with them.

Cllr Bygott added to his written report that he has talked with the Environment Agency about lowering the base of the Beck brook at the Oakington road bridge, and has talked to Pat Matthews, SCDC Drainage Officer. He asked if anyone had a report from years ago illustrating this solution. Cllr de Lacey will share the report with Cllr Bygott. The Chairman thanked Cllrs de Lacey and Bygott for their reports.

4. Police Report. No report this month.

Item 20/115.2 was brought forward to this point to allow the Chair of GTC Trustees to leave the meeting earlier.

2. Girton Town Charity Report. The Chair of the Trustees gave an update that Suffolk Terrace is progressing well and is on schedule, with the properties to be ready by the end of the year. They will advertise for residents to move in during February 2021 if Covid restrictions allow and will hold a public Open Day. Planning conditions on the Michaels Close development are being worked through by Northmores, with tenders scheduled to be completed by the end of November. The Age UK Warden and Elderly Persons Co-Ordinator have been able to support village residents and are fully employed. Camsight have managed to take 116 appointments from village residents. CarePlus is also working well, for residents when they need additional care and support, eg on release from hospital. The hospital taxi scheme is also taking more people to appointments at the biomedical campus and has been extended to cover Covid tests at Newmarket, with the taxi scheme allowance increased to allow for this. Regarding Girton Youth Project, this is being reviewed because of low uptake and declining membership. GTC has been in discussion with YMCA Trinity for the past 18 months. The agreement ran over a three-year basis at £80k per annum to run the scheme. A review meeting with YMCA scheduled for April did not go ahead because of Covid. Plans to restart in September were not in line with Covid regulations. With regret, notice has been served on the agreement, which terminates at the end of November. There are no plans to restart GYP in the way it was running previously, but GTC would be happy to look at an alternative supplier. It was queried whether volunteers could lead it, and if this were to happen they could make a funding proposal to GTC. The Town Charity also supports Girton Colts who have 37 members, plus Kings Junior Singers and afterschool clubs. The Town Charity is not able to fund charities to the same level as previously as income has been affected by the Covid pandemic, (this has affected support to eg Arthur Rank Hospice, East Anglia Children's Hospice). Village clubs and societies are still supported. The Charity's primary motivation is almshouses and older residents. It was suggested that it would be useful to mention in Girton Parish News that this is an hiatus in coverage for young people and ask if there are suggestions, even for in a year's time. There is an active and successful Youth Bus visiting other villages. The repairs to the artistic fence haven't been finished because the substrate has to settle and oxidise with the right weather conditions but will hopefully be completed in the next week. The Chairman thanked the Chair of GTC Trustees for her report.

20/110 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15th September, 2020 (previously circulated). The Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley, and approved with two abstentions.

20/111 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only)

20/101.4 An order has been placed for the replacement Log lift fitness equipment.

20/101.6-7 The tree surgeons appointed for works at Mayfield Triangle are also to meet with the Chairman regarding Weavers Field tree works.

20/101.8 A quotation for installation of car park bollards has been requested and will hopefully be brought to the next meeting.

Regarding the deferred decision on the Log lift, the Chairman investigated alternatives but there is nothing similar available so it was decided to go ahead with installation by Fenland Leisure Products, who will also look at the broken see-saw when they are doing this. Tree surgeons are awaited at Weavers Field and Mayfield Triangle. It is proving difficult to get written quotations for the car park bollards and we continue to search for alternatives.

20/112 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.

1. To agree PC involvement in selection of a Parish Council-appointed Trustee to Girton Town Charity. GTC Chair had proposed making the current vacancy a PC appointment and progressing a candidate under consideration for this. The Charity is keen to get the current applicant on board as the Trustees are not at full capacity as Mrs D Macklin has left. The Chairman questioned why this was necessary and suggested that the PC be fully involved in recruitment of the upcoming PC appointed position. The Chair of GTC Trustees said it was historically difficult to appoint both GTC and GPC trustees, and the charity has worked on a blanket vacancy notice. The Chairman proposed a motion to advertise for a GPC appointed trustee to be advertised in Girton Parish News in December, with a closing date of 31st December, the Parish Council to take part in the process with the Vice-Chair being part of the interview panel, seconded by Cllr Griffin. Mrs Bonnett has standard wording for the advert and will provide this. Cllr de Lacey proposed an amended motion, to state that notwithstanding the agreement we allow the current candidate to be a GPC appointee, but there was no seconder. Mrs Bonnett commented that GTC Trustees have specific skillsets to be looked for and most appointments have been made through networking. The Chairman's proposal was approved unanimously.

Cllr Bygott and Mrs Bonnett left the meeting at this point.

2. To nominate a Parish Councillor to explore options for litter-picking in Girton. The Pavilion refurbishment project is being assisted by a resident who asked for this item to be put on the agenda. During current restrictions, we are limited in times to go out with other people and encouraged to stay at home, so this item could be postponed until the Spring. A number of residents already litter pick and may not wish to be organised, so we firstly need to find out what is already being done.

3. To consider the re-wilding of grass verges in the village in 2021. This idea had been suggested to Cllr de Lacey by a resident, as a response to Eddington's verges. A subcommittee was proposed to see what is involved in rewilding an area and if successful to look to presenting a business case. It was suggested that it would take a minimum of two years to rewild a verge. Cllrs Dashwood, Griffin, de Lacey and Mitchell would be happy to join a subcommittee to be led by Cllr Rodger.

4. To resolve to approach the University about reinstatement of the Girton Boundary signs on Huntingdon Road. This item is already in-hand, and Cllrs de Lacey and Harford need to talk to County Officers.
5. To approve a contractor to reduce canopy of trees overhanging gardens adjacent to the car park entrance road. There are three or four large trees overhanging a resident's garden and we are trying to get quotations for cutting these back. The Chairman proposed that the Clerk approach tree surgeons for cost quotations and with two Councillors, make a decision based on price and availability, seconded by Cllr Cockley. Approved unanimously.
County Councillor Harford and Cllr Griffin left the meeting at this point.
6. To authorise the Pavilion refurbishment Task and Finish group to initiate and progress the contractor procurement process. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Dashwood. The Task and Finish Group has discussed the many ways in which we can procure contractors and need to decide whether we appoint an architect who then procures other contractors. It was queried if a budget should be set for this. Prof D Adamson is a free advisor to the group, which is made up of Cllrs Williams, Hickford, Mitchell and Cockley. Cllr Cockley suggested that Cllr de Lacey joins the group but regretfully he is unable to commit the time. The motion was approved unanimously.
7. To approve a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Cllr Dashwood proposed that the Parish Council donation be raised to £100 as it has been a difficult year for the Appeal as we can't have door-to-door collections. Seconded by Cllr Cockley. The Chairman proposed an amendment that £200 be donated, agreed by Cllr Dashwood, and approved unanimously.
8. To consider mandatory temperature checks for sports facilities users. Cllr Cockley and the Assistant Clerk have worked with Girton Colts regarding temperature checks, but there have been reports of other users not abiding by protocols. The Chairman proposed that all user groups be written to strongly reinforcing the need to adhere to protocols regarding social distancing and hand gel usage and routine adoption of temperature checks for all participants in activities. Seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously.

20/113 Finance and Resource Management

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix C*). Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley. The Clerk was asked to explain why a tire repair had been charged for, because a stake had been left in the ground. The grounds man is to be spoken to about this. The planning application invoice from Cheffins should be handled in our accounts as being part of the Pavilion project. Approved with one abstention.
2. To note any significant variance from usual levels of monthly income/expenditure. None.

20/114 Correspondence (to be received) The Chairman has responded at length to an email from a resident questioning VAT on lettings, Pavilion extension and 20mph zone 'without consultation'.

20/115 To receive reports

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix D*) The Chairman has spoken with the Chairman of Cottenham Parish Council regarding VAT registration. Cottenham PC so registered in order to reclaim VAT on their building works and he considers this the only safe way of being able to reclaim the large amount of VAT on our

proposed Pavilion extension. Registration can be back dated so we can also reclaim VAT on the MUGA carpet and lighting and other claims for 2016-17. Further down the line we should investigate management of some of our facilities by a management committee which could be VAT exempt.

2. Girton Town Charity Report. This item had been brought forward at the meeting (see above).

3. Pavilion Refurbishment project

- Procurement process. The Task & Finish Group are in the process of meeting to discuss this.

- loft clearance Village clubs have been asked to clear their belongings and Cllr Mitchell is liaising with County Archives regarding document storage.

4. Water Management report (*Appendix E*) During recent rain, Beck Brook rose but not to any worrying level, whilst the ditches along the NMU took in some water but only what they are supposed to do.

20/116 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.

Letter regarding dog fouling, dog waking and litter to be brought back to the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

APPENDIX A

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report for Girton Parish Council - 20 October 2020

Health & Social Care An agenda item for the September meeting of Adults committee included the results of a survey carried out to determine service user experience. The survey covered the period 2018/19 but one item particularly attracted my interest. Even at that time South Cambridgeshire came out highest on those who said they had as much social contact as they wanted, or at least felt they had adequate social contact. This has to be a very positive reflection of the community spirit in our rural villages which has been further emphasised by the excellent work done by local support groups throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. However, a separate item on the Adults committee agenda reported that following the first phase of the pandemic it was thought that, among other impacts, isolation would become the new pandemic. That same report was also on the agenda for the September meeting of Children & Young People committee. The impact of the pandemic so far, whilst different, has also been profound for children and young people, who were affected by disruption to their education and restrictions on their very high degree of need for socialising with their peers. Many have also been affected by seeing the stress being caused to their parents and carers through financial pressures. As the days shorten and the weather becomes increasingly less supportive of outside activities and particularly as we all recognise that Covid-19 is still among us and restrictions on our social lives have to continue, I am pleased to see the simple ideas that communities are coming up with to prevent people feeling lonely or to support mental health and wellbeing. It is also interesting to note that many funding sources are now focused on Covid-19 recovery so may be supportive of any projects that the community might like to pursue. On the subject of Covid-19, we are all aware that nationally numbers of cases are rising again and hospital admissions are also seeing an increase. This is a link to the most recent Covid-19 data that I have

received for Cambridgeshire: <https://bit.ly/3dC2y2S> The figures for SCambs, whilst rising, remain lower than the national average and certainly much lower than in some of the areas of the country which are as a consequence, now experiencing much greater restrictions. This makes it all the more necessary that we all remember the basics that we have had instilled into us from the start, now neatly summarised by the government as “Hands - Face - Space”. The national shortage of lab testing capacity for Covid-19 has also been felt locally. The return of children to school with their usual autumnal colds and coughs and the similarity of those symptoms to those of Covid-19 has of course put additional pressure on the system and I have had to follow up recently on concerns that residents have brought to my attention. At the September meeting of Health committee, members received a report from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. This is the trust that is responsible for delivery of mental health services and community physical health services. As with other parts of the NHS, many of the trust’s staff were redeployed to Covid-19 related roles. The consequence of this was the complete suspension of some services such as stepped care therapy, memory assessment service, tissue viability and falls. There was also a service reduction with the trust accepting only urgent/critical referrals. Since June the trust has been returning staff to their previous roles and restoring service levels. All services have now re-opened, although some are not operating from as many sites as they did previously. The use of virtual consultations continues with face to face services being provided where this is the only option. Virtual consultations are currently running at over 50% of the total. Finally, on the subject of health, please can I urge everyone who is eligible, to have a flu jab this year and to encourage others to do so. More people are eligible this year but we have been advised that there is no shortage of vaccine.

Education In July this year the government announced a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020/2021 academic year. This was allocated to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. The coronavirus catch-up premium funding is available for all state-funded mainstream/special schools and alternative provision. The Education and Skills Funding Authority has now published details of the provisional allocation of this funding. A first payment of 25% of the provisional allocation was due to be paid to local academies like Girton Primary School on 08 October. The payment is calculated on a full entitlement of £80 per pupil [aged 4 years or over] and for the number of pupils reported in the October 2019 census. Household Recycling Centres A reminder that opening times from October to March are: Monday to Sunday 9am - 4pm [or dusk if earlier] and you still need to book an appointment to visit the recycling centres. Bookings can be made on line at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/bookingsystem-for-household-recycling-centres> or phone: 0345 045 5207 Local matters I have chased progress on outstanding highways issues and will provide any updates verbally at your meeting. I look forward to seeing you all tomorrow evening. Meanwhile, please do email or phone me with any comments or questions.

Take care. Stay safe.

Lynda - lyndaharford@icloud.com; 01954 251775/07889 131022; follow me on Twitter: @2whit2who

APPENDIX B

i) District Councillor’s Report from Cllr Douglas de Lacey

At Council on 24 September we were pleased after national negotiations to raise our earlier 2% pay award to staff to 2.75%. It is still a poor reward for the sterling work our officers have performed during this testing period.

We had a very long member motion from the leader of the opposition on bullying, though our Code of Conduct already covers it. I annoyed both sides by refusing a LibDem motion for significant changes but accepting one which immediately referred the motion to the Civic Affairs Committee.

We also approved a motion to explore the possibility of taking over authority from the police for imposing fines for parking offences, and one to support a parliamentary private member's Local Electricity Bill.

I mentioned a while back that the Centre for Public Scrutiny (now the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, CfGS) had been asked to investigate how our Scrutiny Committee is working. Covid has slowed down the process so we have only just had a response and a Webinar on their findings. Despite some very valuable comments it was not clear that the subsequent Scrutiny meeting on 7 October really took them on board in its debates.

I have had a long meeting with Warren Forsyth who is now in charge of the Eddington development. A consultation on Phase 2 has just ended, although the University has yet to consider whether Phase 2 should go ahead at all.

We moved on to discussing the roadside verges: Eddington will be happy to help if we want to emulate theirs. I also raised the question of whether the much-vaunted water saving built into the design of Eddington has actually been realised, but am told that this will not be known for at least another year.

I am very pleased that the Council is offering all staff and Councillors a free flu vaccine, a sensible step as our exposure to covid in South Cambs seems to be increasing significantly, though we are still at the 0--2 level in Girton.

I mentioned last month that the Call for Sites for the Local Plan has resulted in a very large number of proposals: some seven times the need; and that officers are now sifting through the result weeding out the manifestly unsuitable. Tories are now accusing the LibDems of creating unnecessary fear by releasing the figures so early (though this is an officer issue, not an administrative one). It makes a change from their previous charges of a lack of transparency.

Douglas de Lacey

ii) District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott – 20th Oct 2020

District Council unlawfully withheld Parish Precepts It has been confirmed by South Cambridgeshire District Council's Administration that in April this year, when parish councils were contacted to be told that the District would need to delay some of the payments to the parishes, the District Council had no legal powers to do so. The legislation states that 50% of a parish's precept must be paid to the parish within one month of the start of the financial year. Opposition District Councillors were informed after the parish councils had been contacted. Some of my colleagues raised the legality of this but never felt that they had a satisfactory answer. This led to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance making a statement at September's Full Council meeting on the matter. This can be viewed on the SCDC website. Whilst I appreciate we are all living through difficult times, if we as non-executive members of the council could see that what was happening was unlawful then there is no reasonable excuse for cabinet members not to have been aware. Below is a link to The Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992 for more information about the payment requirements and interest on late payment of funds:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2428/contents/made>.

Civil Parking Enforcement At September's full council meeting, a motion was passed for the District council to look into taking over parking enforcement. South Cambridgeshire is one of only 13 authorities in England that does not have Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). With the level of serious crimes that our police force is dealing with, it is understandable why they cannot devote a large portion of their time to parking problems. If the District council were able to enforce parking within its area, it would have a real chance of tackling local parking problems. This motion had cross party support and it gives the possibility that something can be achieved to reduce the parking misery faced by many of our residents, improving the lives of those most seriously affected. The Government is also consulting on extending CPE powers to include parking that obstructs the pavement. The consultation, which closes on 22nd November 2020, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parkingoptions-for-change>. Note that the enforcement of existing laws and the creation of new parking restrictions are separate issues. We will need to pay close attention to ensure that having a civil enforcement power does not create an incentive to introduce new restrictions purely to raise revenue or to extend the reach of the 'nanny state'. The point is that having regulations that are not enforced creates a situation of lawlessness, and this erodes the civic fabric of our society.

National Test and Trace Support scheme Residents receiving certain benefits can now apply for a new Test & Trace self-isolation support payment of £500 if they lose income as a result of not being able to work. The Government recently announced the new payment, aimed at helping make up for any lost income people face due to having to stay at home and self-isolate, and tasked local authorities to have this in place by 12 October, with payments backdated to 28 September. To be eligible for the self-isolation support payment you must meet all the following criteria: • you are claiming at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit, • you have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace because you have tested positive for coronavirus or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, • you are employed or self-employed, and • you cannot work from home and will lose income as a result. An NHS Test & Trace ID number, bank statement, and proof of employment or self-assessment returns will need to be provided. Payment is sent within three working days. Applications can be made at:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-payment/> More information can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-package-to-support-and-enforce-self-isolation>

Cllr Tom Bygott cllr@bygott.net 07765 475 513

APPENDIX C
Girton Parish Council Payments Schedule for October 2020
(circulated separately)

APPENDIX D
Chairman's Report

14th October 2020

Our planning application for the Pavilion extension was submitted on September 14th and we await developments. A letter informing all immediate neighbours was sent out soon afterwards. A letter of concern that the School will be able to retain full access from the service road during building works has been received. This is of course essential for other users anyway but we will ensure that this is stipulated in any building contract that is entered into and will liaise with the School on the time frame for the work. We have been researching the optimum Procurement route for the project and are taking advice from an expert in the area who lives in the village. We have requested an up to date statement of our current position from our architect and will then decide the preferred process for managing the project. Shahila and Susie are progressing the work to clear the loft and office space and will report on this at our monthly meeting.

Advice from a neighbouring Parish is that we should register for VAT as any other means of recovery is open to challenge further down the line. It will also allow us to reclaim VAT on the MUGA refurbishment. We can always explore management of our facilities by a management board further down the line to avoid levying VAT on lettings in future.

The formal period of consultation on the 20mph limit zone installation is underway on the County Council Website. This is notified on the village website. One resident wrote complaining that this matter had not been previously publicised. A response has been provided pointing out the consultation in early 2019 and subsequent reports in minutes and the GPN. We have at last been notified that our speed monitoring equipment provided under the 2019 LHI application is to be delivered next week.

Discussions have taken place with the Rector and Church members concerning arrangements for this year's Remembrance service activities. These will be conducted as far as possible on the Recreation ground.

The cost estimate for repair of the playground seesaw is prohibitive so a quotation for inspection to confirm this cost has been requested. Alternative suppliers for a Trim Trail Log Lift do not exist. The only one that is anything like the existing in design and appearance is not approved for unsupervised use, so not appropriate. A quote from Fenland Leisure which removes charges for various elements of the installation reducing the cost by some £500 was agreed with the Clerk and Vice-Chair and an order placed.

A verbal quotation received for installation of bollards along the car park footpath is considerably cheaper than that previously submitted by Mead. However attempts to get this confirmed in writing have failed to date. Others will be pursued.

The publication of the list of submitted sites in the South Cambs. Local Plan development 'Call for Sites' led to some consternation in the village. I have written to a number who expressed concern reiterating that these are suggestions from would-be developers and do not have any status beyond that. Several have been suggested and rejected in earlier years. They may eventually be accepted or not as may the new ones on the golf course practice field opposite Gretton School the land along Oakington Road and the land behind Marks Way and Redgate Road.

Haydn Williams

APPENDIX E

Water Management Report, October 2020

Despite recent heavy rainstorms, both the Beck Brook and Washpit have coped well, and have never been in danger of overflowing.

The ditches alongside the NMU also appear to be coping with intermittent heavy rain storms. Fear that they would drain into Washpit and thence cause problems seem at the moment to be unfounded. As I walk this route regularly I will continue to monitor this.

The Environment Agency has cleared the vegetation from the banks of the brook on the Histon side of the Oakington Road Bridge. Unfortunately their machinery appears to have damaged some of the retaining structures, though for the moment these are still effective.

During a routine inspection of the brook, Professor Irvine and I discovered some undercutting of the bank in a few places on the Fairway side. The Golf Course side of the brook has recently been cleared of vegetation, and appears to be in good order.

Councillor de Lacey expressed concern about a delay of 24 hours in registering the water levels of the brook through the monitoring equipment. I emailed my Environment Agency contact, Harry Chalk, and his reply is quoted below:

In normal conditions (i.e. no risk of flooding), the gauge is set to update every day or so. Each monitoring site is configured slightly differently, but generally speaking when the telemetry updates, it has a small

network cost and sometimes battery issues if updated too often. This is why the gauges are set to update daily, when regular monitoring of the river level is not required.

The gauge will start updating more often when our duty team need to start monitoring the watercourse more closely (i.e. levels high and rising). I've had a quick look at what happened following the heavy rainfall on the 23rd – 24th September, and whilst there was quite a lot of rain, the Brook only had a small reaction (the catchment was probably still quite dry from the summer). As such, the risk of flooding didn't materialise and the gauge wasn't set to update more often than 24 hours. So in summary, if there was a risk of property flooding then the gauge should be updating regularly.

All this said, I understand how valuable it is for you as a community to see the river level updating online after heavy rainfall. I can investigate setting a definitive level at which the gauge starts to update more regularly (say every 15 minutes), and when the Brook falls below this level again it would revert back to updating once a day.

I read into this that the Environment Agency is keeping on top of the situation, and that we can rest easy that should extreme rainfall occur, the monitoring will increase and become more immediate.

Mary Rodger

16 October 2020