

## **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 15th December, 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 20/131.2, with video-conference details for the public open session available on request from the Clerk.*

**Present:** (Cllrs) Williams (Chairman), Cockley, Dashwood, de Lacey (until the end of item 20/1134.3), Griffin, Kettle, Mitchell, Rodger.

Cllr L Harford (Cambs County Council)

Mrs A Bonnett (Girton Town Charity)

1 member of the public (until the end of item 20/131.1)

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

**20/128 Welcome from the Chairman.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially County Councillor Harford, the Chair of the Trustees of Girton Town Charity, and the member of the public.

**20/129 Apologies and Reasons for Absence.** Apologies for absence had been received from District Councillor Bygott and the Council accepted his reason for absence.

**20/130 Members' declarations for items on the agenda.** None.

#### **20/131 Public Participation session on agenda items and matters of mutual interest:**

1. Presentation on Girton Men's Shed proposal by Mr S Clift. Mr Clift explained that, although he has worked with older residents for a number of years, Men's Shed would serve all age groups. A couple of years ago, he had attended the Annual Parish Meeting where he spoke about Men's Shed. It had been hoped to have a site at Abbeyfield in Histon but then the property had closed. Most men have a retreat and Men's Shed tries to emulate the 'shed at the end of the garden'. Men tend not to speak about mental health issues but are increasingly realising that it's good to talk. Men's Shed was set up in Australia to try to reduce suicides amongst men. Men's Shed could bring some of these mental health issues under control and would reach out across South Cambs. Healthcare Workess and Social Workers could use it to help people they work with, and Patricia Johnston (Elderly Persons' Co-ordinator) could also direct people to it. Men and women can gather together to learn and pass on skills, renovate, make things and feel a sense of achievement, as well as socialise and have fun. Club 55 has come to a halt for indoor activities but Men's Shed would be an ideal place to reinvent Club 55, but more money would need to be

raised. Mr Clift thanked the Council for letting him speak to them this evening, and answered questions on what size of building would be needed: 20m x 20m (The size was a surprise to Councillors and it was later amended to 20ft x 20ft **after the meeting**). It would be ideally situated by The Pavilion because of car parking, access to kitchen and toilet facilities, and the chance to watch events on the Recreation Ground. There would need to be tools and work benches in one area, with another quieter area for refreshments. Whilst Councillors supported the concept and the mental health benefits, they challenged the size and felt that a Management Committee would be needed to oversee it. Six South Cambs villages have Men's Sheds (eg Swavesey, Hauxton and Bar Hill) with another four planned in a 20-mile radius of Girton.

The Chairman thanked Mr Clift, who left the meeting at this point.

2. Members of the Public. Written representations to be verbally presented by Councillors None.

3. County Councillor's Report (*Appendix A*) Cllr Harford's cautiously optimistic that the equestrian link to the bridleway near Oakington Road bridge will proceed, and was thanked by Cllr Hickford for her work on this which would be of benefit to dog walkers too. The Chairman asked about the 'wider lighting scheme' referred to by Highways England which was now delaying the installation of the promised Oakington Road lighting, but Cllr Harford has no details yet. The speed monitoring equipment provided under the Local Highways Initiative will need someone to manage it, and perhaps Speedwatch volunteers from Girton and Eddington could help with this. Cllr Harford commended the Chairman's work getting funding and planning permission for the Pavilion modifications.

4. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix B*). Cllr de Lacey spoke about the Zero Carbon Communities scheme which has already given out over £50K to reduce carbon footprint. Girton could think about applying for this, as it could cover PV panels. The tree planting mentioned in his report went ahead on 11th December. Cllr de Lacey was asked about land allocation for housing in the local plan and how much time will be given for consultation with villagers. It was confirmed that Northstowe has a Town Council as it was always planned to be a town, and Cambourne's growth means this is also a town now. If there are any questions arising from Cllr Bygott's report, these should be emailed to him.

5. Police Report. No report this month.

### **20/132 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th November, 2020**

(*previously circulated*). Corrections were made as the two officer errors mentioned in 20/120 were not related to the Fews Lane Consortium. Cllr Harford was surprised that the vandalism to the bus sign had happened in Girton, and Cambs County Council will replace it. The Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley, and approved with one abstention.

### **20/133 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only)**

20/123 Further quotations have been sought for the car park bollards installation.

Two quotations have now been received, with a third expected by New Year.

The AGAR (Annual Return) review has been received from the external auditors and is without comment. This has been uploaded to the website.

### **20/134 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.**

1. To discuss a proposal for the siting of Men's Shed at Girton Recreation Ground. This item was deferred as the space stated to be required was problematic. 2. To discuss SCDC's proposal for installation

of vehicle charging points at Girton Recreation Ground Car Park (details circulated to Councillors). It was queried why the chargers could not be located in a lay-by, e.g. outside Cotton Hall or elsewhere rather than taking up parking spaces. It was also argued that it would be better to place many more charging points in larger car parks such as Park and Rides or at Supermarkets. Parking spaces will also shortly be affected by the Pavilion works. Eddington has a number of charging points. The Chairman proposed that the Council vote on the motion that installation of charging points be allowed, seconded by Cllr de Lacey. The motion was rejected by four votes with two abstentions.

3. To approve the wording and number of guidance signs for dog-walkers at Girton Recreation Ground. Cllr Cockley reported that this is a work in progress. The Parochial Church Council is to discuss an extended dog walking route through the churchyard. Two companies have quoted for provision of signage with one pending, and the wording can still be changed if necessary. Signs will cost about £1K, with costs of approx. £300 for an external company to fix them. Cllr Cockley proposed that the expenditure be approved with the map to be added, seconded by the Chairman, and approved unanimously.

Cllr de Lacey left the meeting at this point.

4. To approve the appointment of two Parish Council-appointed Trustees for Cotton Hall (*Appendix C*). Cllr Mitchell suggested that the positions be advertised in Girton Parish News and to the volunteer groups, and the Clerk will also ask members of Girton Women's Institute.

5. To consider renewing membership of Cambridgeshire ACRE for 2021-22 (*Appendix D*). Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously.

### **20/135 Finance and Resource Management**

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix E*). BT payment was withheld until the billing rate is checked. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Mitchell and approved unanimously.

2. To note any significant variance from usual levels of monthly income/expenditure. None.

### **20/136 Correspondence (to be received)**

All correspondence had been emailed to Councillors.

### **20/137 To receive reports**

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix F*) Regarding the Pavilion extension, there is a meeting with D Adamson on 16th December to progress development of the brief and schedule.

2. Girton Town Charity Report. Mrs Bonnett reported that the GTC Audit has been completed and a precis of the Annual Report and the past year's events will be sent to all households. Suffolk Terrace will be finished by Friday 18th December. Cllr. Rodger congratulated the Charity on the quality of the build. - The houses have been advertised and 13 applications have been received from families with a close connection to the village. Residents have now been appointed for Suffolk Terrace and two family homes in Centenary Court. Tenants will have 3-year appointments, but can be reviewed for another two years. Almshouses allow for a fixed term appointments for residents. Six months before the lease expires, Notice to Leave and access to the Homelink social housing registry. Cllr Harford pointed out that residents don't move up the banding for social housing unless they receive an eviction order and GTC

gives a false sense of security because some people will never build up the reserves to leave. Mrs Bonnet said that Cambridge Housing Society support GTC very well and are careful not to set up people to fail. The St Michael's Close tender has gone out to contractors and a stopping up order for Michaels Close was in process. The Chairman thanked Mrs Bonnett for her report.

3. Water Management Report (*Appendix G*) Cllr Rodger reported that Washpit Lane and Duck End were impassable on 4th December, and, judging by the debris the next day, the brook had burst its banks. The Highways Agency is to be alerted to the NMU ditch filling with water, with Cllr Harford to contact local Lead Flood Officers. The Water Management Team are trying to gauge the effect of Eddington and the A14 works on village flood risk. Town End Close pond is also full.

### **20/138 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.**

Following a positive Covid test for a Pavilion user, users are to be given Parish Council phone numbers to call to speed up the reporting process.

Regarding putting up Christmas lights on Cotton Hall and the Pavilion, the Chairman will put up the existing mains powered lights on the Pavilion as the battery-operated ones appear to be lacking in power. They may be adequate for Cotton Hall as they can be multi-stranded. Cllr Griffin offered assistance if necessary.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report Girton Parish Council - 15 December 2020 meeting**

**Health & Social Care** As you will be aware, the whole of Cambridgeshire was placed in the tier 2 'high' category from the end of Lockdown#2 on 02 December [due to be reviewed on 16 December]. This means that people can still only socialise indoors with people in their own household or support bubble. However, we can meet outdoors in groups of up to six. Full tier 2 rules here. Pubs and bars can open but only if they serve a proper meal and shops, personal care services such as hairdressers and certain leisure and sporting facilities are also able to open. People are being asked to continue working from home if they can. More detail is available in the national Covid-19 Winter Plan available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-winter-plan/covid-19-winterplan-summary> Rates of the virus remain variable across the county but high overall and everyone is therefore being urged to continue to follow the rules to influence a reduction. Of course the good news is that just last week the first Covid-19 vaccination was given to a 90 year old lady in Coventry at the start of the biggest immunisation programme in history. Local teams have started vaccinating patients at Addenbrooke's Hospital and Peterborough City Hospital. People aged 80 and over as well as care home workers will be first to receive the jab along with higher risk NHS workers. There are 50 hospital hubs in the first wave and other hospitals will join Addenbrooke's and Peterborough City hospitals in the vaccination programme over the coming weeks and months. The roll out is somewhat dependent on the MHRA [the

body that authorises use of the vaccine] allowing the currently very large batches of vaccine to be split. Once this is permitted [hopefully at the end of the month], vaccination teams will be able to go into care homes to vaccinate those who are not able to get to the locations where services have initially been set up. Whilst the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] is leading on the local roll-out of the vaccine, the county council is helping to co-ordinate access to community transport, and with communication with care homes. The CCG has asked everyone to help by waiting until they are contacted about being vaccinated, accepting the invitation, and ensuring they keep the appointment they are given. It has though cautioned everyone that even after they have been vaccinated, they should continue to observe the rules on social distancing, wearing of face masks and hand hygiene. You can find out more about the Covid-19 vaccination at:

<https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/covid-19-national-vaccination-programme/> Education All councillors receive a weekly update on the schools where Covid-19 cases have been confirmed. The latest county-wide list of forty-nine, shows that fifteen South Cambridgeshire schools/nursery settings are affected. Of those the vast majority have just one case. Our schools are continuing to do a fantastic job despite the additional challenges they face. One part of the education sector that is often overlooked is that of childminders who have continued to provide invaluable support to parents during the pandemic. Three Cambridgeshire childminders have been shortlisted for the Nursery World Awards 2020 for their brilliant work over the last year. The awards recognise and celebrate childminders across the country who go above and beyond. One of the three nominees is from South Cambridgeshire and all will hear who has won at a virtual ceremony on 04 February 2021. Highways Work is continuing on reviewing the county council's policy for maintaining its verges and I will bring you more news about how this is shaping up in the near future. I have also now been coopted on to the working group that is reviewing the council's policy for maintaining its highways drains. Over recent years, as I have previously advised, proactive maintenance work has diminished and almost all the work has been carried out on a reactive basis. I am really pleased that I have been able to influence a proposal for the next budget year that would see this reversed. Of course it does mean additional cost and so will compete with other demands for funding. However, I feel very strongly that this is a service that is a 'must have' rather than a 'nice to have' and I shall continue to support the case for it to be implemented. There is also a proposal for a change in the way that maintenance is monitored which I fully support. Local issues I am delighted that the pressure put on Highways England [HE] to meet its responsibility for resurfacing the roundabout at Bar Hill has finally borne fruit. The work is to be carried out overnight between 14 and 18 December. I am grateful to those who have supported me as I have insisted that this work should be carried out by HE rather than the county council. Following reports of cyclists sliding on the pedestrian/cycle bridge in the recent icy conditions, I asked HE to include it in its gritting schedule. The bridge has not yet been handed over to the county council; indeed I am not sure if it is intended that it will be. I raised this as an issue some months ago when I realised that it would not be included in the county council's gritting programme. Sustained pressure in the last few days has brought confirmation from HE that it will be gritted. I am awaiting a response from HE about when the final resurfacing of the central section of the bridge will be carried out. Girton's 20mph zone which will extend from Weavers Field to Manor Farm Road will be installed in the next few weeks. All the preparatory work that was required has been completed including local consultation and the installation of additional speed cushions. Both Dry Drayton and Girton have now taken delivery of the mobile vehicle activating signs that each applied for. I

noted that Dry Drayton's sign was working overtime over the weekend and hope that Girton's will soon be reminding drivers when they are exceeding the speed limit, and monitoring traffic volumes through the village. This has been a difficult year for everyone but I hope that you will all be able to enjoy Christmas with friends and family, even if it is not in quite the same way as we usually can. Thanks to the scientists, there is now hope that we will be able to regain some normality in our lives during 2021. My best wishes to you all for Christmas and the new year. Take care. Stay safe.

Lynda

- lyndaharford@icloud.com; 01954 251775/07889 131022; follow me on Twitter: @2whit2whoo

## **APPENDIX B**

### **i) District Councillor's Report from Cllr Douglas de Lacey**

Although I am no longer a member, I still follow the work of the JDCC closely. It is ironic that the JDCC met in the week of new government legislation proposals. Government attempts to bring greater green criteria into planning are certainly to be welcomed, but developers and planners will find it hard to submit and approve acceptable schemes while planning is in such flux; and it is unfortunate that the Government's own developer Homes England does not have a wonderful track record when it comes to providing first-rate housing. Northstowe is very much a case in point. Happily the proposals presented by the University will indeed be first-rate, and there are signs that the University is finally prepared to tackle some of the problems it has created for our residents on Huntingdon Road and for the disabled. I am grateful to Cllr Harford for her support in my efforts to help them.

On 14 November we had another full but remote Council meeting. We approved the establishment of Northstowe Town Council and were able to satisfy all the majority responses to our consultation, and all the concerns of the relevant Parish Councils. There were then four motions put forward by Members, complicated by the fact that three of them wished to propose alterations to their own motions. But I am very pleased that this was because of our encouraging a dialogue between the major political Groups, so all of the motions were approved by affirmation. The one most relevant for Parishes establishes that Parish Councils will have an early voice in assessing the sites put forward for development for the Local Plan, before a list of preferred options is presented for public consultation. I hope Parish Councils will use this opportunity to canvas public opinion, and where negative will be able to develop strong arguments against their inclusion in the list. The other motions were on maintaining food standards after Brexit, greening the Ox-Cam Arc and free school meals.

Cabinet has also had a meaty agenda, mainly looking at our finances (which seem quite healthy) and capital spending programme; but also with a progress report on our equality policies and a proposal to re-start the refugee programme. We have already welcomed four Syrian refugee families into South Cambridgeshire before the Government paused the programme. Having been involved in one of the families I was able to give strong support to this, but also noted that consideration should be given to providing English lessons as part of our support; a suggestion welcomed by the Leader.

The tree planting I mentioned last month is now scheduled for Friday (11 December)

Douglas de Lacey

## **ii) District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott - 15th Dec 2020**

**Cambourne to Cambridge (C2C) Guided Busway** On December 10th, the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Board voted to proceed with further preparations on its preferred route, requiring 3,000 trees to be cut down along a strip of land nearly 3km long past Hardwick, and concreting over a significant stretch of countryside for a Park and Ride at Scotland Farm. This decision is premature because: 1. A location has not yet been decided for the East West Rail (EWR) station at Cambourne, which should be a key destination for the route. Options for the preferred railway alignments and station locations will be published and consulted on next year. 2. The C2C route will eventually become part of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM). This means that whatever vehicles are chosen for the CAM must be able to use this route. The technical specification for the CAM has not yet been published. This is the subject of a procurement exercise, with three of the ten potential suppliers expected to submit designs in March 2021. One of the greatest threats to Girton and surrounding villages is that we will be swallowed up by an expanded Cambridge City. If that happens, it will be an overcrowded, chaotic and poorly planned city that we will be living inside. Well-planned transport infrastructure can avoid that fate by enabling new housing and development to be built further away in areas that currently have low levels of economic growth and would benefit from and welcome more development. This requires a strategic long-term vision, with a properly thought out plan and the various transport agencies and project teams working constructively together.

**Blue Plaque for the creator of Thomas the Tank Engine** I was honoured to attend the unveiling of a blue plaque to the Rev W Awdry in the village of Elsworth on December 8th. Wilbert Vere Awdry (1911 - 1997) was a clergyman, railway enthusiast and hugely successful children's author who created the enduringly popular Railway Series of books and characters, including the much-loved Thomas the Tank Engine. As Rector of the parish of Elsworth, he lived at the Rectory there from 1946 to 1952, where he wrote five of the books. They began as a father's stories to amuse his three year old son, Christopher, in bed with measles. By 1972 he had written 26 books, handing over to Christopher, who wrote a further 16. The blue plaque is located on a barn in the grounds of the Old Rectory, Church Lane, Elsworth, facing the entrance to the churchyard. It is the second in a series of plaques to mark important historical events and to honour the contributions of individual people in South Cambridgeshire District. The Cambridge and District Blue Plaques Committee, of which I am a member, has been active in Cambridge City since 2000 and has recently been extended into the District. More information on blue plaques, run locally

Cambridge Past, Present and Future, can be found at:

[www.cambridgeppf.org/pages/category/blue-plaques](http://www.cambridgeppf.org/pages/category/blue-plaques). Please let me know if you have any suggestions for future plaques in the village, the criteria for which are listed on the above website.

Cllr Tom Bygott

[cllr@bygott.net](mailto:cllr@bygott.net) 07765 475 513

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Parish Council Appointed Trustees of Cotton Hall**

A **Secretary** preferably for 8 years - ie 2 terms of office, Sian Franklin's eight years as Secretary ending in December 2020.

Knowledge of Health and Safety legislations - covid, cctv safeguarding, DBS checks etc.

Computer/internet skills - keeping the website going.

**Financial skills** - it would be good to have someone as a trustee willing to take over as Treasurer from Alice Few at the end of her term of office in December 2022.

This person needs to be prepared to be there for 8 years too.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Information about renewing membership of Cambridgeshire ACRE**

Over the last few months we have provided your charity with advice and support, have you considered the further benefits of being a member of Cambridgeshire ACRE and what this could bring to your committee? The annual fee is £57.00, with this annual subscription Cambridgeshire ACRE can provide a service to support your village hall/community building. The membership fees along with a grant from Defra and the County Council means we can provide the following service to the network of halls across Cambridgeshire, obviously the more members we have the more we can expand this service further to benefit trustees.

A dedicated website is available to provide information, news and sharing of ideas to ALL community buildings in Cambridgeshire <https://cambscommunitybuildings.wordpress.com/> even if you decide not to become members of our organisation please follow this website and blog to receive the information available.

#### **Our Membership Offer**

- Phone and email service to support trustees in their role
- Advisor visit or online zoom meetings are available to support your committee in resolving issues
- ACRE information sheets – a library of information on every aspect of running a community building
- A range of template documents to support trustees to get the correct policies in place
- Hallmark the national village hall accreditation scheme - <https://cambscommunitybuildings.wordpress.com/members-services/hallmark/>
- Community Building Mentors to support other committees or new trustees - <https://cambscommunitybuildings.wordpress.com/members-services/community-building-mentors/>
- Free events so trustees can network with other community building trustees from across the county, sharing best practice and ideas
- Training events designed to support community building trustees (this training can also be delivered on a 1:1 basis or to a whole committee if required)
- Quarterly E-newsletters and regular emails to keep trustees informed
- Support to participate in national events such as Village Halls Week
- Additional consultancy services if you have complex and difficult matters to resolve (this service is bespoke to the hall and any situation that arises so a consultancy fee may be required)
- Your hall will be listed on Halls for Hire (if you wish) <http://www.hallsforhire.org.uk/>



What members have said about our service

- *We really appreciate all the help we get. As chairman I feel that I can call Cambridgeshire ACRE if I am unsure of any issues related to managing the charity.*
- *It is always really helpful to have the support of an organisation like Cambridgeshire ACRE to provide advice and guidance on a wide range of topics that relate to management of village halls and community buildings.*
- *Communication is always professional and relevant to any queries posed. Thank you.*
- *We are always grateful for the help we can access easily from Cambridgeshire ACRE. Life as a trustee would be much more difficult without the knowledgeable advice we receive.*
- *Your help and advice are exemplary and easy to access.*

Cambridgeshire ACRE has been delivering a village hall and community building service in Cambridgeshire for nearly a century (we were founded in 1924) and we hope you will consider joining our network of village halls who receive support and guidance through membership of our organisation.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Girton Parish Council Payments Schedule for December 2020**

(circulated separately)

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Chairman's Report**

**9th December 2020**

Having received an unofficial report that our planning application was to be signed off on November 13<sup>th</sup> we have now been promised that it will surely happen this week. Cllr. Mitchell has been busy developing the Client Brief for the project and accompanied by David Mitchell, (who has skills in such matters!), we undertook a detailed review of the current layout and configuration of services in the building. A meeting of the Task and Finish group is planned to finalise this and agree the next steps in the procurement process. We also need to finalise estimated timings for the project to sign off the draft contract received from the County Council to facilitate our grant funding. All users have been written to requesting their wish list of features in the remodelled building.

It is pleasing to report that the official audit of our annual return was completed without qualification. Thanks to Susie and our accountants for this. Details are posted on the website to fulfil statutory requirements.

A further search for contractors to install safety bollards along the footpath next to the car park has resulted in two visits with quotations awaited, one further visit scheduled, and one provisional quotation received with a visit awaited. A potential problem has been identified in positioning of bollards above the concrete beams in the fence foundations. Drilling through these is likely to be costly and may be

unacceptable to GTC. Alternative spacing of an increased number of bollards to avoid the beams may be possible but is likely to increase costs. Unhelpfully the parishioner who raised this as an issue has since complained to our MP and his office has forwarded the matter for our attention!

The question of possible positioning of a 'Men's Shed' on the Recreation Ground has been discussed with Sam Clift and Patricia Johnston. There are many issues to be considered but if this was possible there is funding that can be applied for in the New Year. Sam is to explain the proposition again at our meeting next week.

As the year draws to a close it is timely to place on record my sincere thanks to the Council staff who this year have had to operate under very difficult conditions under 'Covid' restrictions. Especial thanks are due to Susie who in working from home and being the primary contact point for the 'Helping Gorton' support activities, has been effectively 'on call' throughout most of the year. Councillor Shahila Mitchell also deserves special thanks in this regard.

Regrettably the traditional Chairman's drinks and mince pies party cannot be held this year but be assured that we shall arrange something similar to mark our first face to face meeting, hopefully sometime in the not too distant future.

Very best wishes to all for a Happy Festive Season and a return to 'normality' in 2021.

Haydn Williams

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Water Management Report, December 2020**

1. I met with Professor Robin Irvine, and Harry Chalk (Environment Agency), via Zoom, on 2 December. The following matters were discussed:

- We referred back to discussions some months ago, regarding the bridge owned by Chivers over the Beck upstream of the Golf Course, and some fence posts further downstream. The fence posts have now been moved, and the Environment Agency is checking whether there is a permit for the bridge.
- I had reported undercutting of the bank of Beck Brook close to my own property, citing my personal experience of the bank collapsing and a retaining structure having to be built. Harry Chalk plans to walk the Beck and will report back on his observations.
- It was noted that the Beck is currently very clean and running freely. The banks on the golf course side have been recently cleared of excess vegetation.
- He will also look at the retaining structures downstream of the Oakington Road Bridge, which appear to have become damaged, and a fallen tree near to Gatehouse Road, which is not currently a problem but may become so.
- We discussed the cracks in the parapet of the Oakington Road Bridge, which will also be inspected by Harry. The bridge had been strength tested and was thought to be serviceable for the amount of traffic currently using it, but the parapet could indeed collapse. If this collapsed into the Beck it would cause severe problems. This will be monitored.

- Referring back to Councillor De Lacey's email outlining concerns about the delay in updating the monitoring of water levels in the Beck and Washpit, Harry Chalk reiterated that the frequency of updating can be adjusted if deemed necessary, and also that a failsafe device has been installed. Visual checks are also made by Professor Irvine and other nearby residents.
- CCTV is being installed at some watercourses in the area, but Professor Irvine and I thought that this was not necessary in Girton. We felt that enough individuals living along the Beck and Washpit would be watching out for rising water levels during any periods of heavy rain, and would alert the EA if they were concerned. The only location likely to benefit from CCTV was the Oakington Road Bridge, but this was not thought to be essential.
- The Environment Agency is currently working on models to predict water management in the area, resulting in a number of possible actions, including channel reprofiling. They are giving consideration to natural solutions to the problems, such as wood dams or specific planting plans.

We will meet with Harry Chalk again in the spring.

2. Heavy rain and snow on 4 December had a severe impact on Beck Brook and Washpit. The attached photo shows how close Beck Brook came to backing up. This is the nearest we have come to flooding since the utility pipes were removed around 3 years ago. The water receded shortly after this photo was taken, but it serves to remind us that we cannot afford to be complacent.



3. I also walked the NMU on the morning of 5 December, and noticed how full the ditches were. The attached photo was taken about 18 hours after the height of the rainfall. It makes me aware of how high the water must have been the previous evening. Another one to watch.



Mary Rodger

8 December 2020