

Minutes of Wilbraham River Protection Society committee meeting held on  
11th January 2024 at 7.30 pm at The Windmill Little Wilbraham CB215LG.

**Present.** Richard Townley. David Lomas. Stephen Cory. Jane Gaskell. Rebecca Lomas

**Apologies.** David White. Brian Jackson. Stjohn Starkie. Susan Simpson.

**Minutes of last meeting** accepted as a true record. Draft minutes of the AGM accepted.

**Nomination of new committee members.**

Mrs Sharon Mulley nominated by DL for post as treasurer. Seconded by RT.

Mr Richard Lane nominated as committee member. Nominated DL seconded RL

**Treasurer's report.**

Expenses to be paid: £20 To RL for hire of hall for the showing of Pure Clean Water. £75 To DL for license to show film.

Income £37 from sale of books and donations at AGM

**Secretary's report**

"Our Patch" Fulbourn request to add WRPS to listings. There is some incorrect information on the listings re: the details of the WRPS showing of the Film. RJS to contact and clarify. In principle committee agreed to be associated with the event.

**River Flow update.** Tony Goryn. Augmentation project .

Committee agreed TG had done an impressive job liaising with the EA and improving the augmentation for the river. DJL to support and offer TG help with any future meeting. DJL will liaise and RL letter to TG.

Currently flow in the WR is good. There has been thirty per cent greater than average rainfall in the last year. The water table is very high with an ODN of 15.184 at Cedar Tree Stud.

DI noted that reviewing aerial photos of the LWR about 500m before it passes under the A1303 bridge there may be "overflow" conduits previously inserted allowing flow out of the river in two places. This would affect and reduce flow downstream and may be contributory to the increased reed growth obstruction of the water. He will try to find more information on the works that were done in 1995. It is possible that DW BJ RT have memories of this.

**Wilbraham River-Quy Water Chalk Stream Improvement Project at A1303 Bridge.**

DJL waiting for EA response. Noted significant flow in the conduit after the heavy seasonal rainfall.

**Review of river monitoring SC**

SC Reported that this year has been problem solving as he has encountered some technical difficulties establishing the river monitoring. Several of these have been overcome eg wireless cover,

power to the monitors. There are some issues with water flow measurements but water level measurements have been easier to establish and record.

DI and SC agreed to start with gathering data on water level monitoring and try to record this directly on the website. To liaise with StJS and Alan Cody regarding the website

Noted a webinar on Feb 6th 24 held by CaSTCO on citizen science monitoring DL SC to attend.

## **River Walk**

### **Sunday May 19th 2PM**

Potential start Hawk Mill Farm, parking available. Via GW common land following the river bed via the mill "holt". Follow old river bed which passes through the back of Silvertrees. Permission and access here to be negotiated by RL and DL with current owners if possible. If not walk to Coles Road Gauging station and then to Herrings House. Explore river route in the Parish Acre. DL to arrange permission. Access to be improved and review safety of visiting. Tea at the studio in the Grounds of Herring house. May need gazebos as room is small. JG RL to discuss with Mrs Mel Fraser. Note The Fulbourn Forum film of the history of Fulbourn village will be shown a week before and will include some of the history of Herrings House. This was built on stilts to protect it from flooding due to the proximity of the river. RT to see if the owners of HH are happy with this arrangement and willing to speak at the tea informally. Return walk to HMF check with DW if possibility of alternative parking in field by Coles Bridge and ? cutting verge for safety.

## **Wilbraham's Environment Group**

WRPS and WEG have arranged a joint showing of Pure Clean Water by Tony Eva on Feb 12th in the Memorial Hall Great Wilbraham. A recently released history of Hobsons Conduit which highlights the story of environmental water depletion which now affects our eco system so significantly. Flyers circulated to all members. Another showing is being organised by Fulbourn Forum in March.

## **Update on Wilbraham Fen SSSI UNIT 1 meeting.**

DJL met with Natural England and Norman Sills on Jan 11th to discuss plans to improve the health of the SSSI at Unit 1 on the Fen. There are some issues to resolve regarding the best strategy for "management" of the SSSI.

## **Notice Board Fulbourn.**

Application has been made and may be approved shortly. Will be purchased by Wrights Clock Fund for situating adjacent to the river in Fulbourn. Will display community information including information from the WRPS. JG will coordinate order and update display with RT.

## **Website**

SS and DL change/unifying of subscriptions/registration in progress. Will need GDPR information for consent of those registering as new members. Creation of new page for the WRPS minutes also needed.

**Wilbraham Warbler** RS to submit an article for Feb 11th.

**Cameo.** To attend CaSTCo meeting re monitoring of river. A local catchment plan is being drawn up. Future in person meetings are being planned.

### **AOB**

Details of discussion and points raised at the AGM covered during the committee meeting.  
Circulation to members of draft AGM minutes approved.

The Government proposed Cambridge Housing Development and water provision problems. The Freeman led "Delivery Group" has created a "Water scarcity group" but clearly they face major challenges regarding new housing developments and the water supply..

Meeting dates 2024 second Thursday of the month quarterly

April 11th. July 11th October 10th. AGM? Tuesday 26th Nov

# Minutes of the Wilbraham River Protection Society committee meeting.

11th April 2024 at 7.30 pm at The Windmill Little Wilbraham CB215LG.

**Present.** Richard Townley, Brian Jackson, Jane Gaskell, David Lomas, Stephen Cory, Stjohn Starkie, Rebecca Lomas

**Apologies.** Susan Simpson, David White

**Minutes of last meeting** Accepted as a true Record

**Welcome of new committee members.** Mr Richard Lane and Mrs Sharon Mulley were welcomed as new committee members.

**Treasurer's report.** Signatories on the bank account to be changed. They will now be Richard Townley. Sharon Mulley and Rebecca Steward (Lomas) Brian Jackson will be removed as a signatory with his agreement.

The bank account now contains £1163 following a deposit after expenses from donations made at the Pure Clean Water film presentation of £56.

**Secretary's report.**

The society currently has 109 members.

Members have reported wildlife sightings of Otter and Water Voles and several signs of Water Vole activity at Coles Bridge gauging station.

**Update on various local groups that the WRPS now has involvement with. DJL reported.**

- **Cameo** Cambridge Ely and the Ouse. Cameo is looking to create a Cam catchment plan similar to those created for other adjacent catchment areas.
- **Cam Catchment Group.** Ruth Hawksley of the Wildlife Trust organised a meeting of this group (originally set up by Peter Landshoff some years ago) to discuss the catchment. The meeting involved mainly members of local river groups, and aimed to consolidate the issues facing the 29 surface water bodies in the catchment. Although quality is a key issue the opportunity to raise the issue of water quantity and the importance of EA augmentation was taken. A report is awaited.
- **EA – Update on responses to questions on augmentation/monitoring.** Sam Phillips has replied to DJL again saying he is still collecting information on the questions posed by the WRPS back in October 2023. (Augmentation management, Pump replacement, correct designation). John Findlay of the hydrology & telemetry group had agreed to meet onsite in April/May to discuss improved monitoring sites and techniques.
- **Wilbraham Fen SSSI Unit 1.** Having initially supported the improvement plan in 2021 Natural England have now raised objections regarding the creation of a water filled channel. They are concerned this will worsen drainage and carbon release from unit 1. Norman Sills considers they are not fully aware of the site and its hydrology – he is making further measurements. Discussions are ongoing.

**Recent document update releases of significance to WRPS:**

- **Cambridge Water's Revised Water Resource Management Plan Feb 2024.**

<https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/4138/cambridge-water-revised-dwrmp24-february-2024-revision.pdf>

The revised plan now indicates stopping abstraction from the Great Wilbraham source – but starting only when the proposed new reservoir is functional (2035-2040) – and only implemented fully by 2050. Whilst good news there is a clear risk in the interim period and the situation may well have changed by 2040. The plan remains highly dependent on demand and leakage reduction as well as transfers from out of region and the new reservoir.

- **Water scarcity group.** Cambridge development and water availability.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-water-scarcity-in-greater-cambridge-update-on-government-measures/addressing-water-scarcity-in-greater-cambridge-update-on-government-measures>

Following Michael Gove's announcement of a major future expansion of Cambridge housing and laboratories he established the Freeman Delivery Group. This has produced a "Water Scarcity Report". The solutions are all the same as those ideas proposed by Water Resources East's plans but with the addition of a "Water Credits Market". This will likely be used to justify future development approvals although how this will work and be regulated to ensure it works as proposed has not been spelt out. In fact it is already being used in the appeal for the Brookgate Housing Development close to Cambridge North Station – the result of which Michael Gove will decide in June this year.

**River Flow Stakeholder update.** DL and RL attended a meeting initiated by Tony Goryn to engage local groups who wish to see a decrease in abstraction and an increase in augmentation of the river waters. This was attended by local Parish councils, councillors, common rights holders and environmental groups. Tony will lead this group with support and liaison with the WRPS. The committee was happy with this arrangement.

**Review of river monitoring project** SC has successfully set up two monitoring stations for flow and water levels. These are online with daily readings. He would like to get these live to the website. DJL, SC and SS will meet to review this with Alan Cody in a review of the website. Date to be arranged by DJL.

**Farmers market stall. April 13th 2024** It was agreed to purchase a Square card reader for card purchases and a banner to advertise the WRPS. The plant sale will also promote the WRPS and sell the Fen Drainage books. Permission obtained from Pat Nutbourne to use her drawings from the book for future publicity of the WRPS.

**River Walk. Sunday May 19th** Route. DJL will circulate the proposed route of the walk and get permission to visit the Parish Acre. Discuss with DW cutting the verges for safe passage on the road. RL will explore borrowing tables, tea urn and cups from St Johns Church. JG will arrange meeting to confirm that Herrings House is available for tea. RL and JG to walk route and plan tea arrangements. RL to circulate route and details to members advertise on the notice board. Donations will be requested for tea.

**Wilbraham's Environment Group and WRPS** joint showing of Tony Eva's film Pure Clean Water was very successful. Donations of £220 were received. Promoted awareness of the effects of abstraction on the rivers in the Cam catchment and the ensuing results on the environment.

**Notice board Fulbourn.** To be purchased following Clock Fund approval. JG organising.

**Website.** SS DL and SC will meet with Alan Cody to review the subscriptions link and access to live monitoring.

**AOB**

**SS noted that the Fen Reservoir Consultation Group** had an invited selection of organisations. These mainly represented recreation and community in its local area. Cam Valley Forum appears to be on the panel but is the only organisation representing the rivers and their needs. SS will write to CVF on behalf of the WRPS to check that our concerns are represented appropriately.

Meeting dates 2024 second Thursday of the month quarterly

July 11th. October 10th. AGM ? Tuesday 26th Nov

## Minutes for Wilbraham River Protection Society committee meeting.

Thursday July 25th 2024 at 7.30 pm at The Windmill Little Wilbraham CB215LG.

**Present.** Richard Townley, Sharon Mulley, Susan Simpson, StJohn Starkie, Stephen Cory , David Lomas, David White and Rebecca Lomas.

**Apologies.** Richard Lane, Brian Jackson, Jane Gaskell

**Minutes of last meeting** Accepted as a true record.

**Treasurer's report.** Current balance in the account £1163. This includes £187 raised from the plant sale and £58.60 raised for donations for tea after the river walk. Expenses deducted.

**Secretary's report.** Membership. We have 2 new members. The website has been updated and this will simplify the process of joining the society and sharing topical information.

### **Update on ongoing discussions with various groups/institutions - DJL**

- CamEO – Catchment Plans & Abstraction modelling discussions are ongoing and potentially useful to see if varying the pattern of abstraction will reduce the impact on the river.
- Wildlife Trust has resurrected a Cam catchment based group to help with the catchment planning process
- EA – we have received responses to questions on augmentation/monitoring – slow progress but we expect both gauging stations to provide real-time info on the “Hydrology Data Explorer” by the end of the year. Live monitoring of the Fulbourn Nature reserve and the near A1303 bridge borehole is being investigated.
- Tony Goryn's Augmentation Stakeholder update. Tony is continuing to monitor the river levels and feedback to the EA. He has written to the EA in a personal capacity regarding the pump failings. At his 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting the presence of recent frequent sewage overflows into the Black Ditch was noted by a relative of the owner of the adjacent Island Cottage.

### **WRPS Website - StJS**

- Update on new combined join and newsletter subscribe form (StJS)
- Agreed to use the “blog” for updates/newsletter/information if all members linked to this.
- Reviewed SCs river data and planned to insert this into the website data page – DJL/StJS/SC to liaise
- Agreed to create a committee listing page (DJL)

### **Update on river monitoring project - SC**

SC demonstrated 2 versions of his monitoring system that are operational and updating a webpage. It was agreed to try and get this onto the website and review the best locations. Given the reed/weed problems for a mechanical flow system DW suggested an in river pipe might help avoid this issue and allow for good data. Locations for the ultrasonic system may need exploring to find a clear surface – Hawk Mill remains relatively weed free but elsewhere difficult.

**AGM 2024** This will be on 26th November at Great Wilbraham Memorial Hall.

Suggestions for a speaker.

- Mr David Smith, who was due to talk last year on the Wildlife of The Fens surrounding the river. RS will contact Mr Smith first to see if he is available.
- Mr Steve Boreham on the geology of chalk streams.
- The Farmers and water farming cluster on land management, water and the environment.

**10th River Walk Sunday May 19th 2024** A great success The route was a good length. It was particularly interesting to visit the Parish Acre and Herrings House. Thanks to all who took part. People seemed happy to donate for tea.

**Plant Sale Saturday April 13th** We were in competition with a local more commercial plant stall but sold almost all the plants and raised £187. Geraniums and smaller bedding plants a great success.

**Wilbraham's Environment Group** – Joint Fugolburna Film Screening planned – likely to be in January (20<sup>th</sup> agreed) to avoid clash with Cambridge Film Festival showing.

**Notice board** JG confirms the notice board has been delivered and will be erected in due course.

**AOB**

**Committee meeting dates** 2024 second Thursday of the month quarterly

October 10th at 7.30pm The Windmill Little Wilbraham.

AGM Tuesday 26th Nov at 7.30 at Wilbraham Memorial Hall. Great Wilbraham.

Useful Website Links:

- [www.thewrps.org](http://www.thewrps.org)
- Sewage storm overflow map
- <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/sewerage/storm-overflows/improving-rivers-and-coastlines/>
- Location of local sewage works
- [https://www.southwest-environmental.co.uk/further%20info/in%20depth/sewage\\_works\\_maps/anglian\\_water\\_sewage\\_treatment\\_works\\_location\\_maps.html](https://www.southwest-environmental.co.uk/further%20info/in%20depth/sewage_works_maps/anglian_water_sewage_treatment_works_location_maps.html)
- National River maps
- <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/73ed24b6d30441648f24f043e75ebed2>
- Anglian River basin management plans
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anglian-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022>
- CamEO website
- <https://www.cameopartnership.org/>
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## Minutes for Wilbraham River Protection Society committee meeting.

Thursday October 10th 2024 at 7.30 pm at The Windmill Little Wilbraham  
CB215LG.

**Present.** Richard Townley. Susan Simpson. David Lomas. Rebecca Lomas. Brian Jackson

**Apologies.** Sharon Mulley. Jane Gaskell. Stephen Cory. Stjohn Starkie. David White. Richard Lane.

**Minutes of last meeting.** Accepted as a true record

**Treasurer's report.** Deferred to next meeting.

**Secretary's report.** To send flyer for the March for Clean Water in London Nov 3rd with information on AGM.

**River Status** – It was noted that the river has been “wet” for approximately 18 months helped by both increased rainfall and prompt feedback from Tony Goryn and others.

### **Update on ongoing discussions with various groups/institutions – DJL**

**CamEO** - There are ongoing discussions with the EA regarding developing a groundwater model to allow study of how variation of local abstraction would affect the springs and rivers. There will be an inperson CamEO meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November in Bury StEdmunds which any of the committee are welcome to attend.

**Cam Catchment Partnership.** This has been resurrected by Ruth Hawksley (Wildlife Trust) and should work with CamEO. See their website <https://www.rivercam.org.uk/> They plan a further meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

**EA** – Feedback on the monitoring improvements previously discussed after the site visit has been that all the upgrades are awaiting a new telemetry system – for which they have no definite date!

**DFASS** – Tony Goryn's group is planning another meeting and is trying to obtain a meeting with the EA team responsible for augmentation.

**WRPS Website – DJL** The membership list has been updated and methods for informing the membership explored. Wix limits emails to 200/month without a further subscription increase. A test using the existing [wilbrahamriver@gmail.com](mailto:wilbrahamriver@gmail.com) account has been carried out for updates on the AGM and March for Clean Water and appears to work. As suggested by RT links in the email to the website were used. It was agreed to revamp the home page to include more news/blogs.

**Update on river monitoring project** - SC had emailed to say that he had tested a camera pointing at the Fulbourn NewCut Gauging Weir Board and had installed a further ultrasonic level monitor. He had asked regarding a location for the Lanes gauging weir. Susan Simpson agreed to allow the monitoring equipment on her land which is less vulnerable to interference

## **AGM 2024.**

- David Smith talking on the Wildlife and birds of Wilbraham Fen.
- Great Wilbraham Memorial Hall. Tuesday 26th November. AGM 7.30pm. Refreshments 8PM. Talk at 8.15 pm
- Circulate members with AGM invite and review of the year's review before the AGM if it is ready. DJL and RT.

**Wilbraham's Environment Group** – Fugolburna Film to be shown on January 20th . Jointly WEG and WRPS. DJL to confirm management of any donations and date of screening with WEG.

**Notice board.** Fulbourn notice board now erected. AGM details to be placed. It was agreed to add to the board a permanent marker of thanks to the Common Rights Holders for their donation of the Wilbraham notice board .RL

## **AOB**

- **Susan Simpson** wishes to resign from the committee and nominated her son James Simpson (not present) To formally elect at AGM.
- **Events for 2025.** The plant sale will not be repeated next year but RJS will explore the option of having a charity cake sale at the farmers market.
- The priority for the WRPS in attending community gatherings is to raise the profile of the society not to raise funds at present. It was suggested that we should have a novelty stall at some local events.
- **Annual walk** to continue. Date to be discussed in Jan 25.
- **Logo for the WRPS.** The current Water Vole does not print well. To create a new logo based on the name of the WRPS in full and a simple motif that relates to the river.

Dates for Committee meetings 2025.

Thursday 9th January

Thursday 10th April

Thursday 10th July

Thursday 9th October.