

## Minutes of Wilbraham River Protection Society meeting January 22nd 2022.

**Present.** Richard Townley, Brian Jackson, David Lomas , Rebecca Lomas.

**Apologies.** David White , Susan Simpson, Pat Simpson, Jane Gaskell.

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

**Treasurers Report** No changes to the societies finances.

**Secretaries Report.** The committee was informed of the death of Michael Holdsworth, a member of the committee and who was involved in protecting and monitoring the birdlife along the river for many years.

**Environment Agency.** In their last email the EA suggested a meeting should be after March 22 when work on modelling effects on groundwater levels would have been updated. BJ to write to EA again requesting a meeting in April.

DJL to contact the chair of Cherry Hinton Brook for information on how they managed to get the EA to impose a cap on Fleam Dyke abstraction in WINEP3.

**Water Resources East.** <https://wre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/WRE-Emerging-Plan.pdf>

WRE have published their emerging plan and WRPS have not been contacted re further discussions . RL to contact WRE and check we are still on the mailing list. (RL has done so since this meeting and RT, DL and RL attended a recent webinar on the emerging plans)

**Cambridge Water Round Table.** The WRPS received a reply from Lucy Frazer which was considered a sensible and engaged response. No further action required.

**Water Reports.** The river has not been dry this year at the Wilbraham end but Fulbourn end is dry in its course before the augmentation input. This augmentation is primarily to maintain water levels in the nature reserve. It would be useful to support the river from the Fulbourn springs

BJ presented the most recent water report:

	October	November	December	January
<b>Rainfall</b>	Wetter month with 84mm across the area	Very dry month with 28mm or 48% LTA.	Increased rainfall. 68mm classified as normal.	
<b>Soil Moisture</b>	47mm by end of month;	Slight decrease in SMD.	Normal for December.	
<b>Deficit/Recharge</b>	classified as normal for the time of year.			
<b>River Flows</b>	At all sites; normal or higher for the time of the year.	Cam & Waveney at below normal levels.	Sites remained stable and classified as normal.	
<b>Groundwater</b>	Normal or higher for the time of the year.	Most sites are currently normal.	Stable across the region	

**Website update** DL has added news items to the website every couple of weeks. Any member of the committee is welcome and encouraged to add to the website.

**River Walk** The walk could be in September 2022 and JG suggested Fulbourn to Hawk Mill Farm and along the Caudle ditch .

A further interim meeting to be held to discuss details of parking and sites for the tea. RL to contact JG for a date for this meeting.

**Wilbraham Warbler:** Deadline Feb 11th RL and DL to submit with photo if possible.

**Membership recruitment:** DL will be talking about the river and Fen on the local “Know your Neighbour” village zoom meeting on Feb 8th. Link to be circulated to the committee. The talk will be recorded and available through the Wilbrahams website.

**Update on Wilbraham Fen** DL reported that the LWSMB Parish Council was investigating a management agreement for Unit 1 of the SSSI. He also described a potential improvement plan for Unit 1 that was also supported by the Parish Council but which will need funding.

**Wildlife Trust.** Need to arrange a date with the WT as the river has had flow all year now, to discuss the possibility of projects to improve the river and its support for wildlife. RL to contact Ruth Hawksley and arrange a meeting. Meeting has been arranged for March 18th 2022 am.

**Meetings for 2022. April 21st, July 21st and October 20th at 7 pm**

Agenda and minutes for the WRPS meeting on 31st March 2022  
to be held by Zoom call at 7.30 pm

**1 Present RT DJL RJS BJ JG**

**2 Apologies SS PS**

**3 Minutes of last meeting Accepted**

**4 Treasurer's report**

**5 Secretary's report.** Wilbraham common rights holders offer. Offer of a donation to the society. It was decided to approach them for funding for a notice board to be sited at Hawk Mill Farm. The notice board would contain details of the society, its activities how to join, links to the website etc. Local walks along the river. RJS apply to common rites holders.

Membership Recruitment

**6 Environment Agency Meeting**

*Draft letter from BJ to EA:*

***Wilbraham River Protection Society***

*I refer to our earlier correspondence concerning a meeting to discuss the issues raised in my letter dated 16.04.21. You will recall that you had pointed out that the EA were having problems with arranging such meetings following from the constraints effected by COVID.*

*I wonder if the constraints have eased enough for you to be able to reconsider a meeting and hopefully you will be able to suggest suitable alternative dates.*

*As far as WRPS are concerned the topics we would like to discuss remain basically as detailed in my letter (Ref: EA-14 of 08.05.21). However there has been much to review since then.*

*WRPS have attended meetings with Water Resources East and Cambridge Round Table. A key issue from these meetings has been the concerns expressed that future water resources are planned so as the domestic demands are met as well as the quality of the ecology is also protected. This point is also highlighted in your letter of the 22 June and I quote from p2 second paragraph; "The Environment Agency does believe that current levels of groundwater abstraction from the chalk are not sustainable and in some cases are causing environmental damage."*

*We understand from meetings with WRE that future water resource plans for the region are to be published shortly and we wonder if you have any further information concerning when the plans will be available – we are particularly interested to see the detailed plan*

Clearly the groundwater levels in the region of the Wilbraham rivers have suffered from the pumping from the groundwater sources and we think that the WRE plans are fundamental to the improvement of the health of the Wilbraham rivers and the ecology they support. It is important that improvements are planned to be sustainable.

We hope that you are now able to suggest a date when these issues can be discussed and look forward to your reply,

**Draft letter approved. BJ will add a request for the HIA(hydrological data)report and push for a date.**

**It was decided that we will need to have a pre meeting before the EA meeting to prepare the questions for her.**

## **7 GCCSA On Site meeting with Ruth Hawksley & Project List Suggestions.**

**The topics discussed with RH at a meeting to walk the Quay end of the river.**

**Monitoring of the river flows.**

**The Noticeboard.**

**Sideponds logs and Riffles .**

**Projects to highlight the profile of the river.**

## **8 Response to CW WRMP 24 consultation/Water Resources East /MPs/EA**

*Letter from RT to NA and reply –Letter from JM see attachments*

**Q1 response**

**RT concerned that the reply is very general. In the short term they are suggesting transfers of water not preservation.**

## **9 Water Reports**

*E mail summary from Tony Goryn 21 /3/22:*

The level at Fulbourn Gauging station continues to rise.

The level at Wilbraham GS is stable.

Alex says that the augmentation has ceased at the Temple, and that the springs are flowing.

Alex has invited me to visit the springs/augmentation point at the Temple and I hope to do so before the end of March.

I believe from the EA that augmentation continues at Fulbourn - which is interesting - hopefully it will keep the Fulbourn Nature Reserve peat wetter for longer.

It is about a year since I started monitoring the Gauging Stations - it will be interesting to see how events compare over this summer.

**10 Website update - Know your neighbour talk DJL**

**11 River walk - JG**

**RS and JG to walk the proposed route to confirm duration, places for tea and parking.? park Cow Lane.**

**Date for walk ?4th Sept ?28th August**

[https://fulbournlibrary.weebly.com/uploads/6/5/0/7/65072123/fulbourn-walks-2015-v1\\_3.pdf](https://fulbournlibrary.weebly.com/uploads/6/5/0/7/65072123/fulbourn-walks-2015-v1_3.pdf)

**12 Update on Wilbraham Fen**

**13 AOB:**

**RT reported that it was hoped to be able to gather farmers and landowners from the east and south of Cambridge together to form a cluster. This cluster would encourage wildlife friendly farming and regenerative farming etc and could take advantage of any grants related to the proposed Nature Recovery Network. This suggestion follows the success of a cluster to the west of Cambridge.**

*Cam and Ely Ouse management catchment – Incorrect River Designation*

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3009>

**Inform Defra that map is incorrect and should state Bottisham to Great Wilbraham not Bottisham to Quy Water**

**Next meeting(s) Thursdays 21st July 2022, 20th October 2022.**

Minutes for the WRPS meeting on 21st July 2022  
held at The Hole in The Wall at 7.00 pm

**1 Present**

Richard Townley, Brian Jackson, Sue Simpson, David White, Jane Gaskell, Rebecca Lomas  
David Lomas

**2 Apologies**

Pat Simpson

**3 Minutes of last meeting**

The records were amended to correctly represent the discussion relating AOB.

**4 Treasurer's report**

Treasurer not present

**5 Secretary's report.**

Wilbraham common rights holders offer.

<https://www.greenbarnes.co.uk/shop/external-noticeboards/aluminium-noticeboards/af30/a1-af30-aluminium-noticeboard-ref-af30-a1/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI3Y>

The committee gratefully accepted the Wilbraham Common Rights holders generous offer to pay for the new notice board and approved the design. Note posts are not included in link wishlist. Company contacted to clarify order costs .

RL to proceed with the order.

**6 Environment Agency Meeting**

**Date:** 28 April 2022 at 09:27:05 BST

Dear Brian

Many thanks for your letter which was received at our offices in Brampton.

As part of the easing of restrictions we are now in a position to meet face to face with yourselves, ideally at our Brampton office. Your letter included that you wish to discuss the calibration of our groundwater model in the Little Wilbraham area. This project is ongoing and we would be happy to share the outputs with you once completed.

In terms of WRE, the next draft plan of is due to be published in autumn this year. This plan belongs to WRE so any feedback or questions would need to go directly to it. We highly recommend local groups engage with WRE to give insight to any local impacts on headwaters away from formal assessment points and to put forward your own environmental ambitions that can be considered by the plan.

Alongside WRE, the water company's draft Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs) are also due to be published this autumn with the pre-consultation and development of the plans currently ongoing. We would recommend you engage directly with Cambridge Water to allow your views to be taken into account during this consultation period.

We will be in touch shortly, once the groundwater calibration work has been completed, to organise a date for a meeting. This should be in the next couple of months. In the meantime, please let us know if you have any further queries.

Kind Regards Jen

BJ to arrange a meeting with EA in September. BJ will phone first to discuss with Jennifer Meadows the difficulty we are having getting specific answers to our questions. He will copy our original questions. It will be necessary to have an interim meeting of the committee in advance of the proposed EA meeting.

## **7 Response to CW WRMP 24 consultation/Water Resources East /MPs/EA**

The consultations on WRMP and WRE draft management plans are due this autumn and the committee will need to be alert for their release and share with the rest of the committee for discussion and responses.

## **8 Water Reports**

Interesting comparisons to last year.

FULBOURN

At Fulbourn Gauging Station the river levels are about 10cm lower at this point in July compared to last year.

At Fulbourn Gauging Station last year the levels only dropped by a couple of centimetres more from that level. This a side effect of the augmentation keeping the SSSI wetted to the satisfaction of the Warden (as far as I understand the situation).

It will be interesting to see how low river levels fall this year.

RT will clarify with TG how the feedback system works and establish who is responsible for reporting poor water levels in Fulbourn Nature Reserve and requesting increased augmentation. At present the augmented water flows directly into a ditch feeding the SSSI in the nature reserve but RT considered that some of the augmentation should flow into the ditch that now carries the spring outflow around the edge of the Nature Reserve and into the New Cut.

## WILBRAHAM

At Lt Wilbraham Gauging Station the river levels are now about the same as they were last year in July. When the pump stopped working a couple of weeks ago and the river ceased to flow this could have been disastrous. Instead it has given us the opportunity to evaluate further the importance of a continuous flow being maintained. On 24 and 25 June the level was 13.02m ODN. On the 30 June it had dropped to 12.98m and a day later (on 1 July) to 12.90m - effectively no flow - and with silt and river bed exposed at many points. We don't know exactly when the augmentation pump ceased to operate. We do know that within a day of the pump being restarted the level had risen to 12.98m. And we know that the augmentation has maintained that level since restarting. The groundwater level at Cherry Tree Stud is now probably below 13.5m ODN based on data to the end of June.

From my perspective it seems that the system as designed does work to a degree that will keep the river flowing at least as far as Hawk Mill farm - if properly maintained....

RT to thank the EA for their response to TGs requests to augment flow in the river.

### **10 River walk - JG**

Previously proposed walk dates are no longer available . October 2nd morning walk now proposed. Possible finish at a PH - JG and SS to walk the route and check its feasibility.

### **11 Update on Wilbraham Fen**

At present the Little Wilbraham Paris Council have been unable to get a stewardship agreement for fen area Unit 1. DJL to review the current plans with Norman Sills.

### **12 Designation of Wilbraham river status beyond Hawk Mill Farm.**

DJL has been unable to find a contact to correct the EA Catchment mapping on the government website (see link below). The "Black Ditch" appears to have been marked as the LW River. DJL to continue trying to correct the mapping error.

To note that the LW River is considered a "Main River" as far as Hawk Mill Farm but above that is an "Awarded Ditch" – probably dating back to the inclosure acts. This to be discussed at the planned meeting with the EA.

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3009>

### **13 AGM date speaker**

RT will contact Martin Baker to talk on the proposed Nature Network and we will set the date for the AGM based on his availability. Hopefully we can book the large room in the Memorial Hall for this function. Suggested charging for wine and snacks to help pay the cost of hire.



**14 AOB:**

It was agreed to pay the website subscription (circa £100) from society funds for next year.  
DJL to organise.

**Next meeting(s) 20th October2022** at 7 pm at the kind invitation of Mrs Susan Simpson.

Minutes for WRPS committee meeting October 18th at 7.30 pm at 26 Angle End Great Wilbraham.

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

**Apologies.** David White

**Minutes of the last meeting** These were accepted with minor corrections to be made.

**Treasurers' report.** In the absence of a treasurer RL made the report

No transactions have been made since the last meeting.

Santander paperwork to be completed by RL BJ and PS.

Consider changing Santander business account . New signatory required.

No current committee member wishes to take the roll of treasurer. Suggested members to be contacted and post advertised at AGM

**Secretaries Report.**

Tony Goryn continues to provide information re his work monitoring the river levels.

The river notice board has been delivered and is waiting erection at Hawk Mill Farm.

The payment was made by the Little Wilbraham Common Rights Holders direct to Greenboard

**Matters for discussion.**

**Meeting with the Environment Agency on 13th October.**

The provisional minutes were discussed and accepted following some corrections.

**1 Augmentation efficiency and Tony Goryns work with the EA.**

DL will write to TG to updating him on the meeting. TG remains concerned re the EAs reponses and may wish to proceed with a meeting with the EA.

If we proceed with observational information on the river ie at Hawk Mill or the confluence of the river and the Fulbourn new cut where and when should this information be sent. Laurence Cullen to be contacted for email.

Request for the presentations. BJ will contact Jennifer Meadows to ask for the presentation slides and Laurence Cullen's email.

## **2 The impact of local water abstraction on the Wilbraham River**

This was discussed and is covered in Matt Ramscar's presentation

### **4 Pre reservoir interim water supply plans**

The committee needs to be alert for the publication of the management plan , WRMP, and review the recommendations for capping of abstraction levels.

### **5 Augmentation strategy at Fulbourn nature reserve**

RT noted his concern that similar augmentation flow should go to the Temple Springs and Fulbourn.

The EA are currently most interested in supporting the SSSI at Fulbourn as opposed to river flow. It was noted what work could be done to further support river flow at Fulbourn but this requires and increase in water availability.

### **6 Incorrect classification of the river.**

Mark Corcoran to investigate this.

### **AGM details**

The AGM will be held at 7.30 pm at WMH. This will be followed by Martin Baker Conservation manager for the BCN Wildlife Trust speaking on the Nature Recovery Network. It was noted that if large numbers attend parking should be supervised to avoid disruption to local traffic. A glass of wine may be served at no charge without requirement for a License.Wine offered after the talk.

### **Notice board.**

To be erected and Joining details, website details, a map, and details of DH book to be put up.

### **River walk.**

To be discussed at next meeting.

### **Website.**

### **AOB**

Wilbraham Warbler submissions .Next edition to have details of the AGM.

### **Details of next meetings.**

2023 Thursdays at 7.30 pm venues to be decided

Jan 19th

April 20th

July 20th

Oct 19th AGM Nov 16th

