

# Annual Report from Fulbourn Forum for community action

## Year ending 21 May 2021



**It is now over a year** since we had to cancel the Community Market in March 2020 due to the rapid rise of the pandemic. Little did we know that we would be confirming in this year's report, a lost year of face-to-face community events and activities. So, no markets, no litter picks (but see below), no repair cafes, no work parties, no apple pressing day, and no Grow Your Own Group meetings in the pub. Only time will tell, with the roll-out of the vaccination programme, how and when we might be able to start such events again, which we keep under regular review.

However, this has not reduced the need to monitor and respond to the continuing pressure for development, both in Fulbourn and in the wider Cambridge area.

The writing of the **Neighbourhood Plan** has continued through emails and Zoom meetings – three Fulbourn Forum committee members are part of the steering team, along with others from the village. Working closely with the retained planning consultants, the full Draft Document was finally presented for 'Regulation 14' Public Consultation during January and February 2021. All comments received, from parish residents and businesses, land owners, developers, South Cambs District Council, and other statutory bodies, are now being reviewed, considered, and the plan amended, where necessary.

In our last report we expected that a Reserved Matters application for **the redevelopment of the Ida Darwin Hospital site** for 203 homes was imminent – this was finally registered with South Cambs on 16 December 2020 (Ref: 20/05199/REM). Fulbourn Forum identified several points of concern around the detailed proposals and sent several letters and emails to the planning authority between 9 and 21 February. The issues raised were concerning the surface water drainage and flooding proposals, lack of full compliance with Village Design Guide advice, affordable homes and apartments, tall buildings, under-provision of bin and cycle stores, and unresolved proposals for the community facility and early-learning provision. We also endorsed the response sent by colleague John Willis, citing concerns about the ecology and landscape strategies. Communication on these issues continues.

The two linked planning applications for the final approval of the proposed development of up to **110 dwellings on the two green fields between Cow Lane/Cox's Drove and Teversham Road** were scheduled to go to the SCDC planning committee on 13 January 2021, with a recommendation for approval. The two applications – S/3290/19/RM for approval of Reserved Matters; and S/3209/19/DC, for approval of details reserved by condition – were originally submitted in September 2019, just before the legal deadline. However, with application documents incomplete, and objections from Fulbourn Forum, villagers, the Parish Council, and statutory bodies including South Cambs, the applicants made substantial changes to their submission resulting in the need for a further public consultation in March 2020. Fulbourn Forum made further objections resulting from this further consultation.

However, revised drawings and documents continued to be submitted during 2020, including, in August, a review of the surface water flood management proposals which showed areas of concern not referred to in the planning officer's report recommending approval. Subsequently, further representations were made by immediate neighbours concerning the

threat of flooding, and then just prior to the committee meeting, the threat of a Judicial Review should the application be approved, was formally submitted by other immediate neighbours. Fulbourn Forum had also submitted a written statement for the committee hearing objecting to the application on the grounds that the claim of a net biodiversity gain had not been substantiated by either the applicant or the case officer. On the day of the committee meeting the application was deferred to an unspecified future date. At the time of writing, yet further amended drawings and documents had just been submitted by the applicant, which supports the claim that the development proposals are now substantially different from the original application.

A salutary reminder of the efforts of many people to prevent this highly inappropriate and unwelcome housing development on important meadows and chalk stream is that the original planning application was submitted in June 2014!

Significant redevelopment is now to be expected in the Conservation Area at the top of Pierce Lane. Following on from the approval in July 2018 for the refurbishment and extension of the existing building at **2-4 Pierce Lane** (S/1524/18/FL), together with two new-build flats with under-parking, and a new detached house, three new applications were submitted in 2020 – at **6 Pierce Lane** for demolition of existing and construction of a 4-dwelling terrace and a single detached dwelling (20/02833/FUL – approved by committee 5 votes to 4, February 2021); at **20-24 Pierce Lane** (1066 Planos) for infill construction of a single detached house (20/01302/FUL - approved under delegated powers, December 2020); and also at **20-24 Pierce Lane** for demolition of shop unit and stores, and construction of a new build terrace of four dwellings (20/01303/FUL), subsequently withdrawn in December 2020 and replaced by a new application for a terrace of three dwellings (21/00743/FUL – awaiting determination).

Fulbourn Forum submitted objections to all these applications for a number of reasons, but largely on the grounds of over-development and non-compliance with the advice of the Fulbourn Village Design Guide. Under the terms of the planning approval, the redevelopment work at 2-4 Pierce Lane must be begun by 5 July 2021.

Arising from the developments outlined above, we have become concerned that there is a lack of consideration for the advice of the **Fulbourn Village Design Guide SPD** (Supplementary planning document) by planning permission applicants, planning officers, and other statutory consultees. The VDG was formally adopted in January 2020, although its content was fully known and publicly available around nine months earlier. We have written to both South Cambs officers and councillors expressing our concerns. The VDG was initiated by South Cambs, who paid for external consultants to prepare the document with considerable input by Fulbourn Forum, the Parish Council, and others in the village. The aim was to encourage any new development to be of high quality contemporary design, contextual to its village setting (using traditional materials and forms), together with enhancement of Fulbourn's perceived character of a rural village set amongst trees and hedgerows. Fulbourn Forum has donated two A3 copies of the VDG to both the library and the Parish Council. The document can be found online or borrowed from the library or from Fulbourn Forum.

Several other significant developments are either underway or in the pipeline. The proposals for the redevelopment of the commercial buildings at **Fernleigh Farm, Teversham Road** (in the Green Belt) were approved in 2020. However, although the unauthorised use of Green Belt land adjacent to the Grange Business Park in **Babraham Road as a construction training centre** has continued, the operator (CMT Ltd), has been given a deadline to

relocate. SCDC says that enforcement action will be taken if there is no compliance within the extra time granted.

The 3-storey structure at the end of **Fulbourn Old Drift** (in the Green Belt) **containing 10 flats with an adjoining new social club** which was given approval in November 2018 is now under construction and nearing completion. With inadequate on-site parking, particularly for the social club, the original application provided for the use by the club of parking areas on the Capital Park offices site. This has since been removed and permission given for additional parking bays along the side road that runs at right angles to Old Drift. It is hoped that parking in Fulbourn Old Drift will not impact on the **cycle Greenway** that will run along the road leading to Fulbourn village.

The construction of the new **3-storey, 72 bedrooms, high-dependency Care Home on Cambridge Road** at the entrance to Capital Park on the site of the existing social club is expected to commence on site prior to the planning deadline of November 2021 (approved in November 2018). Fulbourn Forum had objected to both 'linked' schemes as they were identified as 'departure applications', being contrary to South Cambs own Green Belt policies, and contribute to further 'ribbon development' on land between Cambridge and Fulbourn.

The re-zoning in the 2018 Local Plan of the Green Belt land in Fulbourn Road just inside the parish boundary has allowed for the **expansion of the Peterhouse Technology Park** up to the Yarrow Road roundabout. With the sale of its land by Fulbourn's Wright's Clock Fund, this development is now being planned. In January 2021, Fulbourn Forum contributed to the response by Cambridge Past Present and Future (CambridgePPF) to the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion undertaken by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. We were concerned that certain important issues were proposed to be 'scoped out' (ie not included) in the forthcoming assessment. A part outline application and part full application was submitted in mid-March 2021 (Ref: 21/00772/OUT).

In January and February 2021, the Greater Cambridge Local Plan team undertook a consultation with parish councils and residents' associations on the **'Call for Sites'**. To help the Fulbourn Parish Council, Fulbourn Forum prepared a brief analysis of, and comments on, all the 15 sites in the parish that had been put forward.

The growing concerns about **the state of the River Cam and its catchment area of chalk streams**, led locally by the Cam Valley Forum, has resulted in a number of actions and reports being undertaken by various authorities. Fulbourn Forum responded to **the Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study** consultation, and continues to monitor and record the state of our local springs and water courses. The very wet winter of 2020/2021 raised the water table and showed what the local water ecosystem could be like all-year round if the abstraction from the aquifer were to be reduced to support biodiversity. This continues to be the long-term aim. An answer to the plight of chalk streams nationally has now been taken up by groups such as Water Resources East, the Chalk Streams Project Report, The Chalk Streams Alliance, and, at government level, the Chalk Streams Working Group. Fulbourn Forum wants to play its part in these actions.

Fulbourn Forum also submitted a response to the **Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping** online questionnaire consultation in 2020. Also in 2020, we submitted a comment on the Gogs/Cambridge Fens section of the draft Cambridge Past Present and Future / Wildlife Trust **'Cambridge Nature Recovery Network' report**, concerning Fulbourn's Nature Reserve-Hindloders-Roman Road link. The final report was published in May 2021 as 'The Cambridge Nature Network'.

South Cambs District Council undertook a non-statutory consultation in early 2021 on their recent **Fulbourn Conservation Area Appraisal**. This included an assessment of the positive aspects of the conservation area, but also proposed removing from the conservation area the modern developments to the north of the Capital Park site, and the streets of Northfields and The Chantry, which were not considered to merit CA status. Fulbourn Forum responded to the consultation with comments, corrections, and a request for more linkage to the Village Design Guide.

Although we have not run the twice-yearly **community litter picks** at which there are usually between 30 and 45 volunteers, some picking has continued. Individuals and small groups have been picking, including two teenagers who, separately, have filled many bags with litter as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award project. We are very grateful to them for their help in keeping Fulbourn tidy. Fulbourn Forum has lent out pickers, hoops and bags when requested.

The pandemic severely limited the activities of the **Fulbourn Swift Group** in 2020. The first swifts were seen to arrive early, on 26 April, with larger groups arriving in the first and second weeks of May. However, the group, led by John Willis, was unable to gain an idea of the overall swift numbers to compare with previous years as survey work was restricted. The nest boxes in the St Vigor's church tower could be assessed through the CCTV links which showed that this small colony appeared to be stable. The Swift Group continues to monitor local planning applications to encourage the incorporation of nest boxes into new developments, and also collaborates with the Action for Swifts group to get swift bricks incorporated into developments elsewhere in Greater Cambridge. Other biodiversity measures are also encouraged, such as hedgehog highways in garden fences.

The two new **community herb beds** at Pound Green (opposite the war memorial) and the Health Centre planted up in late April 2020 are now well established after a difficult period during the following hot summer. It is hoped to be able to replace the beds at Poor Well and at the Fulbourn Centre in due course, but meanwhile repairs will be undertaken to deal with the rotting timber.

Our two **community orchards** are generally in good health but will need some attention in the coming months. The one on the central green in St Vigor's Road was planted by volunteers in 2015 with nine plum and cherry trees, while the one in the nature Reserve, under the management of the Wildlife Trust, was planted by volunteers in January 2016 with mainly apples and pears. Volunteers to help clear growth around the base of the trees would be welcome.

**Fulbourn Forum continues its links** with the Friends of Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road, the Wilbraham River Protection Society, the Wildlife Trust, the Fulbourn Windmill Society, Cambridge Past Present and Future, Cam Valley Forum, South Cambs Zero Carbon Communities, Cambridge Carbon Footprint, Transition Cambridge, and the Cambs Repair Café Network. We also continue to work with our Parish Council, our South Cambs councillors and our County Councillor, for whom the past year has been a difficult time.

**We sent out five News from Fulbourn Forum emails** over the past year with details of some of the above issues. We hope that villagers will contact us if they need further information or would like to get involved with any of the issues or activities, either now or in the future, when our previously regular events are able to resume. There is no formal membership of Fulbourn Forum, and we are keen for more people either living or working in Fulbourn parish to be connected. So anyone wishing to be added to our email contact list should email the Secretary at the address below.

We will not be able to undertake a formal **AGM** again this year, but there will be some changes to the committee. One change is that Judith Townley has stood down as treasurer (but continues on the committee), while David Nobel has taken on that role. With thanks to them both. We must also report that David Bunting will be standing down from the committee for personal reasons. David joined in January 2011, just nine months after the Forum was constituted. He has been a stalwart supporter of all that we do, always contributing to and participating in the events and activities that we undertake. His knowledge of the village and its people has been very useful, as has his practical knowledge and expertise as a retired builder. He has made countless items for sale at the community markets (with proceeds to Fulbourn Forum), from left-over pieces or second-hand timber – this includes boot jacks, boot racks, spoons, shoe horns, spatulas, tongs, door stops, herb beds, and, of course, many bird boxes, all, we are sure, still in use somewhere in the village. Thank you David - you will be missed!

**Richard Townley**, Chair; **David Cottey**, Secretary; **David Nobel**, Treasurer;  
**David Bunting**; **Eddie Konig**; **Peter Woor**; **Judith Townley**.

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