

# Annual Report from Fulbourn Forum for community action

## Year ending 9 May 2019



Our 2018-2019 Annual Report begins with an update on the large development proposals that were given planning permission in 2017 and highlighted in last year's Report, together with an outline of other new proposals, not so extensive, but still with the potential to add to the pressures on the village infrastructure.

The outline plans for the **redevelopment of the Ida Darwin site with up to 203 new homes** were approved by South Cambs planning committee in August 2017. To date, no application for the approval of Reserved Matters has been submitted. This is partly due to lengthy negotiations between Fulbourn Parish Council, South Cambs District Council and the applicant over the Heads of Terms for the completion of a Section 106 Agreement. A preliminary document was finally received by us in January 2019. The issues at stake were the construction, use, management and maintenance of the social/community building, and the ownership and maintenance of the open space areas, including the so-called 'Green Wedge' designed to prevent Fulbourn coalescing with Capital Park (the effective edge of Cambridge's built-up area) and to help maintain an element of the site's Green Belt designation. The planning application formal Decision Notice has not yet been issued. However, permission has been given for demolition of some existing buildings in Phase 1, and this work is underway.

The Ida Darwin site has been sold to Homes England (bought from the local NHS Foundation Trust), which is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, who will, in due course, release the land to a developer. Currently, the proposal is for the community building to comprise an area as indoor community facilities, and an area for indoor 'early-years' pre-school activities. It is understood that the Parish Council will not be party to the Section 106, with the signatories to the Agreement being South Cambs, the County Council, and Homes England (or a future developer), who, initially, will be fully responsible for both facilities. As the scheme was a 'Departure Application' (a departure from both local and national Green Belt policies), it was submitted to the Secretary of State for ratification, who concluded that the application should not be called in.

Also in last year's Report, we confirmed that the outline planning application for **up to 110 dwellings on the two, potentially wet, green fields between Cow Lane/Cox's Drove and Teversham Road** (partly behind Poor Well) had been approved by the South Cambs planning committee in August 2017. To date, we are not aware of any approach to South Cambs by either Castlefield International (the original applicant) or any developer in advance of a Reserved Matters planning application. However, on 21 February 2019, a small team from a national geotechnical/geoengineering consultancy was undertaking a soil investigation, which might indicate some interest in the development. The potential loss of these two important biodiverse fields bisected by a chalk stream is still of considerable concern. The deadline for a Reserved Matters application to be submitted is 26 October 2019.

Also approved in 2017 was the expansion of the **Primary School** to a two-form entry. All the work has now been completed, while **the rural Green Belt 'Exception Site'** on land to the south west of Balsham Road, approved in March 2018, has just commenced on site. This will provide 100% 'affordable' homes, 14 in total, some shared equity, others for rent, available, in perpetuity, only to people with an accepted Fulbourn connection.

The two other large full planning applications detailed in last year's Report were the Capital Park schemes. One was for the **demolition of the existing single storey social club** located to the right of the entrance to Capital Park off Cambridge Road, and the construction

of a three storey, 72 bedrooms, **high dependency Care Home**. The other, linked application, was to construct a **replacement social club** on a small parcel of land at the end of Fulbourn Old Drift, attached to a **three storey structure containing 10 flats**. Both applications are on brownfield sites in the Green Belt and were approved at committee in March 2018, with the Section 106 Agreement signed and the Decision Notice issued at the end of November 2018. Both were identified as 'Departure Applications' (departing from both local and national Green Belt policies) and were sent to the Secretary of State for ratification – whose decision was not to call in the applications. Fulbourn Forum objected to these applications as they are both contrary to Green Belt policies, and contribute to further high density ribbon development on the land between Cambridge and Fulbourn. To date, there is no further information to indicate when these developments might proceed on site, but we understand that the replacement social club must be completed before the existing one can be demolished.

A further associated planning application relating to the proposed new social club was approved under delegated powers in November 2018. The original application had only 7 car parking spaces on site, with all additional parking being provided by the existing car park on the adjacent Capital Park offices site. The permission now provides for **14 additional spaces dedicated to the club** in the side road off the end of Fulbourn Old Drift, with the office car park no longer being used. Fulbourn Forum has concerns that this will result in parking along Fulbourn Old Drift, a road that has been designated as part of the Cambridge to Fulbourn cycle Greenway.

Two full planning applications for housing in the vicinity of the High Street were submitted in 2018, with both causing considerable concern. One was for a **5-bedroom detached house in the garden of the Six Bells** public house (with access through the pub's car park and garden), and the other was for the **refurbishment and extension of existing buildings, together with two new flats and a new house at 2-4 Pierce Lane**. The Six Bells proposals were strongly objected to by Fulbourn Forum, the Parish Council, and many residents partly due to the loss of a significant part of the garden, used by village organisations for fetes and events. However, the application was approved under delegated powers in September 2018. The Pierce Lane scheme was a slightly revised version of an earlier application that had been refused under delegated powers in 2017. Fulbourn Forum and the Parish Council had both objected partly on the grounds of inappropriate over-development. However, the revised scheme was quickly approved in July 2018 under delegated powers. No further information is currently available.

Two unlawful developments in the Green Belt along Babraham Road have at last been dealt with. A retrospective planning application for the **residential caravan park**, just behind the site of the Sunday car boot sale, was refused, while the retrospective planning application for the use of agricultural land next to the Grange Farm Business Park for a **construction training centre** was also finally refused. The former has now been returned to a green field, while the latter is still operational. However, the company, CMT Ltd, has been given until November 2019 to find alternative premises. We have been told that enforcement action will be taken by South Cambs if they do not vacate by that date.

One of the purposes of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It is concerning that it has taken several years for effective action to be taken against the above two developments, and also the ease with which the further large developments at Capital Park were approved, contrary to the Council's own Green Belt Policies. It is expected that the Green Belt around Fulbourn will remain under threat due to the ongoing expansion of the greater Cambridge area. In addition, a watchful eye needs to be kept on other potential redevelopment sites within the village (so-called 'windfall sites') that could result in an impact on village services, roads and the wider infrastructure.

In September 2018, the **Inspectors' Report on both the Cambridge City and South Cambs Local Plans** was finally published, after a marathon four year examination in public.

The main issues affecting Fulbourn are its redesignation as a Minor Rural Village (which limits any proposal for new housing within the village development boundary to 30 units max.), the loss of the proposal for the two green fields between Cox's Drove/Cow Lane and Teversham Road to be designated as Local Green Space (LGS), and the approval for the expansion of the Peterhouse Technology Park along Fulbourn Road up to the centre of the Yarrow Road/Fulbourn Road roundabout, adding further ribbon development along Fulbourn Road. Of particular importance is the confirmation that South Cambs now has the required 5 year housing land supply, which should limit the potential for the approval of 'rogue' applications on land not identified for development in the Local Plan.

No sooner had the Local Plan (to 2031) been approved, than work on the joint **Greater Cambridge (City and South Cambs) Local Plan** began, with a Call for Sites (11 February to 26 March 2019). The 2018 Local Plans included a commitment to review those plans, the result of which must be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by summer 2022. Our chair, Richard Townley, now sits on the planning group of Cambridge Past Present and Future which has been very useful in informing our committee of the wider issues affecting Fulbourn and the Greater Cambridge area.

Two very important new local planning documents were commenced in 2018, **the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan (FNP)** and the **Fulbourn Village Design Guide (VDG)**. The VDG, a new initiative by South Cambs, once approved, will become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will carry significant weight in the planning process. Fulbourn Forum applied for the funding on behalf of the village in June 2018 and was one of eight villages selected. A steering group was formed to work with the appointed consultant, which included two representatives from Fulbourn Forum, a parish councillor, and several other interested villagers. An initial public consultation on the issues was held at the Primary School, and some older village children attending Bottisham Village College were also visited. The VDG aims to explain what makes Fulbourn special - how buildings, streets, spaces, landscape and materials come together to create distinctive identity and character - and how any new development and improvements around the village should reinforce and enhance that character. The public consultation exhibition on the draft document took place on 25 April with the online consultation period ending on 31 May 2019. After any further amendments resulting from the consultation, it is hoped that the document will get its final approval around July 2019. It is anticipated that the VDG will have an impact on the final design of the Ida Darwin development.

**The Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan** got underway in early April 2018. The work is being carried out by villagers, supported by the Parish Council, Fulbourn Forum, and the Fulbourn Centre. Three members of the Fulbourn Forum committee, Richard Townley, David Nobel, and David Cottey, are involved. John Willis, a founding member of Fulbourn Forum, is also part of the group. Following a period of consolidation and initial evidence collecting, a consultant was engaged in March 2019 to give expert advice and direct the work towards the formulation of objectives and policies. This support will be continued through to the final document. Grant aid from South Cambs is available for this assistance. It is hoped that with further publicity, more villagers will get involved. As with the VDG, the approved FNP (a much larger document) will become a Supplementary Planning Document to sit alongside the Village Design Guide.

**The Cambridge to Fulbourn Cycle Greenway** (one of 12 proposed Greenways) was out for public consultation in November 2018 with an exhibition of the proposals at the Fulbourn Centre. Fulbourn Forum submitted a response to the online questionnaire. The results of the consultation have now been published and we await confirmation of which proposals will proceed, subject to funding being approved. Fulbourn Forum are supportive of the campaigning work done by Camcycle for the provision of 'space for cycling', and a Fulbourn contingent of 12 cyclists joined their **Reach Ride to Reach Fair** on the 2018 May Bank Holiday Monday. Over 1,000 cyclists descended on the fair, with groups starting from Cambridge, Ely and local villages such as Fulbourn.

While Fulbourn Forum continues to promote **a sustainable, well planned and attractive village**, and to counter the threat of development that is inappropriate, it also continues to promote activities and actions that aim to improve and celebrate our existing built and natural environment, and our community cohesion and involvement. As before, we retain our links with Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF), the Friends of Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road, the Wilbraham River Protection Society, the Wildlife Trust, and the Fulbourn Windmill Society. Our commitment to working with other groups was reinforced when at the **Fulbourn Feast** in June 2018 we provided space on our pitches for the Wilbraham River Protection Society, Fulbourn Windmill, the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, and the Cambridge Scrapstore.

**Work parties on the Nature Reserve** recommenced in October 2018 under the direction of the Wildlife Trust's local volunteer wardens, Peter Montgomery and Anthony Godsell. A total of six work parties were undertaken. Much of the work this winter has again been to uproot thorn bushes from the meadows to help maintain the conditions which allow the orchids to thrive. We again promoted the **annual orchid count** in June, undertaken by the Trust with community help. 2018 proved to be a good year with the count of 2,578 being the second highest since counting began in 2001.

The importance we attach to our local wildlife areas was also illustrated by the **talk given at our AGM in April 2018** by Iain Webb, community conservation officer for the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. Entitled *Living Landscapes and other projects*, the talk explained how the Living Landscapes project champions a new way of thinking about how to manage land to do more for wildlife, people and the economy, by creating 'joined up' landscapes that connect reserves together. The talk concluded with reference to the Fulbourn Fen Nature Reserve and Fleam Dyke.

**The Swifts Group**, led by John Willis, continued to keep a watchful eye every Wednesday evening during the swift season on the use of nest boxes around Farmer's Row, Grandridge Close, Swifts Corner, and St Vigor's Church. The nest boxes in the church tower were again occupied, allowing two open days for visitors to observe nesting birds and their young in real-time via the CCTV installation, as well as recorded images. John also organised groups of children from the Primary School and the Steiner School to visit St Vigor's to view the nesting swifts, and he also visited the Landmark International School to give a talk on swifts. All were very successful outreach projects. While the new Primary School buildings were under construction, John negotiated with the builders to get four swift nest boxes installed – the cost of the boxes was met by Fulbourn Forum

**The Grow Your Own Group**, also led by John Willis, held eight informal gatherings in the Six Bells, was responsible for maintaining the **five community herb beds**, and undertook the plant/seed sales at the Community Markets. Some of the herb beds, installed in 2011, are showing advanced signs of rot in some of the timbers. Due to the lack of funds at the time, four of the beds were constructed using treated soft wood sections donated by Ridgeons. We plan to replace these over time using green oak sleepers, and an application to the South Cambs Community Chest Fund for a grant to part fund the replacement of the beds at Pound Green (opposite the war memorial) and outside the Health Centre was submitted at the beginning of April. Subject to approval of the grant, this work will now take place as soon as possible using volunteers and some paid carpentry labour.

Our seventh **Apple Pressing Day** in the Old Stables at Fulbourn Manor in October again attracted a large turnout of helpers and visitors of all ages, resulting in around 215 bottles of pasteurised apple juice, all made from donated Fulbourn apples, with many being picked by a small group of volunteers in the week before the event. Helpers and donators all received some free bottles, with the remainder being used at Fulbourn Forum (and some Fulbourn Arts) events (such as the Repair Cafes, AGM etc.) or sold at the Community Markets to cover expenses and to raise funds for Fulbourn Forum.

**The small community orchard in St Vigor's Road** on the central green, consisting of nine plum and cherry trees, planted by volunteers in 2015, continues to thrive with all trees in blossom in April 2019. The other **community orchard, in the Nature Reserve**, of mainly apples and pears, planted in January 2016 by Fulbourn Forum volunteers in cooperation with the Wildlife Trust, is also thriving and the trees were pruned by an experienced volunteer in early March 2019. The trees are still very young but are well protected by tall, robust fencing.

Two of our regular events also continue to flourish. **The Community Market**, held every three months (March, June, September and December) with an interesting mix of local food and drink, and handmade arts and crafts, provides the main source of income for Fulbourn Forum. Thanks, as usual, to the Fulbourn WI for running the market café, providing excellent and affordable refreshments – always very popular. We try, where possible, to provide some activities for young children to encourage families to attend and stay awhile. Our regular stall holders cannot always make our dates (usually the second Saturday of the month) so we are always keen to hear of interesting alternatives. However, in order to ensure a good mix of table offerings, we try hard not to have too many stalls selling very similar items. In 2018, one new stallholder was Full Circle Shop, with the aim of zero waste/carbon neutral shopping and products which are plastic free, reusable, and sustainable, including refillable cleaning products.

**The two Community Litter Picks**, in September and April, continued to be well supported and effective, with 60+ sacks plus a range of larger items being collected each time. We usually manage to cover a large part of the village plus out along the several approach roads towards the village boundaries. Many thanks go to those who came on the day and also to those who pick up litter throughout the year. If you haven't been before, do come and join us – there are always areas that could be more comprehensively cleared. We are in touch with litter picks being undertaken in Great Wilbraham and Balsham, so the hope is that the areas of cleared pavements and verges will soon extend into the surrounding parishes. The Litter Picks often identify areas that are particularly prone to litter, including dog mess in plastic bags. Representations to the Parish Council by villagers, supported by Fulbourn Forum, have resulted in additional dog bins being installed.

Fulbourn Forum continues to be actively associated with the work of **South Cambs SPEP** (Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership), together with links to Cambridge Carbon Footprint and Transition Cambridge. Using energy wisely, the avoidance of waste and the sustainable use of natural resources is one of our prime concerns. Two successful **Fulbourn Repair Cafés** were held over the past year, in November 2018 and March 2019. We continue working with 'Green Groups' in the Shelfords, Stapleford and Sawston (known collectively as 2G3S) to run a series of Cafés throughout the year at alternate venues. Repairers come from throughout the wider Cambridge area, but several individuals from Fulbourn have also been regularly volunteering – Mark Irving, Halina Szutowicz, Roberta Bateman, David Nobel, and Dave Sexton, with Joanne Redfern running the booking system. Several other volunteers provide refreshments and run the café. We are hugely indebted to those who give up their time to undertake the repair work throughout the year, involving electronics, mechanical items, bikes, jewellery, clothes, clocks, toys, and much more, including the recent new repair offerings of book binding and blade sharpening. If you are interested in getting involved, perhaps as a repairer, do come along and talk to the repairers and organisers at the next event. Fulbourn Forum is an active member and partner of the Cambridgeshire Repair Café Network.

**The work of Fulbourn Forum, reflecting our constitution**, roughly breaks down into five areas: Development and Conservation; Natural Environment; Sustainable Village (energy, food, local economy); Communications; and Community Support. Concerning the last item, we have, over the last few years, been active with others in trying to find ways to lessen the impact of the reduction or withdrawal of public subsidies from rural bus services. Some have been lost, but the subsidised **No18 bus to Newmarket** has continued to run, albeit with a

reduced service. The current contract with A2B Bus and Coach runs out in autumn 2019, but we do not know yet whether this will continue in some form after that date. Public transport is no longer the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council (with whom we had been liaising), but has now been taken over by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority under the direction of the Mayor, James Palmer. In regard to the reduction in the frequency of the **Citi1 and Citi3** buses which was implemented in early 2018, we are keen to hear from villagers of how this has impacted on their use of the service.

Also contributing to the aim to support our local community, and also our interest in the natural environment, Fulbourn Forum approached the Primary School and offered to donate three copies of the best-selling **book by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris, *Lost Words***, a beautifully illustrated book of poems or 'spells' based on 20 words from nature that have been omitted from the most recent edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary. The books were handed over at a special assembly in May 2018. Further support to the school has been given by a donation to their Playground Appeal.

Our occasional '**News from Fulbourn Forum**' emails (now reaching over 440 addresses), together with the **website**, continues to keep villagers aware of what we are doing, the issues that we believe concern the village, and other local events and activities that are complementary to our aims. We thank all those who have given their time and resources, and support and encouragement, to make what we do together, successful and enjoyable – there are too many to name but they know who they are! We also aim to work with, and support and encourage, our Parish Council, our South Cambs Councillors and our County Councillor – we thank them for their involvement. We were pleased to be invited by the Fulbourn Women's Institute to give an **illustrated presentation on Fulbourn Forum**, its formation and objectives, and the issues and activities with which we have been engaged.

The booklet prepared by Fulbourn Forum together with the Fulbourn Library and the History Society in 2013, ***A Walking Guide to the Fulbourn Area***, is still online at [www.fulbournforum.org.uk](http://www.fulbournforum.org.uk) where individual walks can be easily downloaded and printed off. For reference, a hard copy (currently out of print) is available in the Fulbourn Library. In February 2019 a short introduction to the history and environment/ecology of Fulbourn Parish was given to the Stapleford Strollers before their walk around the village and the nature reserve.

As with all voluntary organisations, there is much that needs to be done to maintain our regular activities, and to develop new projects and ideas. **So, can you help us?** Do as little or as much as you feel able – be involved on an occasional basis, perhaps lead or contribute to a new endeavour, or even join the committee. One area of our work that would greatly benefit from help is in the **updating and maintenance of the website** – let us know if you have the relevant expertise and would be interested in ensuring that this important means of promoting our work and activities is kept relevant. We would be delighted to hear from you or provide you with further information on any of the above issues or activities – talk to any of the committee, perhaps at the AGM on 10 May, at our pitch at the Fulbourn Feast on Sunday 30 June, or any time by phone or email. Community action is what we are about!

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

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