

Fulbourn Forum for community action

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 23 June 2023

1.0 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Rose Tristram, Peter Montgomery, John Willis, Liz Willis, Pippa Vine.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Chair, Richard Townley, welcomed the audience of 19 to the Forum's tenth AGM and introduced the committee. 2023 was the Forum's thirteenth year having been set up in March 2010 as a local organisation arising from the publication of the 2009 Fulbourn Village Plan. No AGM had been held in 2020, 2021 and 2022 due to the Covid pandemic.

3.0 Matters Arising from the 2019 AGM (10 May 2019)

- 3.1 Gill Aslett had asked whether more woodland could be planted in the parish, saying it would be good to involve young people in such projects. Since then, 60 hectares (148 acres) at Lower Valley Farm (County Council land) has begun to be converted from agricultural production to meadow, with some woodland, as a carbon offsetting project. The emphasis is on grassland as it will sequester carbon more effectively than trees. The Fulbourn Village Design Guide, with which Fulbourn Forum was closely involved, was largely complete in 2019 but subject to further consultation. The FVDG was finally formally accepted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by South Cambs District Council in January 2020.

4.0 Activities and Overview

- 4.1 Richard Townley reminded the audience of the Objectives of Fulbourn Forum as enshrined in the Constitution adopted on 23 March 2023. This was followed by the PowerPoint presentation by David Nobel which highlighted some of the events and activities undertaken by the Forum both in the past and recently. This included community markets, repair cafes, community herb beds, litter picks, apple pressings for pasteurised juice, the Swift Group, community orchards, work parties, natural environmental and energy issues, Fulbourn Walks booklet, monitoring and responses to planning applications, Village Design Guide, and Neighbourhood Plan.

5.0 Treasurer's Report

- 5.1 David Nobel presented the audited Financial Report to end March 2023. After an explanation of the accounts and Fulbourn Forum's financial model, there were no questions arising, and the report was proposed for acceptance by Selina Sinker, seconded by David Sokal.

6.0 Annual Report

- 6.1 David Cottee presented the Annual Report which covered the period from end March 2021 to End March 2023. He briefly touched on most of the main points in the report and encouraged those present to read the report in full, which had been sent to all those on the Forum's email contact list, and was now also available on the website – www.fulbournforum.org.uk

7.0 Election of Committee

- 7.1 The current committee members were all willing to stand again and were re-elected *nem.con*:
Richard Townley Eddie Konig Peter Woor David Bunting
David Cottee David Nobel Judith Townley

8.0 Comments and Discussion

- 8.1 Rowena Selby-Altham highlighted the dangers associated with the junction of Impett's Lane/Home End with Balsham Road/Dogget Lane where often dense traffic at excessive speed navigates a sharp bend with poor visibility.
- 8.2 The meeting was reminded that Fulbourn Forum, in association with others including the Parish Council, had recently submitted an application to the County Council for a 20mph limit throughout the village. Cllr Claire Daunton (County) confirmed that the County Council is supportive of a lower speed limit in villages and is proving funding over a three year period. Cllr Graham Cone (South Cambs and Fulbourn Parish) confirmed that the PC has, over several years, installed speed monitors in various locations in the village, and this data has been used in the application to help justify the need for a reduced speed limit.
- 8.3 Cllr David Smith (Chair, Fulbourn Parish) confirmed that the PC had recently applied for and received funding for traffic calming measures in Shelford Road. David Cottee also drew attention to the proposed active travel Greenway being planned for Fulbourn Old Drift, part of Hinton Road, Cow Lane, Apthorpe Street, and High Street (the first phase of the full Greenway into central Cambridge), which when implemented would bring a 20mph limit to those streets. A public consultation on the proposals would commence soon.

9.0 Talk by Gavin Shelton – CoFarm: Cambridge City's first community farm

- 9.1 Gavin is the Founder and CEO of the CoFarm Foundation, and is also a member of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, an independent charity concerned with climate, health and nature crises. He outlined his past experience of working in wildlife areas, particularly in association with young people. His keen interest in the world's food systems and their role in biodiversity loss contributed to the setting up of the CoFarm Foundation. Farming has been identified as a major player in climate change and, combined with health inequalities, these are key drivers in the need to rethink food if we are to achieve carbon net zero and global goals.
- 9.2 The CoFarm model is community based agroecology farming aiming to achieve four outcomes: a thriving ecosystem, cohesive communities, healthier populations, and an inclusive economy. The 7 acre site in Abbey, Cambridge is owned by the local St Andrew's Church with the fenced horticultural enterprise in the centre surrounded by 4.5 acres of wildflowers and orchards. Activities such as beekeeping, and green woodworking/traditional crafts (to help create necessary infrastructure) are planned. The project was developed and designed in collaboration with local people with the first crops harvested in 2020. Professional horticulturists are employed to oversee the planting and growing. Produce harvested in 2020 was 3.72 tonnes, 7.95 tonnes in 2021, 5.23 tonnes in 2022 (a hot drought year), with an estimated 16.9 tonnes forecast for 2023.
- 9.3 People from all walks of life have come forward to volunteer, with many friendships formed. Eleven people have gone on to careers in farming/horticulture. Other farms elsewhere are beginning to apply the CoFarm model. The aim is to encourage the formation of 250,000 acres dedicated to a similar model by 2030 – about just 1% of the existing UK agricultural land. This would make tangible progress on supply chain emissions (Scope 3 Emissions). The Nature Friendly Farming Network is a collaborating partner.

- 9.4 The CoFarm model relies on multiple revenue streams. This includes subscription schemes for employers, grants (eg. a lottery fund grant has been applied for), discounts on produce purchased by households, schools and others, and subsidies from the government farming/environment support programme ELMS.
- 9.5 A site in Fulbourn consisting of two fields (total 40 acres/16 hectares) has been identified for a second local CoFarm. These are situated behind dwellings at the south end of Station Road. The next steps are for a co-design in conjunction with residents, confirm funding and recruit a farm manager, community engagement coordinator, and education manager.
- 9.6 A number of questions were raised by the audience of 51. Gavin confirmed that security had not been a problem at the Abbey site with no vandalism. Concern was expressed that the farm might impact on the gardens in Station Road. Gavin responded that the design and the layout of the farm operations would be developed in conjunction with the neighbours, and that the size of the site would allow for a 'buffer' zone to be incorporated if desired. He also confirmed that the number of volunteers helping on site at any one time would be small and managed by an online booking system. The size of the horticultural element may not be much larger than at the Cambridge site and the produce would not necessarily be for local consumption. The size of the farm would bring other opportunities such as the possibility of growing heritage grain and other such produce.
- 9.7 The audience were invited to sign up to the project on the CoFarm website after which they would be kept informed of progress and given the opportunity to participate.

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