



Annual Report from Fulbourn Forum for community action

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

The Fulbourn Forum committee met seven times during another busy year with much to report:

We held four **Community Markets**, as usual in June, September, November and March. These continue to be our main source of income, apart from any grants received for specific projects. Our thanks, as always, to the Fulbourn WI for running the popular café.

The twice-yearly **Community Litter Picks** took place in April and October. We are hugely grateful to the volunteers who turn out, whatever the weather, to help with this essential activity. 50+ filled bags are the norm each time. We try to get out right to the parish boundaries if there are enough participants. We are also grateful to the villagers who pick litter around the village on an occasional or regular basis throughout the year – Fulbourn Forum can help by providing pickers and bags if required. The Fulbourn Parish Council (FPC) provides all the equipment and extends their thanks to all volunteers.

Our twice-yearly **Repair Cafes** took place in April and November. We are indebted to the many skilled repairers (usually around 12 at each event) who volunteer to participate, giving a second life to many things. There are usually around 50+ items brought in for repair, with a good successful repair rate. In other instances, advice is given where replacement parts are required. Our thanks also go to the volunteers who bake the cakes and run the café.

The annual **Apple Pressing** was held in September, producing almost 150 bottles of pasteurised juice from local apples. Many thanks go to those who helped on the day and those who donated apples. If you are able to provide apples for the 2025 pressing do please get in touch in August or September. After bottles were given to helpers and donors, juice was available to purchase at the community markets in November and March. All were sold.

The **Fulbourn Swift Group** undertook, from early May, its weekly Wednesday evening observations of the swift colony and its nest sites, particularly around St Vigor's Church (where cameras are installed in nest boxes) and around the area of Grandridge Close, Swifts Corner, Windmill Lane, and Farmer's Row. The group's observations, led by John Willis, indicate that the colony has maintained its numbers. Events were organised during the national Swift Awareness Week in early July.

The group applied for and was awarded funding from the Wright's Clock Lane CIO to purchase and install 50 swift nest boxes in the village. The response by villagers has been good and, after a survey of each volunteer location, it is hoped to get boxes installed in spring 2025. An additional direct grant of £500 was made by Fulbourn Forum to the Swifts Project.

On the **Fulbourn Fen Nature Reserve SSSI** (Site of Special Scientific Interest) there were six winter Sunday morning **Work Parties** run by the Wildlife Trust under the direction of the local volunteer wardens. The main work is the removal of scrub such as hawthorn in the meadows to improve the habitat for the wild orchids. The **2024 Orchid Count** recorded almost 2,600 plants - slightly down on the record number in 2023. This might have been due to the wet spring weather that year.

We publicised the well-attended guided walk organised by the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke (FRRFD) in August to see the **new grassland and woodland at Lower Valley Farm** which is establishing well. As is the **new wildflower meadow at the Nature Reserve** adjacent to the bottom end of Stonebridge Lane.

The fruit trees in the **Community Orchards in the Nature Reserve and at St Vigor's Road** are generally looking in good condition, and continue to be monitored. The trees in the Reserve are looked after by the Wildlife Trust, but Fulbourn Forum volunteers have undertaken pruning at St Vigor's Road.

The five **Community Herb Beds** continue to be maintained by volunteers, with any necessary new plants being donated by residents or purchased by Fulbourn Forum. We are grateful to Martin Sullivan who volunteered to construct a new bed at Caraway Road to replace the old rotten one.

Fulbourn Forum again organised a small contingent from Fulbourn to join the May Bank Holiday **Reach Ride**, which is run by Camcycle. Leaving from opposite the Hat and Rabbit, we joined the main ride in Newmarket Road. Around 1,000 cyclists join the ride each year.

The **Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan** has now been a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for two years, and the Fulbourn Village Design Guide for 5 years. Fulbourn Forum has prepared a report outlining the actions that have taken place which are relevant to the FNP policies and aspirations. The reports are forwarded to the Parish Council.

Over the last twelve months, Fulbourn Forum has responded to **three planning applications**. August 2024: proposals for the demolition of commercial buildings and the erection of nine dwellings at 20-23 Pierce Lane. This application was refused under delegated powers. November 2024: proposals for the demolition of commercial buildings and the erection of nine dwellings plus office space at Home End/Rushden Close. Decision awaited. January 2025: Conversion/demolition of agricultural/commercial buildings and change to retail use at Fernleigh Farm, Teversham Road. Decision awaited. The development of land next to the Nursing Home in Pierce Lane for two dwellings was refused under delegated powers in July 2024 (our response was sent in March 2024).

Last year's Annual Report confirmed the initial work undertaken in connection with Fulbourn Forum's **Tree and Woodland Survey and Associated Planting Programme**. In 2024, following the completion of the professional survey of, and future strategy for, the village's existing trees (mostly on public land), a selection of, and planting programme for, 54 additional trees was prepared. After securing approval for planting from the various land owners (ie. PC, SCDC, CCC, Alms Houses, Metropolitan Housing, and Healthcare Homes), in early 2025 a grant to fund the work was agreed by Wright's Clock Land CIO. The planting is now largely completed, and a two year care, watering, and maintenance programme begun to ensure that the trees get well established. A full report on the project will be published in 2025.

Work is now underway on the three large housing projects in the village – conversion of the **old Pumping Station** to 11 flats, the first phase **redevelopment of the old Ida Darwin Hospital** for 203 dwellings, and the **development of 110 dwellings on the two meadows** between Teversham Road and Cox's Drove. The incorporation of the old 'Victorian Garden' (adjacent to the pumping station) into the latter scheme is now open to the public as a walking route into the new estate.

The conversion of the existing office blocks at **Capital Park** to bioscience laboratory space is now underway, with the development now known as CamLife. Since the community workshops run by owner Longfellow Real Estate in autumn 2024, in which Fulbourn Forum participated, no further details have yet emerged regarding changes to the parkland area and access by the public. However, conversion of a space in Victoria House has begun which, it is understood, will be available for use by village organisations.

The proposal for a **village wide 20mph speed limit** was finally unanimously approved by the County Council Highways Committee on 1 October. David Cottee, Chris Loughlan and John Cooter-Baker attended in person and made presentations in support. Three other villagers attended online and also spoke in support. The installation of the necessary signage began on 24 March.

After amendments to the proposals for a **Fulbourn to Cambridge Greenway** (Greater Cambridge Partnership - first phase from High Street to Yarrow Road) resulting from the public consultation in June/July 2023, a further consultation took place on 2 December 2024. Fulbourn Forum attended the event and submitted a written response. As the final stage of the process, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was submitted in March 2025. The outcome is awaited.

Last year, we reported that we had helped with the **Local Highways Initiative (LHI)** submitted by the Parish Council to the County Council for safety improvements to the Dogget Lane/Cambridge Road corner. This only just missed selection for action. An updated application for the same work was submitted by the PC in January 2025. The outcome is awaited.

Fulbourn Forum's 2024 AGM in May included a capacity audience for the premiere screening of our **film documentary *Fugolburna: a stream frequented by birds?*** The film has been well received. Fulbourn Forum hosted a second screening at Eddington (Storey's Field Centre) in July. Since then there has been further screenings at Eddington (hosted by Transition Cambridge), Gt Wilbraham (hosted by Wilbraham River Protection Society and Wilbraham Environment Group), Rock Road Library (hosted by Friends of RRL), Stapleford (hosted by environment group 2G3S), and Cambridge Central Library (hosted by Cambridgeshire Library Service). All have been well attended. Further screenings are being arranged at Gt Shelford, Linton, Newnham, Cambridge and Haslingfield.

On 20 June, Fulbourn Forum arranged and hosted a well-attended **Hustings for the 4 July General Election**. The event was chaired by the Rector, Alice Goodman, and representatives of all the political parties plus an independent candidate attended.

Fulbourn Forum prepared the necessary information for an application to be made by the Parish Council for the designation of the Six Bells public house and restaurant as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)**. This was successful and the Six Bells is now on the SCDC ACV Register meaning that should it come up for sale, the community has the opportunity to consider acquisition.

From 4 to 11 May, Fulbourn Forum contributed to the **'art and environment project' called 'My Patch'**, organised by Deanna Tyson. We installed a display in the marquee at Fulbourn Manor highlighting some of the work of Fulbourn Forum since its inception in 2010.

Further raising awareness of the need for action against climate change and the need for healthy soils and food, on 15 November we screened the acclaimed **film documentary Six Inches of Soil**. Promoting agroecology and regenerative farming techniques, the film attracted a capacity audience and included an informative Q&A led by local farmers and the film's producer.

Fulbourn Forum has again provided space at some community markets for the **Fulbourn Windmill** to publicise its planned restoration works. The initial work to establish the necessary legal framework for the Fulbourn Windmill Trust, supporter membership, and Lease and Grant Agreements is now almost complete. Charity Registration has also been approved – Fulbourn Windmill CIO.

Fulbourn Forum continues its links with the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke (FRRFD), the Wilbraham River Protection Society (WRPS), the Wildlife Trust, Cambridge Past, Present and Future (CPPF), Cam Valley Forum (CVF), South Cambridgeshire Zero Carbon Communities, Cambridge Carbon Footprint (CCF), Transition Cambridge, the Cambridgeshire Repair Café Network, and Carbon Neutral Cambridge (CNC). We also continue to work with our Parish Council, our SCDC Councillors and, our County Councillor. We are pleased that our new MP, Pippa Heylings, was able to attend the premiere screening of *Fugolburna*.

Representatives of Fulbourn Forum attended the AGM and talks/visits of FRRFD, CPPF, CVF, the WRPS, CNC, and the SCDC Local Climate Action Conference at Cambourne in November.

Our involvement with the WRPS, CVF, CPPF, and the Wildlife Trust, is connected with our concerns for the health of the water environment and biodiversity in the Cam Valley, particularly in the Cam catchment area of Fulbourn and the Wilbrahams, together with the promotion of action to support the Nature Recovery Network programme. The work outlined in last year's Annual Report continues, and while winter 2023/24 saw exceptional rainfall, well above the average, winter 2024/25 has been significantly drier leaving concerns for the water courses during 2025. Further recent action by WRPS is the beginning of work to monitor the water quality by sampling and testing for pollutants at strategic points in our catchment area. Fulbourn Forum is engaging with and supporting this work.

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