

Briefing Note for Parish and Town Councils Watercourse and Ditch Flood Risk

As you will be aware there has been a substantial increase in flooding incidents in recent years. Wiltshire Council as Land Drainage Authority continues to work with many local communities to appoint Flood Wardens and help plan for such events to reduce the risk to people and property.

Wiltshire Council often approaches landowners to request them to clear overgrown and blocked ditches and watercourses where there is a risk of flooding. However, there is an extensive network of watercourses and ditches in the county it has been found that Parish and Town Councils have in many cases been successfully able to provide valuable assistance in identifying and helping to resolve these issues including working with us to help reduce the risk of flooding in their communities.

As part of the partnership working initiative I would like to ask your Council to become more involved in the early stages of this process and using your local knowledge and contacts to make the initial informal approaches to landowners to undertake clearance of their ditch or watercourse. The first approach could for example be made by telephone or email followed by a letter. For your assistance we have attached a template for the first and second letter to this briefing note. We would also ask that you retain copies of any emails or letters sent to the landowners. Town and Parish Councils have both local knowledge and contacts and the ability to take a less formal approach and the Parish Council's role would be perceived to be a neighbourly reminder highlighting the parish's role within the community. Wiltshire Council will be looking to informally review this initiative within 6 months.

The suggested approach is set out below:

1. An informal approach by (telephone or email) from a Parish or Town Council representative is made asking a landowner to clear ditches and watercourses.
2. If there is no action by the landowner the first letter can be sent requesting action.
3. If the clearance is still not undertaken a second letter can be sent to the landowners.
4. Should you encounter any problems please do not hesitate to contact the Council's Drainage Team who can then prioritise any further action as appropriate. If necessary then may also instruct the Council's legal team should any formal legal action be necessary or arrange for a referral to the Environment Agency where a watercourse is a main river.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact Renate Malton, Project Officer on 01225 712514 (mobile 07827 954856) or by email renate.malton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Simon Jacobs

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