

Notes of the Operational Flood Working Group North

May 2022 Hybrid Meeting

Updates by statutory agencies

Environment Agency

- Carrie back from maternity leave
- Completed the refresh bid for money from Defra to fund projects protecting properties from flooding
- 4 sites in Wiltshire - Ladyfield Brook, Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge and Malmesbury.

Guidance and advice re PLP

- Funding criteria, Defra guidance advises properties that are most vulnerable as 1:20 and 1:30 categories.
- The Flood & Coastal Committee has backed and approved the business case to include the 1:40 category.
- Applications have been undertaken on a site by site basis e.g. investigating historical records, events, review significant properties using this guidance
- EA deal with main river and coastal flooding. In some areas it can be difficult to distinguish the source of flooding and the EA do the best they can regardless of the source of flooding, even if there is surface water involved, we work closely with Wiltshire, provide information and undertake joint funded schemes.
- Steve has a five-year programme which is currently full and includes, Burton, Castle Coombe, Burton and Malmesbury
- On receiving reports from OFWG, Wiltshire Council & Town and Parish Councils he visits the site and undertakes liaison with residents.
- Where there are multiples sources of flooding, he books them in and investigates to see what they can do.
- Wiltshire has undertaken previous schemes on behalf of the EA. The EA has previously supplied funding for Crudwell, Easterton & Dauntsey with Wiltshire Council undertaking the surveys, appointing contractors, installation, and requested the assistance of the Parish Council.
- Once installed the assets are handed over to the property owner and they take responsibility. The assets are dedicated to the property, not the individual. They should service and maintain, try installing them at least once a year to refresh how to install them.
- The final contribution comes from the homeowner themselves, in that once everything completed, the homeowner is responsible for maintenance and care. It is this that is their contribution to the scheme.
- Handover information was supplied at the time of installation. If homeowners have trouble accessing repair or spares, they should contact the EA who will endeavour to assist. Everything is approved to BS standards so the seal strips

should be changeable. If they are missing larger or damaged items, they will need to replace themselves.

- All for proactive rather than reactive, but there are some houses that we know flood already but may or may not want to be involved in the scheme. Wilshire has no funding currently but will take opportunities when available.
- The project covers whole of Wessex and there are a lot of properties to cover.
- PLP is a last resort, all of the communities are first assessed for a traditional flood alleviation scheme and if that is not possible, we will try and reduce the risk in other ways. We would rather give better protection in other ways.
- If you have flood defence products installed and they are damaged Danny suggested looking at the National Flood Forum's Blue Pages for details of installers.
- Email Steve or Renate. Following an installation information and advice is given in the handbook. A 12-month warranty is available from the EA following their installation. Steve advises people to take out a maintenance contract to ensure the items are regularly services.

Questions

- Jacqui wanted to know if Thames Region ran a similar scheme as there are properties that were badly flooded in 2007 and are still at risk.
- How does flooding affect people's house insurance as there is a lack of under reporting due to concerns of blighting their property.
- Steve will get in touch with the Thames Office to find out how they set up and are tackling PLP in the Thames Area. He is aware they have some very large PLP projects going across their area.
- Danny advised we have the same contacts off but since 2007 we have not had the volume of flooding.
- Malmesbury – We have had a community led approach scheme with 1:50 protection. Recently we have been developing an outline business case which is going to the South-West Regional Flood Defence Committee. Carrie is looking at it along with Atkins. Carrie to undertake site visit. Chris Whitlow will respond to the questions then forward it to Atkins prior to sending it for approval. The more work we do now the quicker the process so front loading to save time. The RFC has funds if it is within their parameters. Hopefully we will submit within a couple of months, Carrie also waiting for Chris Whitlow to share the model requiring extra information.
- Liaise outside of the meeting for a suitable date for meeting

Insurance

- There is a legal responsibility to declare if your property has flooded internally or any of your land/garden when you sell. If you as a homeowner indicates that the property has never flooded, and it comes to light at a later date that it had flooded then the seller can be sued in court and made to pay back to the purchasers the value of the property they sold it for and possibly for any additional damage caused by the flooding. The courts take a dim view of this

type of dishonesty and the consequences can and will be financially devastating for the seller.

- Jacki was concerned that if you buy a property on fields that previously flooded how does this work. Part of the planning process is about “how are you going to mitigate the flood risk”, and in order to proceed with their application the company concerned must demonstrate how they will achieve this, the onus being on them to prove that they can.

Insurance

- A levy to which all householders contribute to enables those properties which either have flooded or are at risk of flooding can obtain insurance cover. This is run by the insurance companies and is known as Flood RE.
- This came about in 2015 to enable a reasonable cost of insurance for those at risk or who have been flooded. Properties built since 2009 are however not covered by this scheme.
- Once an installation has been provided and it has been handed over, the EA offer a post installation flood risk report which can be shared with their insurance company and may reduce premiums.

Wessex Water

- Having correspondence with Malmesbury residents. A scheme for last year or so was delayed due to the dry winter in turn delaying the CCTV survey. This is now progressing.
- Drop-in session in Beanacre on the 24th May went well and scheme progressing.
- Query regarding the sewage works at Lacock – advised the site is maintained, regulated and performing as it should be.
- There was a good turn-out of residents and thank you for hosting what was a very useful session, pleased with how things are progressing. The project in Woodrow/Forest Road is progressing well and getting towards the end. Very pleased thank you
- Charlotte advised the time frame is all dep on financial approval.

Network Rail – apologies

- Any questions please email them to Renate who will pass them on.

Town and parish update

Staverton & Hilperton

- Staverton & Hilperton action group, concerned about Fire & Rescue at Staverton moving away. Danny advised this is all misinformation following consultation with Fire & Rescue. The installation of the gate at Staverton negates some of the risk. The causeway does not have a gate but does have a road closed imposed signs, people ignore the signs and continue to drive despite this.

- Natural England have expressed concerns about drainage for the development in this area. Wiltshire Council are always in discussions with them as well as all the ecology charities. Our planning office deal with the one of our statutory consultees.
- Sustainable transport have concerns the development could go one of two ways either a no or mitigate the risks by by spending a lot of money by putting in a new bridge and realigning the road. If that occurs, they would need to enlarge the development. Celia concerned this being the driving force to have more houses in this area, and others are being ruled out.
- Nic advised her to talk to her Wiltshire Councillor re their concerns. The causeway is already being looked at to see if they can improve things.

Dauntsey

- Onsite meeting to be held. Highways England has their own preferred term consultant, which is Atkins, but it is their Atkins and not ours. Nic will be at the meeting.
- Need to arrange a meeting with homeowners to encouraging them to clean their ditches.
- The Parish Council are expected to send out ditch letters first as they are informal letters, whereas ours are much more direct. Then Richard can go in if there is no response. Discussion as to who has responsibility. The Parish council has not had any discussions with the homeowner. They need to do this first before Wiltshire will step in.
- The culvert going over the underpass is now the responsibility of Wiltshire Council which includes maintenance. It is showing on our terrier layer. Need to confirm with legal team that everything is up to date, and we will not start anything until ownership is affirmed. Danny thought it was a replacement issue and nothing mentioned about maintenance. A request was made for a maintenance schedule for the culvert as there are at least 12 properties at risk. Danny will have a look with the area team and our own budget to see what is available for maintenance.
- Flood alleviation scheme going through Dauntsey has silt built up EA is responsible, Steve to pass onto operational guys, liaise with Howard the flood warden. The land is not owned by anyone, and highways is responsible. Howard will forward details to Steve who will speak with their ops people.
- The field adjacent to the M4 is very wet but the north side is bone dry concerned a leak may be affecting our groundwater. Request he emails this in and so that we can report it to Highways England. Apparently, the damp field is so wet they are unable to put the horses in it.

Malmesbury

- Would like to thank for the work everyone is doing on behalf of the residents.

Kellaways

- It hasn't flooded for a couple of years, SAT nav's still directing people via the route. No properties are flooded aside from the Mill so it is more of a safety

issue, if there is an expectation of flooding the flood group will endeavour to put signs out but it is down to individual drivers as to whether they choose to ignore the signs

Hankerton

- No issues since last in person meeting, unless there is news on Hankerton pumping station,
- Charlotte advised nothing for the station itself but there is a scheme underway, Follyfields to protect the houses with a small pumping station if there is an issue at the pumping station, Will install a tank that they can all pump into.

Box

- Thank you for mentioning the training being organised by Box parish council for flood wardens around the highways. As soon as everything is finalised Integrity Enterprises, will undertake the training but need to think about doing this in the Autumn and possibly during the day because of the travelling, need to look at numbers.

Melksham without

- The Whitley flood wardens still active, manage to commandeer extra volunteers. Continuing to patrol local waterways and drainage channels despite no rain. PC did an exercise reviewing their DBS checks and on new volunteers.
- **Imp keep updated with the flood wardens contact details and DBS if they are expected to liaise with residents. Keep your plans updated**
- A350 and railway north of Dunch Lane, the drainage team have made their comments well known to the applicants. The new plan instead of both attenuation ponds being in the south there is now one in the north. The outfall from the other attenuation pond should go under the railway line by the accommodation crossing, to reach the culvert on the other side. Once they have filled the overflow it will enter the Southbrook and we know this causes flooding in Melksham.
- Richard advised the attenuation ponds are designed to hold up to a biblical event and Stella is working hard on this. There is a willingness to work with the developers, Danny checking this with NR, but has not t seen a drainage strategy or anything that works. Residents of Beanacre are concerned that the site accumulates storm water and help with the drainage of Beanacre village, and this will be affected if the development goes ahead. Need evidence to show this, objecting on the planning portal individually, photographic evidence
- Thank you to Danny for the liaison he provided re the issues of open space in Bowerhill. Work starts on 6th.

Southwick

- No recent flooding but in the last event the A350 flooded for some time causing vehicle wash to flood homes. Would like assistance in reducing the speed of traffic during a flood event. This will be down to Wiltshire as the highway authority. Drivers are supposed to slow down, police can take action if drivers are not slowing down. The parish is hesitant about putting signs out as the road has fast moving traffic. It should be reported to My Wilts which will enable signs to be put out. Some parish councils have taken photos and registration numbers of vehicles not slowing down, or a video but concerned that this puts people in danger. Some communities park cars on the road which then slows the traffic down.
- Matt advised when we go into a heavy storm, we up our resources we can put people on standby so its important to let us know. We can look at putting up barrier's signs, but we need to know as it happens, anything that needs an urgent response during the day or out of hours should be phoned in.

Biddestone

- Everything okay

Trowbridge

- In receipt of future funding for the town centre which includes the Biss. The scheme put forward does not consider any flood attenuation schemes. If the scheme does not take this into account the town council is concerned the money will be wasted should the Biss flood.
- Planning appeal for Wain Homes has been opposed by Wilts C. They are planning to put a bridge across existing watercourses. First phase of the development plans to put the first property within 7 metres of the railway. Wessex Water has refused to sign off on the drainage that has already been put down. Request email sent to Renate which will be forwarded to Mark Howells at Network Rail.

Cricklade

- Thames are not here again and not attending the meetings. Advised the current system can only accept another 49 properties.
- In March a burst water main occurred on the 419 and the town council were not informed our updated, despite requesting this information. Advised writing to the chief exec asking for an explanation of re their shortcoming to the town council. Will continue to send the questions into Thames water. Thames water cover a large area, but that is no excuse to ignore concerns raised with in.

Nettleton

- There is flooding in Burton and wanted to get up to date with what is happening around the county. Their problem is getting the water off the road

and making sure the rat holes are cleared enabling the water to get to drain off the road.

- Matt advised contacting Dave Arnott outlining what you said about the grips and other concerns that local knowledge is being ignored and is sure he will endeavour to assist.

Purton

- Listening to Purton Jacqui advised they have similar issues with Thames water, they dig up roads then disappear, there appears to be no joint working or liaison between Thames Water, Purton Council and Wiltshire Council. Purton Council would appreciate it if they had a list or new what was being planned. There are also issues of not Thames Water not liaising with the Wiltshire re road closures in Purton.
- New Road floods regularly and the landowner needs to be contacted with regard to clearing out the ditches.
- Wain Homes is proving difficult as a planning application included a bridge across the river Ray. Wain Homes have not built the bridge after planning was approved and since then the EA have remodelled the river requiring a larger bridge. She is not sure the bridge will ever be built.

Potterne

- Land drainage issues at Coxhill Lane and run off from the field. Danny has engaged with Natural England as the area is not currently on their list and is hoping to hear back next week.
- We have received the update from Atkins re the CCTV, there are a couple of blockages, and we need to liaise with Wessex Water as to who needs to do what. There have been a lot of investigations around Coxhill Lane, High Street, War Memorial and Duck Street.
- There was a small flood last week and Matt was able to send out the gully tanker. The parish were provided with an AO map and asked to populate this with local information concerned with drainage and landowners, they still have not done this. We requested this be done to assist in completing the Section 19 and are struggling to complete the report without this information. We are doing what we can, but the parish are not cooperating as requested.
- Currently Wiltshire Council cannot find the ownership of an area of land which Danny now believes can be taken as Highways Waste. Historically there was a tax on landowner's land and if it were not viable the landowners wouldn't register. He has asked the legal team to investigate.
- Matt has put this on his list for ditch clearance but does not think it has been done yet as they are collating the list. The work should be done within 8 weeks max. Matt asked to communicate this to the parish council.
- With regards to undertaking any dredging the parish council as part of completing the map were asked to contact the landowners which they have not done. We are trying to be proactive as a council and asking the parish to complete certain tasks which they appear reluctant to undertake. Should another flood event occur the will not doubt phone us for assistance

complaining yet appear unable to help themselves by providing information. Their inaction is causing issues, Wessex Water were unable to carry out works, we have chased our Streetworks team.

- The drainage team does not have time to spend on issues which could be dealt with by the parish council which in turn reduces our effectiveness.
- Renate advised they have not completed their flood plan or advised her on progress.

Canals & Rights of Way

- Canal looking quite empty at moment it has been very challenging. Restoration work is being hindered as they are unable to test work undertaken due to the lack of rain. The Kennet & Avon will struggle if they don't get some rain – sustained period of average rain is all that is needed.

Highways

- Reiterate highway concerns contact your local highways engineers as a parish and we will endeavour to assist.

Drainage

- Working on the Top five list and CCTV investigations. The team received additional monies, but like everyone could always do with more.
- Will bring the top five to the next meeting for discussion and highlight areas we think we should be concentrating
- We have gone back to the Highway & Divisional Engineers to see if there are any other areas we should be concentrating on.
- We have been receiving a lot of emails regarding Thames water which is putting more pressure on the team. If you do have issues with any of the utilities, please let us know and we will endeavour to get some accountability.
- Now is the time to be looking at ditches and watercourses in your parish. Crops are being harvested which can lead to blocked gullies. Summer storms are bigger than historically winter ones so make sure all your equipment is ready and working, any flood defence equipment is checked, maintained and practice installing them. Check pumps, airbricks working, aqua sacks in dry place
- We have been lucky not to have had the large storms that have hit other areas around the county. It is only a matter of time before we have one over Wiltshire – be prepared.

Flood Wardens & Volunteers

- Reminder to keep in touch with your flood wardens and volunteers. Ensure your contact lists are up to date and if you need any replacements try and recruit new ones. Every town and parish should have received Nic's letter about the OFWG groups and hopefully this will encourage more of them to attend and allow us to be as effective as we can.

- If the issue doesn't come up at any of your parish council meetings, please let us know.
- The SSEN funding application closed in June, and we received a few requests regarding applications. This year's fund was in response to many communities losing power for several days at a time due to storms so focussing on community resilience during a power outage. How could you as a community improve your resilience in the event of a power outage lasting for several days.
- BT have a programme in place to remove all the landlines and replacing them with mobile phones. During a power outage you used to be able to still use the phone to call for assistance as the system had its own power supply. This has now gone, so communities should look to other methods of communication. The

A.O.B

- Next meeting 21st July and we will continue the meetings in their current format as it is important every community has a say.
- Melksham town council does not have a representative to this group following the election of new town councillors. Nick will contact the Mayor as not only is the town centre at risk of flooding but also residential areas.