

# Public Document Pack

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT: Martin Coker, Mike Williams, David Cannon (Chairman), Gerry Clark, Thompson, Jane Perry and Richard Scarff

Also in attendance: Councillor Mandy Brar, Denise Kinsella (Thames Water), Brianne Vally (Environment Agency) and David Bedlington (Environment Agency)

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Amy Gower and Simon Lavin

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Larcombe.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2019 be approved subject to the following amendments:**

Page 3, 3rd paragraph should read - Brianne Vally from the EA indicated that there were two pieces of strategic work regarding flood risk management that needed to be carried out; a Thames Flood Risk Management Plan (as required by the Flood Risk Regulations 2009), a collation of all measures the *Risk Management Authorities* took to alleviate flooding and also, a River Basin Management Plan.

Page 3, 1st paragraph of Thames Water update should read - Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, stated that she was aware that meetings regarding Ham Island Sewage Treatment Works had been held with the Parish Council and that another meeting was being scheduled, as questions around capacity of the works have been raised.

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Flood Risk Manager to request a start date for the works and then let Ian Thompson know

The action was relating to CCTV survey work due to be carried out by Volker highways on the "barrel arch" culvert. The Flood Risk Manager confirmed that some works had been carried out but the Borough was still waiting for the report.

- ❖ **Action** – the Flood Risk Manager to chase up the report from Volkers Highways, and inform the Parish of the outcome.

The Clerk to circulate the presentation on the likely timeline for progression of the River Thames Scheme to the Members of the Flood Liaison Group

The Clerk confirmed the presentation was circulated the week commencing 21 October 2019.

Brianne Vally to find any information on the possible transfer of responsibilities for navigation to the Canal and River Trust and to circulate prior to the next meeting.

Brianne Vally confirmed that she had circulation all the information she had available to the Members of the Flood Liaison Group. Ministers had concluded that it was not feasible at this time, to transfer responsibility for navigation on inland waterways to the Canal and River Trust. The Environment Agency would therefore retain this responsibility.

## UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

### Update on the River Thames Scheme

David Bedlington, Environment Agency (EA), provided a timeline for the River Thames Scheme (RTS) and circulated a handout of the timeline (attached to the minutes).

David Bedlington stated that Surrey County Council had approved funding for the scheme at their Full Council meeting held at 14.00 on 29 October 2019 and that meant that funding for the scheme was now in place. He confirmed that based on the Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding available, plus funding from central government and committed funding from other partners such as the Royal Borough and private contributors, funding for the RTS was now in place.

Surrey County Council had made a press announcement before their Full Council meeting which only related to the funding they were contributing to the scheme; as long as all the other promises of funding were confirmed, the scheme was now fully funded. The next step was to go to the Treasury with a business case so there were four or five months to firm up all funding before approaching the Treasury.

David Bedlington confirmed the announcement made by Surrey County Council regarding the funding being in place was not an official EA announcement, it was a Surrey County Council announcement; the approval of the business case by the Treasury will allow the EA to carry out all works required to go into the final business case. It will also allow engagement with stakeholders, and the public to commence. This would include open public forums and open days. Members of the Flood Liaison Group would be invited to attend.

- ❖ **Action** – David Bedlington to attend the next meeting of the Flood Liaison Group and facilitate discussion on how public engagement on the RTS may be progressed.

David Bedlington explained to Members that OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) was the procurement process the EA would be following due to the value of the scheme being so high. The EA would use a bespoke competitive tender to enable contractors to put together bids for the contract to be received by November 2020. The earlier the EA went out to the market, the less risky the project became as the contractor chosen would be on board from the beginning of the project, allowing early contractor engagement on issues such as buildability and programming of the works. The tender included the design and build aspects of the scheme.

There is a high degree of confidence in the envisaged four year construction programme and it is anticipated that the diversion channels will be constructed in parallel (i.e. at the same time). Works will not however end at substantial completion / operational completion of the diversion channels and creation of the pocket parks, and completion of the cycle ways and landscaping works could take a further 5 years.

Dave Bedlington confirmed that there is a contingency allow of circa 35% included in the scheme estimates to allow for potential risks during the construction of the RTS.

David Bedlington also confirmed that the route maps for the diversion channels were updated in spring 2019 and were available on the EA website.

- ❖ **Action** – David Bedlington to send the link for the route maps on the EA website to the Clerk for circulation to the Flood Liaison Group.

### Catchment situation report for the River Thames

Brianne Valley provided Members with an update on the catchment situation report for the river Thames and stated the Thames Catchment has received 164% of the average rainfall for October, up to the 28th October. The past week has been unsettled, with most of the rainfall occurring Thursday, Friday and Saturday (24, 25 and 26 October). Widespread rainfall totals averaged around 23mm in the northwest, 16mm in the southwest and 12mm in the northeast. Flows have increased at all sites due to rainfall accumulations over the past week and flows at all sites except Fieldes Weir are well above the long term average for October. Soil moisture deficits have continued to drop due to the recent rainfall. SMDs in all areas are below the long term average for October. Out of the observed groundwater indicator sites, there are: 2 sites at exceptionally low levels; 2 sites at notably low levels, 3 sites at below normal levels, 5 sites at normal levels, 1 sites at above normal, 1 site at notably high, and 1 site at exceptionally high levels for the time of year. Groundwater levels rose at 10 indicator sites, fell at 4 sites and levelled off at 1 site this week. For more detail on rainfall, river flows and groundwater levels please consult our water situation report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-local-area-reports>

- ❖ **Action** – Brianne Vally, Environment Agency to send the link for the water situation report for the Thames Valley area to the clerk to circulate to the Members of the Flood Liaison Group.

Brianne Vally stated a “Challenges and Choices” consultation would open shortly. This consultation related to the future management of the water environment and talked about flow, climate and future pressures on the water environment, from 2021 onwards. She suggested that Members reviewed and made comments on the consultation.

- ❖ **Action** – Brianne Vally to forward the link for the Challenges and Choices consultation to the Clerk for circulation to the Flood Liaison Group Members.

Dick Scarff stated that the Friends of Battlemead Common included a sub group focusing on the management of the waterways. The first meeting was approximately two weeks ago and the EA sent two representatives. Their interest however seemed to focus on biodiversity in the area and they were not aware of concerns regarding flooding in the area. Brianne Vally responded there was a number of activities pertaining to the Maidenhead Waterways Project and the EA would like to discuss issues regarding the wider project with the Royal Borough so it could be agreed how the EA would work through issues moving forward. Brianne Vally hoped a meeting could be arranged as early as end of November 2019, and following that, the EA would know if the Friends of Battlemead Common was the right group to work with to address these concerns; however, no meeting had been scheduled yet. Dick Scarff commented that there needed to be more coordination between the Borough and the EA regarding flooding interests.

Mike Williams enquired about the flood modelling of the Thames. Brianne Vally confirmed the hydraulic modelling of the Lower Thames had been ongoing for a number of years. She had been informed that the outputs were currently being packaged to allow updating of the public facing mapping on the EA website.. The next update to flood maps for planning was due on 31 October 2019 but, if this update did not happen, it would be made at the end of January 2020. Once published, she would meet with the Parishes and provide local mapping for their areas.

Brianne Vally confirmed that she had not received a recent update on the Wraysbury Temporary Flood Defences proposals, so she would take this away as an action and update the Chairman, Councillor Larcombe and Mike Williams via email when she has an update.

- ❖ **Action** – Brianne Vally to email an update on temporary flood defences for Wraysbury to the Chairman, Councillor Larcombe and Mike Williams.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, informed Members that Thames water were preparing for winter, to keep pipework and drains clear and flowing. They were working with customers to keep their water flowing during the winter and had been repairing 1,000 leaks a week.

Denise Kinsella confirmed that no further work would be undertaken at Lightlands Lane Pumping Station and that the station was running fine. After the last flood, Thames Water repaired the gap in the flood defence wall and altered the surface water drainage system in the pumping stations compound. This made the station more resilient to flooding

Ian Thompson stated that Datchet Common Brook had a number of significant blockages, he had produced a report to send to Thames Water (who were the riparian owner of this length of watercourse) and handed a copy of his report to Denise Kinsella. Ian report included photos indicating the blockages.

Ian Thompson also stated that discussions needed to continue regarding the installation of a control valve on an existing outfall to Datchet Common Brook, near Penn Road. Denise Kinsella explained that this issue had been discussed following the previous meeting of the Flood Liaison Group and Thames Water's position was that they would need assurance that the installation of a valve was appropriated and would not create problems elsewhere. Ian Thompson responded that Thames Water had sold off some of their land in this area and that Thames Water may no longer be the landowner. Ownership of the land in question therefore needed to be confirmed. Denise Kinsella confirmed she would clarify the extent of Thames Water's land ownership. The Chairman queried whether, following the last meeting, had any action begun, had anyone commissioned an impact assessment relating to the installation of a valve. That needed to be done and the impact needed to be assessed by the EA. The Flood Risk Manager stated the action needed to be carried out by the Borough as the outfall was on an ordinary watercourse. A flat valve might not have an adverse impact elsewhere, but he was not sure if it would help the situation either. This needed to be raised with the Council's Commissioning Team. The Chairman asked Ian Thompson to send him his proposal and he would forward it to the Commissioning Team.

- ❖ **Action** – Ian Thompson to send the Chairman his proposal for the installation of a control valve on the ordinary watercourse outfall to Datchet Common Brook. The Chairman will then forward this to the Commissioning Team – Denise Kinsella to check who owns the land and where Thames Water's responsibilities end.

Denise Kinsella also stated that Thames Water were still in discussion with OFWAT regarding their future business plan.

### UPDATE FROM RBWM

Simon Lavin, Flood Risk Manager stated the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was being progressed and the Borough was also currently reviewing its Adverse Weather Plan. Amy Gower, Emergency Planning Officer, stated that once the adverse weather plan had been updated, the Council could make sure the advice on flooding was correct. The Flood Risk Manager confirmed the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was a high-level strategy and would make reference to other policy documents such as the Adverse Weather Plan. Community Flood Plans would sit below the Adverse Weather Plan.

The Emergency Planning Officer confirmed there was a teleconference being held on 26 November 2019 which was in lieu of the usual flood warden meeting that used to be held at this time of year. Ian Thompson stated Datchet had a meeting with flood wardens in November to make sure the parish was ready for any flooding event.

Mike Williams asked where the key for the repaired weir on the Horton Drain was held. The Chairman stated that a replacement key was being manufactured and that this key would remain with Volker Highways. The Borough will take responsibility for the operation of the weir and will develop a management strategy / processes for the weir.

Ian Thompson circulated a report on the Wraysbury Drain, written by Councillor Larcombe. The Chairman requested the report be attached to the minutes.

- ❖ **Action** – The Clerk to attach the report written by Councillor Larcombe on the Wraysbury Drain to the minutes.

The Emergency Planning Officer requested that Parish Councils provide contact details for their flood wardens, so the Council could make contact with them.

- ❖ **Action** – Parish Councils to email list of their flood wardens to the Clerk for circulation to the Emergency Planning Team at the Borough.

### UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

The Flood Risk Manager stated the Planning Enforcement Team had served an enforcement notice for the removal of the hardstanding placed in Feathers Lane (near Hythe End Road). A notice will also be served by the Borough for the reinstatement of the ditch to its previous condition.

The Chairman commended that the Borough's Legal Team would like to contact the Wraysbury Parish Council Clerk to request any archived documents on the Inclosures Awards, applying to the Horton and Wraysbury Drains that they might have.

Martin Coker stated that Cookham Parish Council had recently requested confirmation that a plan was in place for the operation of the Causeway during a flood event. The Emergency Planning Officer responded that she was aware of the issues around Cookham and that this plan was currently being reviewed. If any changes are considered necessary the Parish will be consulted. Other parishes will also be contacted regarding any plans they have in place.

Ian Thompson said that he was concerned that further works had been undertaken at the Poplars in Datchet during the summer of 2019. The landowner had cut a pathway down to the river so the pathway ran from Southlea Road directly to the river and a new patio had been installed alongside the river. If the river rose water would follow the line of the pathway. The EA said they would get their properties manager to look into the current position relating to the River Thames Scheme offtake. Some of the risk should be mitigated in the short term by the proposed installation of temporary flood defences. The area was being looked at by the RTS and compulsory purchase of land was possible. She added she would try and get an update for the next meeting.

- ❖ **Action** – Brianne Vally to provide an update on the Poplars Southlea Road and the River Thames Scheme offtake proposals for the next meeting.

Brianne Vally asked who the responsible officer at the Borough was for Battlemead Common. The Chairman stated the lead officers were David Scott, Head of Communities and Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director – Place.

- ❖ **Action** – The Clerk to contact David Scott and Russell O'Keefe and ask them to make contact with Brianne Vally at the Environment Agency regarding Battlemead Common.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....



# RTS – Current timeline

- Approval of Outline Business Case by HMT – April 2020
- Public engagement meetings – TBD. Likely summer 2020
- OJEU notice to start contractor procurement – November 2020
- Planning Submission – Summer /Autumn 2021
- Planning Decision (subject to inquiry)– Spring 2023
- Contract award (Design Phase) – Summer 2022
- Final Business Case Approval – Summer 2023
- Construction start – Autumn 2023
- Construction Complete – Autumn 2027

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## The Wraysbury Drain – an ‘ordinary watercourse’?

### A brief report to Wraysbury Parish Council from Ewan Larcombe 9/10/2019

**Background:** The Wraysbury Drain is over two miles of very ancient and legally protected watercourse that is an important part of the local network of land drainage infrastructure. Starting near Wraysbury Railway Station the channel takes a steadily curving route downstream running generally parallel to Station Road, the High Street and Staines Road and finishing in Hythe End. The channel is designated ‘ordinary watercourse’ but has dimensional cross-sections **specified by legislation over 200 years ago.**

**Changes - starting in the 1980’s:** The area between Douglas Lane, Station Road and the railway line was quarried for gravel and the channels entirely removed. After ignoring warnings the railway bridge collapsed in 1988. Upon completion of partial backfilling the local drainage channels were reinstated **on different routes.** It became necessary to install a weir in order to ‘drive’ (i.e. provide sufficient head of water) the now relocated Wraysbury Drain. The original stoplog weir was then replaced with an adjustable metal weir in about 2006. There are images of the two weirs available.

#### The current situation:

- a. Despite expenditure of at least £125,000 and the recent best efforts of local volunteers the Wraysbury Drain **is still not flowing.**
- b. The failed weir at Wraysbury Station was identified as a major problem and reported in September 2018.
- c. After a long list of reasons why maintenance works could not be started the weir was eventually repaired (by RBWM?) in mid-July 2019.
- d. **There is still no means of weir adjustment. A ‘key’ is required.**
- e. The channel is blocked with gravel at both sides of and beneath the bridge at the entrance to the Dive Centre in Station Road. **The gravel needs to be cleared. Who is responsible?**
- f. The Diving Centre Bridge design/construction shortcoming allows vehicles to displace the gravel into the channel. **The bridge needs fixing otherwise the problem will continue.**
- g. From the Dive Centre Bridge upstream to the junction near the weir - flow is restricted **by thirty years of tree growth.** This new section of channel was created along a different route after the Wraysbury Station Railway Bridge collapse in 1988. **This length of the Wraysbury Drain has**

**not been maintained for 30 years. Who is responsible? Apart from the cost there will be issues relating to access and/or responsibility!**

- h. At Feather’s Lane the channel is now entirely blocked, having been filled to ground level with rubble and fenced over. The channel has also been culverted without permission. **Action is required now.**

**The big questions:** Who is responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the Wraysbury Drain?

Reach Identity	Monitoring	Inspection	Capacity	Level	Quality

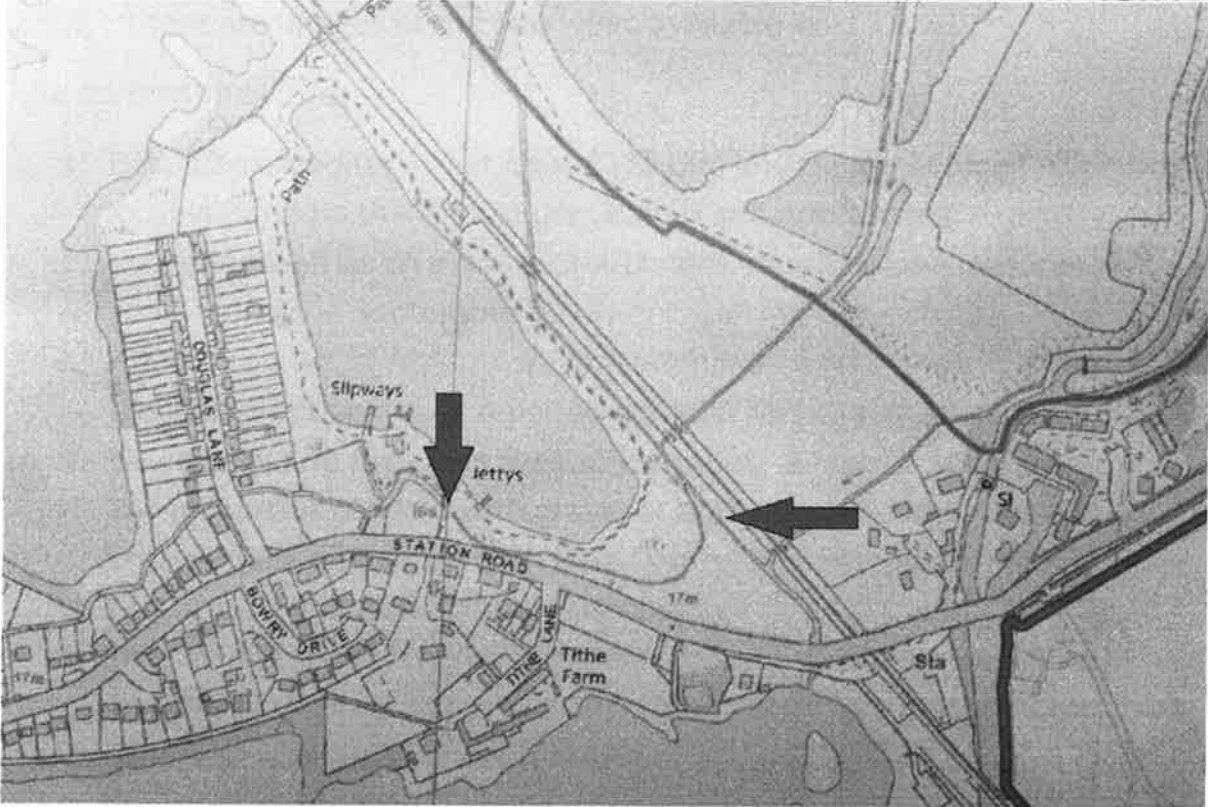
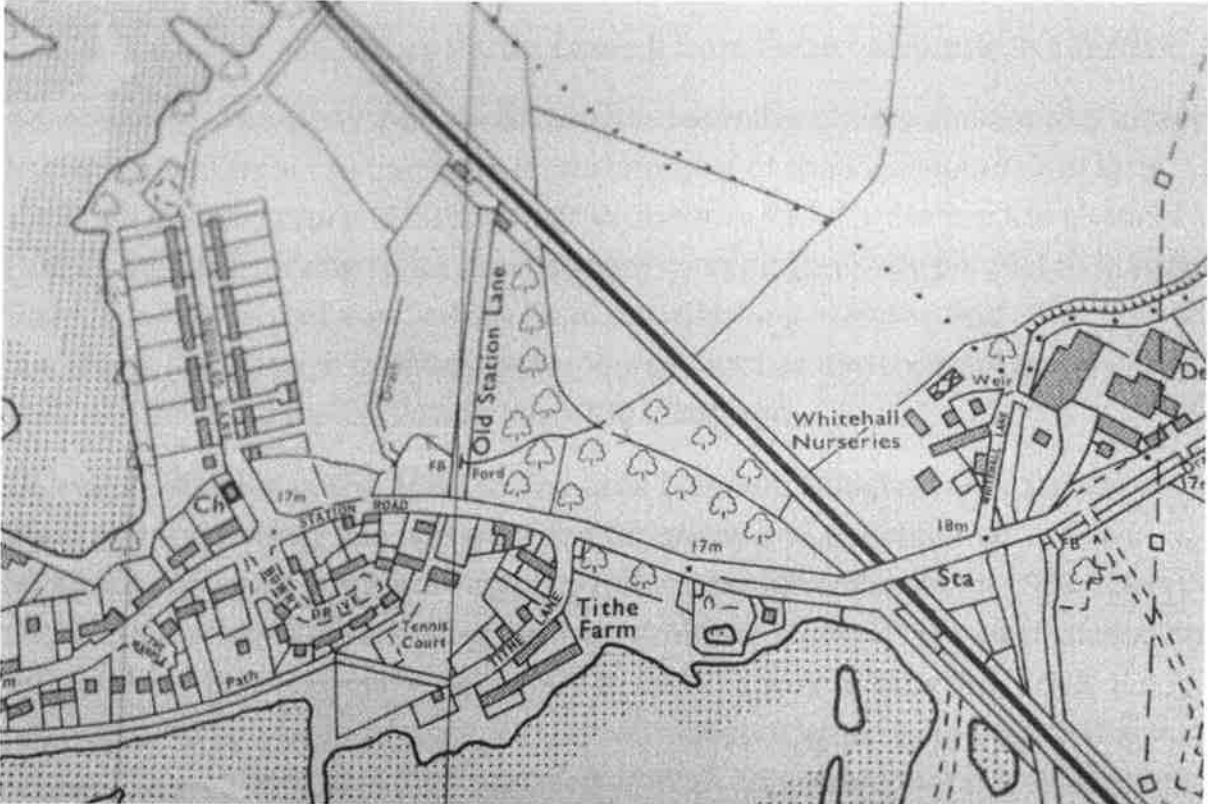
(Riparian, Wraysbury Parish Council (WPC), RBWM (planning enforcement or designated LLFA), Environment Agency and/or Thames Water.)

**My conclusion is:** We still need to identify who is responsible for monitoring and maintaining this channel. Land ownership is an issue. The planned River Thames Scheme makes no allowance for what will be a number of truncated watercourses. **If the Wraysbury Drain is not immediately evident and demonstrable as a living, working watercourse it will be lost forever. This will influence groundwater levels, land drainage capability, local ecology, visual appearance and security.**

I intend to submit this report to the RBWM Flood Liaison Meeting scheduled for 31/10/2019. I now have copies of the Environment Agency booklet ‘Living on the Edge’ – the riparian owner’s guide.

The two images below show the Wraysbury Drain route both ‘before and after’ 1988. The two red arrows on the lower image indicate the positions of the current Dive Centre restrictions and the Wraysbury Station Weir. In my opinion **the channel between the two arrows (about 250m) requires re-engineering in terms of channel width/depth and gradient. This is a major project.**

Maps: Wraysbury Drain at Station Road, Wraysbury.



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