

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillors Martin.Coker, Mike Williams, David Cannon (Chairman), Gerry Clark, Larcombe, Gary Muir, Thompson, Beer and Perry Martin Coker, Mike Williams, Ian Thompson, Malcolm Beer and Jane Perry.

Also in attendance: Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Mandy Brar and Councillor Gurch Singh. Laura Regazzacci, Steve Hockin, Claire Taylor and Dick Scarff (public speakers).

Officers: Andy Carswell, Sam Franklin, Sue Fox, Fatima Rehman, Carolyn Richardson, Brianne Vally, Sam Franklin, James Liney and Chris Joyce.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from David Burfitt, Councillor Stimson and Mohammed Mamun, who was substituted by Sue Fox. Duncan Parker sent his apologies offline.

### MINUTES

Councillor Brar said for her attendance to be amended for meetings 23 January 2020 and 12 August 2020.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2020 be approved.**

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

<b>Action arising from previous minutes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Clerk to share details with Denise Kinsella.	Completed. Email correspondence was sent to Simon Lavin in January 2020 by Denise Kinsella.  The Chairman said Mohammed Mamun was now the Project Centre contact, as Simon Lavin had left the role. Councillor Baldwin requested for contact details to the Project Centre and was informed to contact Sue Fox or the highways inbox at <a href="mailto:Highways@RBWM.gov.uk">Highways@RBWM.gov.uk</a> .
Brianne Vally to share PDF maps with Parish Councils and the Borough.	Completed. Brianne Vally shared the defended outline that was completed in January 2020. This was shared with several parish councils and Emergency Planning team, though not covering all the borough. The Chairman requested this to be forwarded to Sue Fox, to be shared with the Project Centre and himself.  Brianne Vally was aware of the data requests from Datchet Parish Council from September 2020, which were yet to be actioned.

	<b>ACTION: Brianne Vally to share the PDF maps with Sue Fox and the Chairman.</b>
Brianne Vally to update the Group on the telemetry gauges.	Completed. Brianne Vally said the request was regarding the Cookham telemetry gauge that had failed, which were repaired and were operating. There was a follow-up request to take gauges offline in the event of a flood, however this was not possible. She encouraged representatives from the parish council to take part in the Environmental Agency (the EA)'s research to improve the flood information service.
Clerk to share information with Mohammed Mamun to review the information.	Completed. Mohammed Mamun reviewed the information offline.
Carolyn Richardson to check the progress on the Causeway Plan.	Completed. Carolyn Richardson said the Causeway Plan was shared with parish councils in January 2020. Due COVID-19, the adverse weather plan, including the flood plans, was being reviewed.
Brianne Vally to share the hydraulic modelling results with Mohammed Mamun, Sue Fox and Datchet Parish Council.	Brianne Vally said the final report for the hydraulic modelling was yet to be received. The report was on the hypothetical blockage of the underpass near Datchet golf course and the flood risk impact on the area. This would form a wider discussion to reduce flood risk in Wraysbury and Datchet.  <b>ACTION: Brianne Vally to share the hydraulic modelling results with Mohammed Mamun, Sue Fox and Datchet Parish Council.</b>
Brianne Vally to update on the development of the installation quality at Jubilee River and update at the next meeting.	Completed. This was addressed in the meeting, following Councillor Larcombe's concerns in the previous meeting. He was in contact with Simon Lawrence from the hydraulic and telemetry team at the EA. The contractors did as they were asked, and it was agreed to revisit the installation to ensure greater security and prevent unwanted damage going forward. The work was due to begin in the next 6 weeks. Councillor Larcombe said he did not feel improvements were agreed.
Carolyn Richardson to report back to Cookham Parish Council regarding the depth boards.	Carolyn Richardson determined that the borough had placed the depth boards, and it was believed there may be boards at Tinkers Lane depot. She was in conversation with the contractors to find their location.  <b>ACTION: Carolyn Richardson to report back to Cookham Parish Council regarding the depth boards.</b>
Carolyn Richardson to consider training considering social distancing limitations.	Carolyn Richardson said physical training was unlikely to take place because of COVID-19, with remote options being explored.

Sue Fox to report on the drainage inspections near Whyteladyes Lane.	Completed. Sue Fox said the issue was to have the gully cleared bi-annually, which the contractors had now put in place. The gully was last cleaned on 14 September 2020 and was next due for March 2021. Any issues in the meantime could be reported via the Council's online reporting system.
Brianne Vally to report to the Group if River Colne Brook was on the maintenance plan and assess the water in Coppermill Road and Horton.	Completed. Brianne Vally could not recall offering to support in this matter. Information had been circulated to Members offline the maintenance programme online that covered the programme of work for the next four years. The areas covered were sections of the Colne Brook around Coppermill Road and Feathers Lane. Due to COVID-19, the timing of work has been amended. The work mentioned on the Mention program does not guarantee funding and the team has been requested to provide an update for what work has taken place recently.  The Chairman said there was a tree removal below the Coppermill Road bridge and further reports of reed and tilled islands formed here. This was reported to Sarah Hale, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, and was being dealt with.  <b>ACTION: Brianne Vally to provide an update on the maintenance plan on the River Colne Brook.</b>
Martin Coker's correspondence to be circulated with the Group.	Completed. The email correspondence was circulated with Members offline.
The flood management of Battlemead to be placed on the agenda, with written reports to be provided in advance of the meeting, where possible.	Completed. A written report had been requested from officer Anthony Hurst, Parks and Countryside Team Leader, and the Battlemead item would be on next meeting's agenda, 13 January 2021.

#### UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally, Environment Agency, provided an update to the Forum. The Thames catchment received 234% of average rainfall for October 2020. Marsh Lane, Maidenhead, recorded the maximum weekly total of 47mm. River flows increased on all sites since last week (at the time of meeting) and were well above the monthly average for October. Resultantly, catchments were more responsive to rainfall. The Met office long-range forecast predicted settled conditions with outbreaks of rain. In the second half of November 2020, there were predictions for frequent showers affecting the east of the UK.

Material was circulated offline regarding the Flood Action Campaign to support the campaign from the 9 to 11 November 2020. The campaign was created to remind

people of actions to take before, during and after a flood event and Brianne Vally requested Members to support the campaign. The Chairman asked how parish councils and the borough could support the campaign and the Group was informed that videos could be shared on social media, posters that could be shared with local communities, as well as adding the email signatures to show their support.

There had been an initial internal workshop in September 2020 to discuss alternatives to Channel Section 1 for Datchet, Wraysbury and Old Windsor. A report was produced, and the next step was to have further discussions with the Chairman for appropriate resourcing, agree the objectives and measures and the engagement plan. The Chairman said he was waiting for a response from Sarah Hale to schedule a virtually meeting with Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth and Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning – Infrastructure.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to contact Sarah Hale to schedule a meeting with the Chairman, Chris Joyce and Ben Smith.**

The Herts and North London team covered parts of the Wraysbury area was updating some of the lower Colne's hydraulic modelling that would refine the EA's understanding of flood risk. This would be shared with the Group once available.

Repair work was being undertaken on the Black Potts weir on the Jubilee River following a routine inspection that identified erosion downstream side of the weir. The intention was to return the flood relief channel to an operating condition by Christmas 2020, to coincide with the wetter period between January and March 2021. It was possible that additional works would be carried out in 2021.

James Liney, Asset Performance Team Leader, said an underwater survey took place in August 2020 which revealed scouring, causing erosion to the riverbed downstream of Black Potts weir. The issue was further complicated because of the viaducts and the railway above it. The underwater survey showed no damage to the weir and the bed of the weir, and the viaduct was unaffected at present. However, left unattended, erosion could work back up the weir and the viaduct. Emergency contractors were hired through the Environment management framework to set up the site compound in the coming weeks. The Jubilee River would continue to flow at 5 to 10 m<sup>3</sup>/s. Black Potts weir was the only part of the Jubilee River that was affected.

Councillor Larcombe said in 1988, a rail bridge collapsed on that line in Wraysbury. He said the problem of erosion and scouring also occurred downstream of Taplow Mill Leat and downstream of the Taplow control structure where a stilling basin was not placed. He asked why erosion problems were occurring, when the system was only running at two-thirds of its design capacity. James Liney said there were similar size weirs on the River Thames with similar effects. Regular routine and reactive maintenance downstream of the weir along the River Thames were taking place. In 2017, a survey highlighted the potential for the start of deterioration, and it was recommended to undertake an underwater survey following the heavy use of the structure. The follow-up strategy took place in August 2020, which was later than expected due to restrictions following COVID-19.

Dick Scarff, Cookham Society, said there were higher flows in 2014 and asked if there were any scouring problems since. James Liney said there were cumulative issues which led to the effect on the riverbed and the structure was 19 years old. He said he would review this.

**ACTION: James Liney to update Dick Scarff if there was scouring problems since 2014 at Black Potts weir.**

Councillor Brar said she thought the issues were present since 2014 and asked why the EA was starting work now, as Cookham was at risk of flooding due to the weather. James Liney said the full detail of deterioration of the riverbed was only clear to the EA from August 2020. The 2017 survey highlighted that the riverbed needed to be reviewed after the next heavy rainfall event. The EA was working quickly with the information collected from August 2020, and he said he was unable to comment about the assertion about 2014. Brianne Vally said the other flood alleviation assets part of Maidenhead Eton and Windsor flood alleviation scheme would be operated, which would reduce flood risk in Cookham regardless of status of the Jubilee River.

Ian Thompson, Datchet Parish Councillor, said water levels were approaching 21 metres above ordnance datum in 2014. He said that if works were carried out, the flow of water would come back from the Thames River and into and up the Jubilee River. He said it was suggested there was a sweetening flow in the Jubilee River and asked where the water would go and how would it effect the works below the weir, which would be many metres below the surface of the water.

Brianne Vally said the contractors designed a modelling simulation to assess the impact of velocities and turbulences on the scouring. The work to be carried out needed the EA's permission and she believed the detail would be included in the methods of works of the application. Brianne Vally would be able to advise on the mitigation measures then once this was reviewed.

Ian Thompson asked if the method statement could be shared with the Datchet parish council so that it could be reviewed, as it effected residents in the area. Brianne Vally said the information that was being shared as part of the Flood Risk Activity permit was in the public domain and could be shared, once the application was finalised and would share the method of work for awareness. She said Datchet would not benefit from the reduction in flood levels when the Jubilee River was or was not operating, and the works would be carried out to ensure local areas would not experience increased flood risk.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to share the method of work with Ian Thompson.**

Cookham Parish Councillor Jane Perry said she was concerned about the effects of the EA's decision to not dredge some of the local streams that were important in getting water away from properties. Her house was flooded in 2014, and since then, there was a band around a nearby gravel pit to protect the pit from water, which would prevent flood of water across the flood plain. She asked if there were any measures that could be taken that would reduce the risks whilst the Jubilee River was not functioning as it should.

Brianne Vally said the flood alleviation assets in Cookham and north Maidenhead would take place as per operating instructions, which would help reduce flood risks. The Chairman said the parish council or Councillor Clark could write to Brianne Vally directly.

Ian Thompson said a report was circulated to Members regarding the heavy downfall of rain that caused minor flooding in Datchet due to blockage from weed overgrowth in

the Datchet Common Brook. This caused minor damage to some gardens on Penn Road, and he asked if the EA and Thames Water would clear the blockage.

Brianne Vally said the Common Brook was not on the maintenance programme and she would raise this with colleagues. She said it was the riparian owners' responsibility to ensure water flowed naturally and any concerns of obstruction on the natural flow should be removed. The points raised by Ian Thompson would form part of the wider discussion for Old Windsor, Datchet and Wraysbury. She advised for any immediate concerns to be raised through the Incident Communication Service.

Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, said this could be raised with the site owners and could be discussed offline. Ian Thompson said he would like the flow to be sped up as slow flow would increase the height of the Common Brook. A flat valve was sought to prevent the water coming into the Brook, which would otherwise put properties at risk. The Chairman said this matter was being progressed by Sue Fox, Principal Commissioning Officer, and would be part of the wider flood alleviation risk discussions by the EA.

**ACTION: Denise Kinsella to update on the clearance of the Datchet Common Brook blockage.**

Cookham Parish Councillor Martin Coker, asked for the Battlemead to remain clear, and whilst some wanted to allow flora and fauna to grow, it was important to allow water to flow. The Chairman said this was an appropriate discussion for the Battlemead item for the next meeting.

Laura Regazzacci, Secretary of Eton Wick Waterways Group Committee, said a group of 15 group volunteers cleared out weeds due to the lack of assistance from Thames Water, the EA and other bodies. It had become an issue, causing flooding of gardens, cellars and loss of trees due to high levels of output from Slough sewage treatment works and flooding. In 2014, following floods in Slough, an increased output of sewage came into the village. She raised concerns about winter 2020 because of the Jubilee River not operating and the higher levels of water. She wanted to inform Members that the streams were overloaded with water and could be a flooding risk. The Chairman said this was a concern, the source was known, and working closely with Thames Water and the EA was encouraged.

#### UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella informed the Group that in preparation for winter 2020, the planned maintenance programme in the Thames Valley area was taking place to ensure sewers that that historical issues were clear and free flowing. There were increased specialist teams that would deal with flow management in local areas. The team would ensure the tankers were working in the most productive way, as well as targeted planned maintenance in areas that were blockage hotspots.

Councillor Brar said the Lightlands Lane sewage pumping station site information was due to be circulated, and the Group was informed that pump run times and rainfall information were sent to Dick Scarff.

Malcom Beer asked if the sewage works in Ham Island, Old Windsor that took place at night during summer 2020 were extensions or maintenance. He said the work was

disruptive, with noise, floodlights and headlights. Denise Kinsella said she would gather information and update after the meeting.

**ACTION: Denise Kinsella to send an update to Malcolm Beer on Ham Islands sewage work, cc'ing the clerk.**

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Sue Fox said RBWM was continuing to work with Carolyn Richardson, Joint Emergency Planning Manager, and the Emergency Planning Team on the Cookham plan and were undertaking general preparedness with contractors for winter 2020.

Councillor Larcombe said the Wraysbury drain was stagnant, with some stationary water. He said there was no water flowing throughout the year and it needed work near Feathers Lane. Fly tipping had been cleared; however, construction waste was blocking the drain. He asked when the drain would be cleared and if it was the responsibility of the lead local flood authority to ensure the water was free flowing.

Sue Fox said it was the borough's responsibility dating back to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and said the contractors were instructed to remove all waste from that section of the Wraysbury drain and would chase this. The land was unregistered; therefore, enforcement action could not be applied, and the Council took responsibility of clearing the drain.

Councillor Larcombe said the ditch upstream was filled with builders' waste and fenced over and was inaccessible. He said the channel was culverted without permission, with steel fencing and a screen put over the channel, adjacent to Hythe End Road. Sue Fox proposed a site visit to identify the locations, which Councillor Larcombe agreed to, and Councillor Baldwin requested to take part.

**ACTION: Sue Fox to update on the clearance of the Wraysbury drain and partake in a site visit with Councillors Larcombe and Baldwin.**

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Martin Coker said he undertook a site visit of Lightlands Lane sewage pumping station with Thames Water in the presence of residents, with a report recently sent through. Due to COVID-19, the Cookham Flood Committee was considering expanding its remit to cover all emergencies within the parish and report to bronze command.

The Chairman thanked all officers, Members and attendees of the meeting.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.02 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....