

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2021

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

Also in attendance: Councillor John Bowden, Councillor Mandy Brar, Councillor Phil Haseler, Colin Lemmings and Councillor Shamsul Shelim

Officers: Denise Kinsella, Simon Dale, Sue Fox, Sam Franklin, Anthony Hurst, Fatima Rehman, Carolyn Richardson, Brianne Vally and Joseph Hitchman

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stimson.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 be approved subject to amending 'converted' to 'culverted' and 'Hyde' to 'Hythe' in the RBWM Update.

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

<b>Action arising from previous minutes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Brianne Vally to share the PDF maps with Sue Fox and the Chairman.	Completed.
Brianne Vally to share the hydraulic modelling results with Mohammed Mamun, Sue Fox and Datchet Parish Council.	The contractor was due to share the final draft, which would be circulated and was shared on 14.01.2021.
Carolyn Richardson to report back to Cookham Parish Council regarding the depth boards.	Completed; Sue Fox said the team would ensure the depth boards were visible. Martin Coker requested for the depth boards to have both metric and imperial units.
Brianne Vally to share the method of work with Ian Thompson.	Completed.
Brianne Vally to provide an update on the maintenance plan on the River Colne Brook.	The maintenance plan was due by April 2021, and feedback from the Group on the plan would be proposed, if possible.
Brianne Vally to contact Sarah Hale to schedule a meeting with the Chairman, Chris Joyce and Ben Smith.	Completed.
James Liney to update Dick Scarff if there was scouring problems since 2014 at Black Potts weir.	Dick Scarff said he had not received an update. Brianne Vally circulated the response offline during the meeting.
Denise Kinsella to update on the clearance of the Datchet Common Brook blockage.	The action was mistakenly assigned to Brianne Vally instead of Denise Kinsella; therefore, an update was unavailable. <b>ACTION: Denise Kinsella to update on the clearance of the Datchet Common Brook blockage.</b>
Denise Kinsella to send an update to Malcolm Beer on Ham Islands sewage	Completed.

work, cc'ing the clerk.	
Sue Fox to update on the clearance of the Wraysbury drain and partake in a site visit with Councillors Larcombe and Baldwin.	Completed.

## UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally, Environment Agency, provided an update to the Group:

- The Thames catchment received 15% of the average rainfall for January and river flows were decreasing at all sites. Monthly water situation reports were available on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-local-area-reports>.
- Up to 55mm of rainfall in the Thames catchment took place on 23 and 24 December 2020 on saturated grounds, which led to a rapid rise in water levels. On 22 December 2020, the catchment received 130% of the average rainfall for January. There was increased rainfall following this due to Storm Bella on 28 December 2020.
- On 28 December 2020, there were 13 flood warnings and 34 flood alerts in the area, and the Environment Agency (EA) Incident Room was virtually operated from 23 December 2020 until after the New Year. Community Information Officers were deployed in Maidenhead to monitor river water levels.
- The Jubilee River was operated up to 50 cubic metres per second in the main channel on 27 December 2020. Normal operation resumed on 31 December 2020, as and when there was a fall in the Thames water levels. The EA was reviewing the incident to ensure they were prepared for future flood events.
- There were two phases to the Black Potts Weir work. The first phase was to remove damaged grout mattresses and install sheet piling to protect the weir and main structure and moved the pontoon closer to the weir. The second phase of work included bed reinforcement using heavy rock armour; the design and quantity of rocks was to be finalised. An update on work was to be circulated to Members, which would explain why the work would be longer than the original March 2021 deadline.
- In 2021, the EA would continue to work on the future flood risk management in the borough, with Parish Council's involvement as and when appropriate.
- An updated flood modelling evidence of the Colne was likely to be published in Spring 2021 and engagement around the Colne Strategy looking at options to reduce flood risk in the Colne area was likely to start about the same time.
- A consultation on the flood risk management plan to deal with flood risk management was likely to take place in Summer 2021, where Members would be invited to provide their feedback.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, asked if the structural examination of the embankment adjacent to Black Potts Weir was taking a place and was mandatory. Brianne Vally said the works at Black Potts are being designed and delivered at pace, therefore evidence on the ground is still being gathered to inform the final design. It is unclear if the evidence gathered also relates to the embankment. Brianne to find out.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to inform the Chairman if potential structural examination of the embankment adjacent to Black Potts Weir was to take place.**

The Chairman said there was a perception that the Jubilee River was operated at the end of the day during the festive period, which led to the rise in water levels in Wraysbury overnight. Boat owners were unaware of the weir's operation and were concerned they would not be able to access or move the boats. He asked if it was possible to operate the weir in the morning and Brianne Vally said it could not be guaranteed that the weir would only be operated in morning, as the gate movement took place when the EA pre-empted water increases. Notifications on the Jubilee River could be accessed by signing up to Maidenhead flood alerts and following 'Environment AgencySE' on Twitter. Brianne Vally said she would

inform the EA to review notifications arrangements and consider providing communication tailored to boat owners.

The Chairman suggested Brianne Vally to advise the team managing Maidenhead flood alerts to also alert downstream areas that would be impacted from the operation of the Jubilee River.

*(Councillor Bowden joined the meeting.)*

Mike Williams asked what the time delay was between operating the control at Taplow and receiving water in Datchet, and Councillor Larcombe said this was approximately 4 hours, dependent on the speed of waterflow.

Councillor Larcombe asked if how he could receive an unredacted version of the agenda and minutes and was advised to contact David Bedlington, the Environment Agency.

Ian Thompson said he was concerned about the railway tunnel near the borrow pit which needed protection. The east bank of Black Potts weir had eroded, was shallow, and the bank had slid back into the borrow pit. The borrow pit had the same level of flood water as the water in the River Thames.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to review if there were plans for the railway tunnel near Black Potts east bank.**

Ian Thompson asked if the level boards by the telemetry stations and upstream of Black Potts weir would be replaced, as they had either been washed away or rotted. He also requested for commonality of river level measurements, so that there was a better understanding of the levels and better predictions could be made.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to review the level boards upstream of Black Potts weir and commonality of river level measurements.**

Brianne Vally said there were several apps which provide levels that were in metre AOD and on the EA website on levels, which would be recirculated to Members.

Councillor Brar asked if there was an update on the safety of the Cookham Weir and the Group was informed that the Cookham Lock repair work had started on 4 January 2021 and was due to end on 12 March 2021.

The Group noted the item.

## UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, informed the Group that Thames Water:

- Continued business as usual work in the borough, including planned maintenance. Over 23km of proactive cleaning took place, ensuring sewers were free flowing.
- Was installing sewer depth monitors to enrol the smart sewer system so that blockages were identified before customers report the issue.
- Continued the 'Bin it - don't block it' campaign, as most blockages were caused by items that should not be in sewers.

Jim Cooke asked for further information on the burst sewer in Bisham Abbey that took several days to resolve, which caused damage to surrounding trees and contaminated the brook. Denise Kinsella said this was a specialist sewage pumping station within the vicinity of the Abbey that had a burst caused by pollution to the land. She was unaware of the burst causing pollution to the brook; however, it did significantly affect the land area. The repair took time because there were two mains close together, so care was required, and hand digging was required as the land was a protected area, and the work was to be done under the canopy of

the tree. Work was one with the council to possibly remove a tree, to be replaced with a new tree, away from the sewer.

Martin Coker asked if information requested at the Lightlands Lane visit was circulated to Dick Scarff and a customer.

**ACTION: Denise Kinsella to recirculate Lightlands Lane information to Dick Scarff.**

The Group noted the item.

### UPDATE FROM RBWM

Sue Fox, Principal Commissioning Officer, introduced Joseph Hitchman as the new Project Centre Lead Local Authority, which was previously held by Mohammed Mamun. Sue Fox said she and Joseph Hitchman worked together on a flood risk management monitoring report to keep track of all activities strategically and operationally with VolkerHighways and the Emergency Planning team. The subheadings in the report included:

- Strategic flood risk matters in partnership with the EA and Thames Water. This would consist of the flood risk management plan and contributions made to other regional strategic initiatives.
- Strategic flood risk project. This would include alternatives to Channel 1 of the River Thames scheme with the EA by exploring catchment area studies and funding opportunities available for flood risk management.
- Council's capital programme. There were several propositions in the budget 2021-2022, which would include flood risk management schemes, localised highway and surface water drainage schemes and other initiatives.
- Emergency planning. Busting silos during emergent responses, including the winter flood planning for 2021, working with parishes and defining roles and responsibilities.

Sue Fox updated on the site visit of the clearance of the Wraysbury drain and the actions agreed were:

- To review existing culverts and CCTV footage for blockages.
- To carry out works required with the riparian owners to ensure there was free-flowing water near Feathers Lane.
- To investigate the route of the culvert upstream and identify blockages and work with the riparian owners or use land enforcement powers if necessary, to reinstate free flow.

An alert was placed with the district enforcement service to patrol the area for ongoing fly tipping in the open sections of the drains. Fly tipping in the area could be reported through the RBWM website. The weir at the confluence of the Horton drain was repaired and raised by 1cm as a trial to evaluate the impact to the waterflow before Christmas 2020. Whilst there was water in the middle of the drain, this was surface water rather than from the weir. A walked inspection was planned to identify any blockages, working with riparian owners to remove or take enforcement actions.

Sue Fox updated on Old Windsor's wet spots, two of which were addressed offline by Malcolm Beer:

- Meadow Way had a longstanding surface water flooding issue, and a plan was ready to execute, subject to prioritisation of the budget. Malcolm Beer said officers had documented findings on Meadow Way and Straight Road in the past, which would be available in the archives, rather than starting from scratch.
- Straight Road had a problem of surface water overflowing the main road. Whilst the parking area in front of the shops was private land, the drainage system appeared to

- flow into the highway. Gully cleaners would be dispatched to investigate the area, with a discussion with the landowners, should further work be needed.
- The Priest House/Burfield Road junction suffered during heavy downpours and was deemed to be resolved with neighbouring Surrey County Council. However, this appeared to be a reoccurring issue, and an investigation to identify the flooding causes, costs and repairs needed was planned.

Ian Thompson asked for an update on the barrel arch works in Datchet, and the Group was informed that a CCTV survey was carried out and was to be looked at by structural engineer to determine whether structural or cosmetic work needed to be done. Works would restart in Spring 2021.

Councillor Larcombe asked when Wraysbury Drain was likely to flow, particularly from the railway line and down the Dive Centre. Sue Fox restated the weir was raised to review if this made an impact and a walked inspection would take place to identify the blockage, once it was safe to proceed.

The Group noted the item.

### UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Councillor Larcombe said the Group was to report back to Cabinet and Highways Overview & Scrutiny Panel and could not find this. Sue Fox said the flood monitoring report was previously brought to Cabinet in 2016 for information and to obtain sign off on the flood and drainage capital programme. Cabinet now only take when a decision is required. The Chairman said the request should be made through the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Larcombe said the strategy stated an annual report would be reported back to Cabinet and Highways Overview & Scrutiny Panel. The Chairman said the strategy was outdated and under review, and the Highways Overview & Scrutiny Panel no longer existed.

Martin Coker said that during the festive period, the trigger point of 60cm for opening the hub was reached on Christmas Eve 2020. The hub was not opened following advice from the meteorologist, as it was water was coming down the river. Daily Flood Committee meetings took place from 24 December 2020 to 30 December 2020 to assess the situation, during which water levels rose to 89cm. There was only some flooded land and no inundation to houses. Webinar-style training was to be provided to councillors, and other Councils were welcome to participate. Brianne Vally said that Eton Parish Council had contacted her for training.

The Chairman asked if the trigger point was set in conjunction with the EA, as there were alarmist messages received based on flood alerts rather than flood warnings. Martin Coker said the trigger point was set in conjunction with the Emergency Planning team, meteorologist and flood coordinator and training was to be given to new councillors as a result of the incident. The Chairman said a Bronze command would not take place at the specified trigger point unless there was a flood warning issues by the EA.

Councillor Brar asked if national flood maps were sent by Carolyn Richardson, and the Group was informed that they were available on <https://www.gov.uk/> and on the EA's website. Jim Cooke thanked the EA; following their advice, a volunteer group was clearing and maintaining Bisham brook. Jim Cooke requested to be involved in the monitoring related to the new scheme in Marlow to alleviate flooding and requested Denise Kinsell's contact details regarding other queries he wished to address offline.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to circulate the latest newsletter to Jim Cooke.**

The Group noted the item.

### BATTLEMEAD UPDATE

Anthony Hurst, Parks and Countryside Team Leader, introduced the item. The Council purchased the land in 2018 and was keen to work with stakeholders who had an interest in the site. Therefore, the Friends of Battlemead Common was formed, which had several subgroups. The subgroups met on 4 November 2020 and were due to meet on 9 February 2021. A trial in desilting in White Brook took place in March 2020, in partnership with Maidenhead Waterways, discussion with the subgroup and advice and permit from the EA. An application for further desilting works in 2021 was under consideration, subject to the EA's consent. The Council was in the process of removing fallen branches from the brook and nearby areas.

The Group noted the item.

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

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.27 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....