

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor David Cannon (Chairman), Councillor Gerry Clark, Councillor Ewan Larcombe, Parish Councillor Martin Coker (Cookham), Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer (Old Windsor), Parish Councillor Jane Perry (Cookham), Dick Scarff, Laura Regazzacci, Ian Thompson, Claire Taylor and Colin Lemmings

Also in attendance: Councillor David Coppinger, Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor Mandy Brar and Councillor Leo Walters

Officers: Andy Carswell, Oran Norris-Browne, Sue Fox, Carolyn Richardson, Alysse Strachan, Brianne Vally and Helen Lovell

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Muir and Bray Parish Councillor Kneen.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – That the meeting held on the 27th July be approved as an accurate record.

Sue Fox asked for the location of Fairfield to be corrected to Fifield on page 6.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cookham Parish Councillor Martin Coker to email Sue Fox about the replacement of flood boards.	Water level boards - Currently in hand with contractors. Flood Warning boards - Brianne Vally said that sources of funding had been suggested to Councillor Brar to replace the boards and was left to the discretion of the Parish Council.
Brianne Vally to confirm with contractors when work would take place on Cookham Bund.	Routine maintenance was continuing, but timescales were unclear. Brianne said that Dick Scarff would be updated when further information was available.
Councillor Larcombe to email Brianne Vally about the large cage around the Windsor park gauge.	Action completed. Councillor Larcombe expressed concern over the size and visual aspect of this.
Sue Fox to check if Lightlands Lane was part of the work outlined for Cookham in the capital programme.	No specific works ongoing in Lightlands work, but if there were concerns, Cookham Parish Councillor Martin Coker could raise these with Sue Fox.
Dick Scarff to send Sue Fox the location of the balancing pond in Cookham Dean.	This had been completed.

ACTION – Denise Kinsella to contact Datchet Parish Councillor Ian Thompson regarding arranging a meeting with David Groves.

ACTION – Councillor Larcombe to email Brianne Vally with concerns over the large cage at Windsor park gauge.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally (Environment Agency) said that as of the 12th October the whole of the Thames catchment received 65% of the average rainfall and the highest weekly accumulation was within Epping forest. This was 24.6 mm. All river flows in the last week had decreased at all sites and were now below the percentage of monthly mean for October.

Brianne Vally said that during the week that would follow the meeting, no rainfall was expected and therefore river and reservoir levels may start to decrease.

Brianne Vally said that following repairs to the Black Pott weir, the Jubilee river was now back in full operation with no restrictions on flows or levels. Further maintenance on other parts of the flood alleviation scheme was also planned.

Brianne Vally said that there were numerous footbridges over the Jubilee river and that not all are covered by the RBWM. Berry Hill footbridge in Taplow had been closed for the foreseeable future due to structural instability, this was being looked after by Buckinghamshire council.

Brianne Vally said that in the next few months, the hydrometry and telemetry teams will carry out some maintenance works on the Pockocks Lane sensor and a small hut next to this. This would ensure that data is more reliable and resilient.

Brianne Vally said that information had been circulated with regards to maintenance on the River Lower Colne and that all the identified pinch points should be cleared by November 2021. The Chairman said that he would pass this on to the Flood Warden for the area.

Brianne Vally stated that a flood risk management plan had been worked on for the last couple of years with the Environment Agency, other relevant lead local flood authorities including the RBWM. This was a joint plan and there was a statutory requirement to undertake this.

Brianne Vally said that in 2017 several areas at high risk of flooding were identified as being within the RBWM and that the plan outlined what the principles were for dealing with flooding from 2021 to 2027. This was being issued for consultation on the 22nd October 2021.

Brianne Vally stated that Datchet and Wraysbury had been identified as being at high risk from flooding from main rivers. The draft measures reflected the intentions to manage flood risk in the Datchet and Wraysbury areas. The Environment Agency and the RBWM were working together to refine the options in these areas.

ACTION- Brianne Vally to circulate consultation details with the Flood Group.

Brianne Vally said that the Environment Agency were currently within the investigate stage of the 'Developing a project to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk' plan that was being referred too. The 2 next steps were development funding and then choosing the preferred option.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services (Sue Fox) said that the council had £10 million circa in its approved capital programme for the Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury and Old Windsor scheme. This was embedded within the programme for the next 3 years.

Councillor Larcombe asked what the cost was of the Black Potts weir repairs.

Brianne Vally said that work had been carried out also on the Manor Farm weir and that the figures she had, covered both repairs. The total cost of the repairs was just under £7.5 million and was comparable to past works on the River Thames.

Councillor Larcombe asked for a copy of the latest Jubilee river operating procedure.

Brianne Vally responded by saying that some of the data gathered whilst carrying out the Black Pott weir works and the experiences from last winter, led to some minor changes being implemented to the procedure in question. This was to reduce gate movements at Taplow in the evenings.

Brianne Vally stated that there were 2 main aims for this:

1. Improve the safety of the lock and weir keepers, who must face wintery conditions.
2. To learn from previous comments from communities of how it was operated in the past.

ACTION- Brianne Vally to provide the group with the latest changes to the Jubilee river operating procedures.

Councillor Larcombe asked what the progress was for the River Thames scheme and the development consent order.

Brianne Vally replied by stating that work was in progress for further refining of the design of the River Thames Scheme. Market engagement had also begun with the construction industry to potentially bring it into play in approximately 2 years' time.

Brianne Vally said that a major update was being planned via the website in November and referred the group to this website for further information.

Councillor Larcombe asked why 1 individual footbridge had an issue and not the others, when they were all installed at the same time 20 years ago.

Laura Regazzacci (Eton Wick Waterways Group) asked for some more information regarding Manor Farm weir and stated that some repair work had been carried out there, which saw a serious reduction in flooding around her village.

ACTION- Brianne Vally to provide the group with information on the repair works at Manor Farm weir.

Councillor Rayner asked for information regarding Eton Wick and the proposed Thames Water scheme.

Brianne Vally said that several cost recovery meetings had been held with Thames Water over the last few months to look at their proposal. Brianne Vally said that Thames Water were planning to submit a flood risk assessment to local planning authorities to review their proposal. This was planned for the end of October/ start of November 2021.

Brianne Vally said that an Environmental Impact Assessment was required, which is when evidence of flood risk would prevail. Brianne Vally added that any permits that were required would also be identified there.

Councillor Rayner said that Thames Water were engaging with local residents and the community and that she had been to several meetings regarding this already.

Colin Lemmings asked if Brianne Vally was able to provide the schematics for flood warning boards.

Colin Lemmings asked if the Environment Agency were responsible for choosing the locations of the flood warning boards. This was due to a sign being damaged and being then placed in a location that was not suitable.

ACTION- Brianne Vally to find out if Environment Agency is able to provide advice on where to locate flood warning signs and if the schematics could be obtained.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella (Thames Water) said that planned maintenance schemes were continuing, and that work had been completed in Whyteladyes lane in June 2021.

Denise Kinsella said that Thames Water were investing by increasing their fleet size by 20%. Older vehicles were being cleaned out, with new vehicles also being added to increase the size of the overall fleet.

Denise Kinsella said that work was continuing in Moneyrow Green, having already cleaned a section of sewer that was over a km long we removed scale and there was a blockage in the initial manhole. Since work had been completed in the summer, no reports had been received, but investigations are ongoing.

Denise Kinsella said that in relation to the Myrke, when carrying out an inspection no issues were found. Denise Kinsella said that if this was not the case, then she would be quite happy to investigate this further with an exact location having been provided.

Councillor Walters said that a resident in Moneyrow Green was having issues with flooding in her house and that all the water from surrounding areas was finding its way there. He added that there was also flooding off the polo fields in Stud Green.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that the RBWM were working closely with Denise Kinsella and Thames Water when it came to these identified issues. The current stance was to isolate specific issues and deal with them on a case-by-case basis.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said with regards to the polo fields that the RBWM were in contact with residents in Stud Green regarding this.

Councillor Larcombe asked why the Dorney Common pipeline had to go across the Dorney Common and not just straight into the Jubilee river.

Councillor Larcombe said that he would be open to attending the Myrke and reporting an exact location of the issue that he identified.

Denise Kinsella said that this could be done using the 'What 3 Words' programme. This could be used to pinpoint a location within 3 metres.

ACTION- Denise Kinsella to pass Councillor Larcombe's question regarding the Dorney pipeline to Christopher Butterfield for a response.

Councillor Brar asked if the sewage problem under the bridge on Maidenhead road had been solved. Councillor Brar said that this was identified on the 4th October 2021 and reported it on the 5th October 2021.

Denise Kinsella said that on the 3rd October a blockage was cleared there, and since then no further reports were made about the site until Councillor Brar's report. Thames Water went back to the site and still could not find the issue. Councillor Brar said that the issue was a regular occurrence every few months. Denise Kinsella said that she would view Thames Water's system and sort offline.

Datchet Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked if there was a mandate to look at neighbouring boroughs to eliminate problems, in this case to do with the Myrke.

Denise Kinsella said that Thames Water were aware of this issue historically and will check the surface water outfalls.

Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer asked if it was possible to add a weir or a gate valve in Old Windsor to stop the River Thames intruding on a neighbourhood area.

ACTION- Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer to email Denise Kinsella regarding the flooding in Old Windsor.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that there were 2 significant areas of surface water flood risk. These were in both Maidenhead town centre and Windsor town centre.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services encouraged members of the group to be actively engaged and participate in the consultations that had been previously mentioned by Brianne Vally.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that the RBWM were progressing some local measures, which were separately funded outside of the £10 million RBWM contribution to the RTS alternatives project.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services stated that these works included:

- Work on the barrel arch in Datchet
- Work on the non-return valve on the culvert into the Datchet common brook
- Work on the Wraysbury drain (Horton/ Douglas Lane- downstream if required)
- Work in Feathers Lane

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said in relation to the capital programme that there were currently ditch clearings and soak away cleansing occurring. This was accompanied with day-to-day maintenance works occurring.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that the liaison with residents was continuing especially in Fifield, Moneyrow Green and Stud Green to address certain issues with regards to flooding.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said in relation to land drainage that the RBWM actively carried out inspections of trash screens that were located at key water sources within the borough. She added that any further discoveries that related to Thames Water or external partners, would be referred to the appropriate bodies.

Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer said that an issue had been identified a year ago with water coming off the A308 Straight road into a parade of shops, which when there is heavy rain leads to flooding in this area.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services replied by saying that some work had been carried out at this location, with suggestions made by Malcolm Beer having been considered. This suggested work had been ordered and was ongoing.

Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer expressed concern at the level of the gully's compared to the road level and said that water would always find the lowest level as it was doing in this situation.

ACTION- Sue Fox to update Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on the progress of the planned works at the A308 Straight road.

Councillor Larcombe said that he believed a land drainage inspection and maintenance procedure was needed to cover structures and the pieces of channel between them. Councillor Larcombe suggested that Parish Council's could once a year focus upon water issues within their local parish in the form of a report.

The Chairman acknowledged this suggestion, however dismissed it due to the potential encouragement of trespassing.

Councillor Larcombe asked for a copy of the specification that will apply to the Wraysbury drain between Douglas lane and the Horton drain due to concerns over the size of the watercourses.

The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that the works that were being carried out were enabling works and recognised ancient legislation that alludes to the measurements of watercourses.

Councillor Larcombe asked what the costs were of the works on the Wraysbury drain and if these will be re-charged if it was found that riparian owners had not fulfilled their duties if on their land. The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said the main aim currently was to get the water flowing and other factors would be looked at in due course and would begin before Christmas.

Dick Scarff expressed concern over Battlemead Common and the borough's plan to plant vegetation, which could cause issues. The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services replied by stating that the borough was aware of the issues and that she would raise these concerns again.

Councillor Stimson asked Brianne Vally to inform her of any ongoing discussions regarding this.

Cookham Parish Councillor Jane Perry said that a sludge was present at the Battlemead Common because of a lack of dredging and that the planting of this vegetation would lead to the water level in the river rising, increasing the risk of flooding.

Datchet Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked for an update on the time scale for works on the barrel arch. The Principal Commissioning Officer for Highway Services said that she would address this offline.

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Cookham Parish Councillor Martin Coker asked if the Environment Agency held the copyright of the flood warning boards. Brianne Vally said that this would be researched and discussed offline.

Colin Lemmings asked where he would go to obtain emergency contact numbers for the borough, Environment Agency, and other relevant bodies and if there was a schematic that showed a reporting structure during times of flood.

The Chairman said that from the RBWM's perspective, during office hours the number would be the customer service number and out of office would be the borough control room for any incident. The Environment Agency had their usual contact number or their website to log any issues.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.45 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....