

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Ewan Larcombe (Chairman), Councillor Gary Muir, Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen (Bray PC), Ian Thompson (Datchet PC), Parish Councillor Jane Perry (Cookham PC) and Parish Councillor Colin Lemmings (Bisham PC)

Also in attendance: Councillor Mandy Brar, Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor John Bowden, Brianne Vally, Victor Freeney, Denise Kinsella, Emily Merritt and Laura Ragazzacci.

Officers: Laurence Ellis and Ben Crampin

ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING

Due to the Chairman sending his apologies, the Forum voted for a chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Councillor Muir proposed Councillor Larcombe to be Chairman for the duration of the meeting. This was seconded by Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen.

A named vote was taken.

Election of Councillor Larcombe as Chairman for the duration of the meeting (Motion)	
Councillor Ewan Larcombe	For
Councillor Gary Muir	For
Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen	For
Parish Councillor Ian Thompson	For
Parish Councillor Jane Perry	For
Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer	For
Parish Councillor Colin Lemmings	For
Carried	

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED: Councillor Larcombe to be Chairman for the duration of the meeting

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor Clark, the Chairman, Dick Scarff, and Parish Councillors Jim Cooke and David Burfitt

MINUTES

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2022 were a true and accurate record.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

ACTION: Denise Kinsella to discuss with Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on the next steps on arranging a meeting regarding the flooding in Old Windsor.	Discussion yet to take place due to Parish Councillor Beer being unwell.
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ACTION: Denise Kinsella to circulate information regarding river discharge to the Panel and Councillor Baldwin	Completed – Information circulated to Panel members and Councillor Baldwin.
ACTION: Brianne Vally to provide contact details to Councillor Baldwin on resources for planning applications.	Completed – Brianne had provided Councillor Baldwin with the details.
ACTION: Laura Regazzacci to forward information relating to the Cain Bioengineering Hydrology Report to Brianne Vally.	Completed – Brianne had seen the report.
ACTION: Denise Kinsella to raise the issue of the build-up at the Datchet Common Brook at Thames Water and report back to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.	Denise Kinsella raised the issue at Thames Water which were planning to get a contractor to assess what would be needed. Once this was done, Denise Kinsella stated she would provide an update to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.
ACTION: Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene to email Denise Kinsella and Ben Crampin on the flooding issues in Stud Green and Fifield in which they would investigate the issues.	Completed – Email had been sent and a meeting took place.
ACTION: Ben Crampin, Councillor Walters and Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene to organise and visit Bray to investigate flooding issues in the areas.	Ben Crampin had met with Bray Parish Council; but had not yet been in contact with Councillor Walters. He stated he would contact him on whether he still wanted to meet for a site visit.
ACTION: Emily Merritt to reach out to flood wardens in the parishes, Duncan Parker and Dave Francis.	Completed – Emily Merritt had contacted all the flood wardens.

ACTION: Denise Kinsella to discuss with Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on the next steps on arranging a meeting regarding the flooding in Old Windsor.

ACTION: Denise Kinsella to update Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on Thames Water's response to the build-up at Datchet Common Brook.

ACTION: Ben Crampin to contact Councillor Walters on whether he wanted to meet for a site visit in Bray to investigate flooding issues in the areas

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Forum reviewed the suggested amendments to Flood Liaison Group.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the suggested amendments to Flood Group's Terms of Reference.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Councillor Brar asked if the Environment Agency (EA) could do a site visit to Lightlands Lane, Cookham as residents were concern with the nearby culvert. Brianne Vally, Environment Agency, stated a visit could be arranged if the exact location was provided. Ben Crampin, Flood Risk Manager, added that an email response was written for the residents, and stated he would forward this to Brianne Vally before they make the site visit.

Councillor Brar then requested for a meeting between EA and the residents at Lightlands Lane, Cookham. Brianne Vally stated she would look into this.

ACTION: Brianne Vally to arrange a meeting between EA and Lightlands Lane, Cookham residents over concerns with the culvert.

Councillor Brar asked Brianne Vally for an update on the flood walls in Cookham. Brianne Vally informed that EA had replaced some flood warning signs in Cookham and Bisham. She added that she liaised with contractors to enquire about a missing flood warning sign on Cookham High Street. Brianne Vally confirmed the sign is assumed lost or stolen. She also mentioned she will share the infographics and details for Cookham Parish Council to procure a replacement sign should they be interested. She then stated that a letter detailing maintenance of the flooding signs had been sent out to Cookham Parish Council a few months prior. Councillor Brar asked for this letter to be sent to her. Brianne Vally agreed to do so.

ACTION: Brianne Vally to forward the letter regarding maintenance of flood warning signs in Cookham to Councillor Brar.

Starting off the EA update with the situation of the catchment, Brianne Vally informed that the Thames catchment area had received 121% of the average rainfall for October. As a result, natural river flows had increased across the Thames catchment. In spite of this, the Borough was still in a status of drought as declared in August 2022 and was expected to continue to be in a drought status into 2023. Brianne Vally mentioned that more information regarding the water situation in local areas was on gov.uk website.

Brianne Vally then moved onto ongoing maintenance works in the local areas. Most of the works were focused on the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme and the wider assets which form part of the scheme. Maintenance works were being done on the A4 Bath Road retaining walls along the Jubilee River Channel and were close to being completed.

On the North Maidenhead Bund between Cookham and Maidenhead, EA were investigating and collecting some evidence required to carry out some maintenance works and repairs. In Cookham, the bunds around the access pass had been repairs. In addition, maintenance work began around the Cookham flood walls, including in the Riverdene area, with focus on the mortar joints and the joint seals.

Brianne Vally then explained that a program of maintenance was about to take place at Taplow, which was the start of the Jubilee River, where a gantry was being installed to facilitate future maintenance.

Brianne Vally then gave a presentation on an update on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures. Relative to the EA Project Lifecycle, EA were at the 'Initial Assessment' phase and proceeding towards the Strategic Outline case.

EA were working with its framework consultants, Jacobs, to develop the Strategic Outline Case (SOC). SOC was intended to justify that there may be viable alternative options to reduce flood risk from Datchet to Hythe End and that these are worthwhile investigating further. EA sought to make a case to attract funding in order to explore those alternative options.

EA had also taken on board the comments received in response to its letter from 9th February 2021 and had subsequently established a long list of options.

Since the last meeting in June 2022, EA had launched the [DHEFIM website on gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/datchet-to-hythe-end-flood-improvement-measures), a go-to place for residents to find information, and this has resulted in some useful feedback from residents.

Brianne Vally then presented a program summary up to the end of the SOC. EA were developing a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) document which was expected to be completed by the ends of December 2022. Whilst the approximate dates for each activity had changed, the date for signing off the SOC had not changed and was still expected to be March 2023. Some contingencies within the program had been formulated to prevent any delays.

Brianne Vally then provided an update from the River Thames Scheme (RTS) Team. She explained that the River Thames Scheme had started a non-statutory consultation from 8th November to 20th December 2022. Brianne Vally stated she and other members from the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures team will be attending an RTS consultation event at Wraysbury Village Hall on 25th November from 1:00pm to 7:00pm.

Brianne Vally stated that the River Thames Scheme would be providing a Councillor briefing session on 7th November 2022 with the River Thames Scheme Team circulating further details in the near future. She then notified that further questions could be sent to the River Thames Scheme Team's email address (RTS@environmentiphone.gov.uk) or searched on their website (riverthamesscheme.org.uk).

On the Flood Risk Management Plan, Brianne Vally stated that the final plans were to be published in early-December 2022. She explained that the Flood Risk Management Plan provided information on how flood risk was managed in flood risk areas (e.g., Windsor, Datchet and Wraysbury). The plans were updated following feedback from the consultations which ran from 2021.

Brianne Vally then reported that the central government had been working on an emergency alert system which was scheduled to launch in Autumn 2022. This would allow notifications to be sent to mobile devices highlighting a risk of life. EA would be using this new system to emergency alerts to residents in flood risk areas.

Brianne Vally then showed a [short video](#) showcasing the emergency alert system.

The Chairman asked if the gantry over Jubilee River was over the 3 gates in Taplow. Brianne Vally confirmed this, adding that it would be used to enable maintenance of those gates.

The Chairman then asked about the steel fencing installed around Slough Weir. Brianne Vally speculated that there was investment into a public safety risk assessment based of the key sites based on some tragic deaths which took place.

The Chairman then asked if Brianne Vally had a response regarding the resolution passed by RBWM Council about the reinstating of dredging. Brianne Vally replied that EA had been notified by Ben Crampin to respond to the Council's motion.

Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer asked the Chairman if Surrey should be involved with the financial implications of the Datchet to Hythe's End Scheme due to its close proximity to the River Thames and its diversions. Brianne Vally responded that EA were adjusting the study area. If it became appropriate, EA would look into broadening the partnership funding.

Regarding the scoping document about the River Thames Scheme, the Chairman asked if Brianne Vally knew about a section which stated that water companies would pump water from the River Thames into the reservoir when the water levels in the river rose. Brianne Vally replied that she would explore this further.

Councillor Rayner asked if the consultation on 25th November at Wraysbury Village Hall could be shared with the RBWM Comms Team to promote it as widely as possible. Brianne Vally replied that EA were meeting with a member of the River Thames Comms and Engagement Team the following day.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson explained that he had recently presented the effects of the old Channel One Section on large areas of Surrey (as well as Egham and Chertsey). He stated these implications undermined section 2 of the River Thames Scheme. On this basis, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson then asked if there was an invite to the residents of Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury to the consultation in Wraysbury on 25th November. Brianne Vally replied that EA could look at the report that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson was referring to. She then stated residents who would have benefitted from the River Thames Scheme Channel Section One were invited to attend. She added that there were drop-ins across the area where the River Thames Scheme Team could be approached, such as in Egham, but the Datchet to Hythe End Food Improvement Measures Project Team would only attend the Wraysbury drop-in.

Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer asked for an update on microplastics being filtered out from river water for drinking water. Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, replied that she had passed this issue onto Thames Water and then sent a couple of emails to Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer. Referring to a study carried out in 2018 or 2019, which suggested that the situation with microplastics became much worse, Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer asked if there was an update surrounding this. Denise Kinsella stated that Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer could ask his questions on the EIR request that was sent to him via email.

The forum noted the update.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella gave the update for Thames Water. She explained that Thames Water had gone through some reorganisation in its business approach, namely working more into river basins and catchment. She added that her colleague, David Harding, would be attending future Flood Liaison Group meetings, thus replacing Denise Kinsella as the officer from Thames Water.

In terms of work from Thames Water, Denise Kinsella started off with some proactive work across the catchment. Sewer depth monitors were still in place which alert Thames Water of any blockages which would then allow a quick response. There were 28 sewer depth monitors in Windsor and 88 in Maidenhead. Thames Water had already attended blockages in both of these catchment areas when around over 20 alarms went off.

Thames Water were continuing with their planned maintenance, which involved proactively going out to the sewers which may have issues.

Denise Kinsella then explained that Thames Water's 'Bin It, Don't Block It' messaging sought to be more targeted whereby an informative letter was sent to all properties within 30 metres of a blockade, informing residents of how to not block their sewages. If there were repeated blockages in the area, residents would receive a second of the same informative letter, followed by a home visit from Thames Water to directly investigate and inform residents if another blockage took place.

On other updates:

- The Eton Wick project was still within the design stage. Thames Water was still providing updates to Eton Wick Waterways Group as well as sharing data, namely studies on the water levels.
- On the clearance on the Datchet Common Brook, Denise Kinsella stated that a contractor was to be assigned to assess what needed to be done.
- On Moneyrow Green, some work had taken place, such as the cleaning of the sewer and changing the manholes. Thames Water would continue to oversee any developments.

The Chairman asked about the Myrke ditch pollution (near the Windsor Road and downstream of the Slough Wier). Denise Kinsella stated that Thames Water had investigated but did not notice any issues. She explained that residents would need to phone up and inform Thames Water, stating that Thames Water needed to see what was happening in order to resolve it. The Chairman replied that there were 30 other people observers of the Myrke ditch pollution and that it had been in this state for 30 years.

Referring to the Myrke ditch pollution, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson stated that he saw this issue and reported it 5-7 years ago and was surprised by its lack of resolution. He stated he would be appreciative if Thames Water investigated the Myrke ditch pollution.

The Forum noted the update.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Ben Crampin gave a presentation with some updates from RBWM:

- On the Wraysbury Drain, some maintenance work took place around the downstream of the control structure where watercourse splits from the Horton Drain. In addition, some site investigations were taking place upstream of the splash including the sections of watercourse downstream of the previous works site. There was also some silk clearance which took around the downstream end of the Windsor Road Bridge owned.
- Some communication took place with landowners on the downstream ends of the Wraysbury Drain where there had been some long-standing issues with the watercourse over the last few years. Ben Crampin expected to arrange a site visit in the upcoming weeks to discuss the area as well as upstream.
- Windsor Road Bridge maintenance works had not started yet. This was due to the gully sucker (used to pump out silk) could not suck up logs and bricks. RBWM Flood Management were looking into how to undertake this clear-up in a more effective way.
- At Douglas Lane and Windsor Road, RBWM Flood Management were working with landowners to maintain sections of watercourse underneath the highway.
- A programme of work was put in place for the next year.
- Surveys were conducted at Datchet Barrell Arch which revealed that there were no major issues.
- A contract was being finalised to undertake silt clearance around Datchet Barrell Arch. Ben Crampin warned that some closures may take place, but there would be a 90-day notice.
- Work had started on the Flap Valve at Penn Road. Initial surveying and modelling work had been undertaken to get a better understanding of the area. The modelling work was expected to be finished by the end of October 2022, with results by the end of 2022.
- Over the past few months, work had been conducted on Grant-in-Aid projects, namely whether they were feasible or not. This included the surface water study in Holyport Fifield and Oakley Green areas. Progress was expected to begin 2023.
- A new Flood Risk Officer was recruited whose role was to investigate and report flooding issues. RBWM Flood Management were also seeking a Sustainable Drainage Officer.
- Ben Crampin was also seeking to expand the flooding content on the RBWM website over the next year. The additional content was likely to include watercourse responsibilities, SuDS and Ordinary Watercourse Consent.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked for progress on Eton End Rail Tunnel where a discussion between RBWM and Network Rail took place. He also asked what amount was available from £10 million allocated to the Local Flood Plan. Brianne Vally stated that an EA had an initial meeting with Network Rail whereby there was a better understanding of Network Rail's requirements if EA decided to proceed with maintenance in the area. She stated that

RBWM had decided that the option would require an investigation as part of the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measure to collect information in the area.

Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer asked if there was any progress on the issues on Straight Road in Old Windsor which had a history of flooding. Ben Crampin stated that there had been some maintenance work in place, such as an extra gully to mitigate the flow of water. He suggested to meet with Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer to investigate any flooding issues.

ACTION: Ben Crampin to meet with Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer to investigate the flooding issue on Straight Road, Old Windsor.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson stated that there were some problems with the water mains in Datchet which meant there were still flooding issues around Datchet Village Green despite some maintenance works previously taking place. Ben Crampin asked if Parish Councillor Ian Thompson could email him the details of the issues, in which Ben Crampin would forward them to VolkerHighways so that a contractor could get involved.

ACTION: Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to forward details of the flooding issues surrounding the drain near Datchet Village Green to Ben Crampin, who then forward these details to VolkerHighways to allow them to investigate the issue.

Emily Merritt, Emergency Planning Officer, reported that the Emergency Planning Team would add content on RBWM's flood webpage, such as preparation for flooding and the risks associated with that.

Emily Merritt stated that there was some Flood Awareness Training on Thursday 17th November, being orchestrated by Royal Borough Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS). She said she would share the details of this training to flood wardens and potentially the wider Borough. In addition, the Annual Flood Wardens meeting was taking place on Tuesday 22nd November.

The forum noted the update.

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

No new updates from Parish Councils.

Councillor Bowden asked if the flood wardens from Eton and Eton Wick had been contacted to take part in the Flood Awareness Training course. Laura Ragazzacci stated that she and Claire Taylor had not received an invitation for the training courses despite being recorded as assistant flood wardens. Emily Merritt requested for Laura Regazzacci to forward her details.

Councillor Bowden then asked if there was a separate flood warden for Eton itself. Laura Regazzacci stated there was not; and that John Lovell was the main flood warden and that she and Claire Taylor support John Lovell. Councillor Bowden stated he would raise this at Eton Town Council.

The meeting, which began at 6.02 pm, finished at 7.37 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....