

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

Wednesday 11 October 2023

Present (virtually): Councillors David Buckley (Chair), Devon Davies (Vice-Chair), Ewan Larcombe, and Richard Coe; and Parish Councillors Ian Thompson (Datchet PC), Colin Lemmings (Bisham PC), Riccardo Ludovici (Eton Town Council) and Mandy Brar (Cookham PC)

Also in attendance (virtually): David Harding, Laura Regazzacci, Brianne Vally, Stuart Mollard, Natasha Gibbs, Dick Scarff and Helen Branscombe-Davies

Officers (virtually): Laurence Ellis, Ben Crampin and Emily Merritt.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Parish Councillors David Burfitt (Hurley PC) and Louivanne Kneen (Bray PC).

### MINUTES

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were a true and accurate record.

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

<u>ACTION FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>
<b>Laurence Ellis to circulate Richard Hancock's instructions on signing up to the flood warning service to Flood Group attendees.</b>	COMPLETED – Instructions forwarded to FLG forum members.
<b>Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen to contact David Harding regarding the drain cover near the Jolly Gardener pub, namely the cover having Colt Telecoms written on it.</b>	Laurence Ellis informed that Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen had notified that she had been in contact with the landlady of the Jolly Gardener pub, who would send the information through to her. Upon receipt, she would contact David Harding with Ben Crampin copied in.
<b>Ben Crampin, RBWM Flood Risk Manager, to relay to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the funding for flood defences in the Borough in the last 4 years.</b>	Ben Crampin reported that this had not been completed but stated that he would pick this action up with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson outside of the meeting.
<b>The circulated presentations and documents to be re-circulated to the new members of Flood Liaison Group.</b>	COMPLETED – The presentations and documents were recirculated shortly after the last meeting.
<b>Brianne Vally to ensure that Councillor Devon Davies received updates on the installation of a new fence at Dorney</b>	Brianne Vally believed that most of the actions relating to Eton Wick could be marked as completed but acknowledged that issues

<p><b>Common and weed clearance around Roundmoor Ditch and Boveney stream.</b></p>	<p>remained. She informed that Jeanette Wooster, EA Catchment Coordinator, had liaised with the interested individuals around Eton Wick. She stated that she was willing to forward any updates or answers if there were any actions which had not been addressed satisfactorily.</p> <p>Councillor D. Davies, Vice-Chair, stated that he would wait for the update from EA and ask any questions he may have to Brianne Vally or Jeanette Wooster.</p>
<p><b>Brianne Vally to inform Councillor Coe on any update to water maintenance plans around Eton Wick.</b></p>	<p>COMPLETED – Brianne Vally informed that that Jeanette Wooster had picked this up at her recent meetings. She added that she was willing to pick this if it was not addressed satisfactorily.</p> <p>Councillor Coe had not arrived at the meeting at this point to give any feedback.</p>
<p><b>Update on weed clearance around Eton Wick in the next meeting agenda in October 2023.</b></p>	
<p>Councillor D. Davies informed that weeding had continued, ending in Summer 2023 and had started again in late September 2023. He stated that flood levels had decreased.</p> <p>Laura Regazzacci informed that the Eton Wick Volunteer Association (EWVA) had done around 50% of the rivers around Eton Wick, which had made a difference. However, she stated that she was awaiting the major landowners such as Eton College, Eton Town Council and the Palmer Estate for Dorney Common to do their part. She stated that they appeared to be held up due to finances, where they were expected a financial contribution from Thames Water, which had not been received yet.</p> <p>Overall, Laura Regazzacci reported that the weeding had been conducted by EWVA; whilst satisfactory, it had not resolved the issue with the rivers unprepared for any flooding in the winter period or early spring. She opined that the programme had not been completed. When asked by the Chair, she requested for this action to be carried over to the next Flood Group meeting.</p> <p>When the Chair then asked if she wanted any intervention if requested, Laura Regazzacci replied that she would leave this with Councillors D. Devon and Wilson (the local ward Borough Councillors), stating that they were on the case; particularly, she stated, as Councillor Wilson had good knowledge of the water system around Eton Wick and had been in contact by Jeanette Wooster.</p> <p>While two meetings had taken place with EA, Laura Regazzacci disputed Brianne Vally's claim that the flooding issues at Eton Wick had been resolved, stating that there were major issues in the north of the village, namely flooding in a field which often extended towards Colenorton Crescent. She asserted that this was a risky situation which required a long-term approach. She stated that a sensible long-term solution had not yet been found, including the landowners and the build-up of silt.</p> <p>Brianne Vally clarified that the action points had been carried out as far as she was aware, but she nevertheless acknowledged that the issues at Eton Wick remained. She informed that Jeanette Wooster was arranging another update and meeting in the forthcoming weeks to</p>	

explore alternative methods with weed clearance and support any further plans for the spring. She then informed that the EA Operations Team had sought to liaise with the major landowners with limited success. She also notified that EA had carried out some vegetation clearance in areas where EA was the landowner, mostly around Roundmoor Ditch which went under the Jubilee Flood Alleviation Channel.

The Chair requested for this action to carry on behind the scenes and follow-up for Laura Regazzacci.

**A meeting between EA officers, Laura Regazzacci and relevant Councillors on weed clearance and flooding at Eton Wick.**

Following from the discussion with the previous action point, Brianne Valley stated that the meeting had taken place; but added that follow-up meetings and discussions were possibly required, likely exploring methods on vegetation clearance.

**A meeting between EA officers, Ben Crampin and Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury Councillors on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures.**

Brianne Vally informed that a meeting had taken place between the Borough and EA officers regarding the scheme. She added that Stuart Mollard would be providing an update on Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures scheme later in the meeting, hoping it would answer some questions in relation to communication and engagement.

The Chair however disputed this item as being completed, stating a meeting between EA officers, Ben Crampin and Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury Councillors (rather than Borough and EA officers) had not taken place.

The Chair wished for this action to follow up to the next meeting.

**Ben Crampin to forward an update to Parish Councillor Mandy Brar regarding flooding issues in Burchetts Green Road and Cookham High Street.**

While he did not forward an update to Parish Councillor Mandy Brar before the meeting, Ben Crampin gave some quick details.

With Cookham High Street, Ben Crampin informed that RBWM had ordered some works in July 2023 to take place. He added that he would chase this up on whether the works had taken place.

As for Burchetts Green Road, Ben Crampin reported that this was not on the programme for the current financial year (2023-24), though he added that this may change depending on whether there was any leftover money within the financial year.

Essentially, Burchetts Green Road was not being prioritised at the moment in contrast to other works which had greater priority due to property flooding.

	<p>Nevertheless, Ben Crampin requested for Parish Councillor Mandy Brar to keep him posted if the issues at Burchetts Green Road continued so it would be recorded, and he would then keep her updated.</p> <p>Parish Councillor Mandy Brar stated that she would check the Burchetts Green issues as well as acquire input from the Residents' Association.</p>
<p><b>Brianne Vally to inform Parish Councillor Mandy Brar on whether the Temple Bridge (near Hurley) would be reopened after repairs.</b></p>	<p>COMPLETED – Brianne Vally believed that she circulated an update; though added she could circulate the recent update from 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 if she had not done so.</p> <p>However, Parish Councillor Mandy Brar responded that she had not received any update.</p> <p>Brianne Vally <a href="#">then shared the information</a> in the Zoom chat.</p>
<p><b>Ben Crampin to inform Claire Taylor on the flooding issues at Moore's Lane, Eton Wick, and the section of the Roundmoor.</b></p>	<p>Ben Crampin reported that he had a meeting with Claire Taylor yet. He stated that he had spoken with Slough Borough Council on this issue and Jeanette Wooster (from EA) due to the land being within Slough Borough.</p> <p>Ben Crampin stated that he would get into contact with Claire Taylor to discuss this further.</p>
<p><b>Ben Crampin to investigate the modelling regarding the Penn Road Flap Valve and Datchet Common Brook water flows, and then report back to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.</b></p>	<p>Ben Crampin responded that he looked through the detail of the report and stated that he was confident in the modelling used in the report.</p> <p>Ben Crampin added that he had recently emailed Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to arrange a conversation on a number of issues. He stated that he would arrange a specific date and time with him.</p>
<p><b>Thames Water to update Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on Thames Water's response to the Datchet Common Brook.</b></p>	<p>Due to technical issues, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson was unable to respond to this.</p> <p>The Chair decided to carry this action point over.</p>

Outstanding actions:

- **Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen to forward information to David Harding regarding the drain cover near the Jolly Gardener pub, namely the cover having Colt Telecoms written on it.**
- **Thames Water to update Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on Thames Water's response to the Datchet Common Brook.**
- **Flooding issues at Eton Wick:**

- **A further update on weed clearance around Eton Wick in the next meeting agenda in January 2024.**
- **A further meeting between EA officers, Laura Regazzacci and relevant Councillors on weed clearance and flooding issues at Eton Wick.**
- **Actions for Ben Crampin / RBWM:**
  - **Ben Crampin to relay to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the funding for flood defences in the Borough in the last 4 years.**
  - **Ben Crampin to forward further updates to Parish Councillor Mandy Brar in regard to flooding issues in Burchetts Green Road and Cookham High Street. Meanwhile, Parish Councillor Mandy Brar would forward any updates on these issues to Ben Crampin.**
  - **Ben Crampin to inform Claire Taylor on the flooding issues at Moore's Lane, Eton Wick, and the section of the Roundmoor.**
  - **Ben Crampin and Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to arrange a conversation on the relevant flooding issues in Datchet.**
- **Actions for EA:**
  - **Brianne Vally to forward any further updates on the installation of a new fence at Dorney Common and weed clearance around Roundmoor Ditch and Boveney stream to Councillor Devon Davies.**
  - **A meeting between EA officers, Ben Crampin and Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury Councillors on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures.**

*(Natasha Gibbs, Hertfordshire North London Environment Agency (EA), joined the meeting at 6:15pm)*

### UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally, Environment Agency (EA), introduced the item by informing that Stuart Mollard, Environment Agency (EA), would be presenting an update on Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM).

Beginning with the Project Lifecycle, Stuart Mollard informed that the Project had passed the Strategic Outline Case (Gateway 1) at the end of May 2023, moving into the Appraisal Stage. It had then moved through to the Outline Business Case (Gateway 2) which would conclude in Summer 2026. The subsequent phases included presenting a Final Business Case (Gateway 3) and then the Delivery (Gateway 4).

Stuart Mollard explained that the long and vague timescales for Gateways 3 and 4 because the preferred option was not known at this stage. If the preferred option was simple or was a series of options, it would then be quicker to design and then construct compared to a more complex option.

Stuart Mollard further elaborated the project background by summarising the Strategic Case, which then lead, once it was approved, to the Business Outline Case. There was a number of properties (around 2,500) within the Project area which were at risk of flooding from the River Thames, including houses, schools, a fire station, places of worship, civic buildings, and critical infrastructure like railways, roads and utilities. Whilst there were some isolated flood risk management assets present, it was accepted that there were large parts of the Project area remained undefended.

From this, the EA sought to align the Project with both national and regional business strategies which called for measures to be undertaken to reduce flood risk in the Project area. In addition to flood protection, DHEFIM had the potential to deliver other benefits, namely several environmental, sustainability and social improvements.

The EA had been working in partnership with RBWM to seek out solutions which worked for communities and their environment, working together under a combined project team and a joint project board.

Stuart Mollard conveyed that the project team had made good progress in the last three months in taking the project forward.; however, he highlighted that the objective of DHEFIM project was to reduce the risk of flooding rather than unfeasible eliminate all the risks in its entirety. Nevertheless, he reassured that the EA were committed as part of the joint team in delivering flood alleviation works.

Stuart Mollard then moved onto summarising key activities in the last three months, namely working through the Appraisal Stage. The EA had finalised its contract with its framework consultant and technical supplier, Jacobs; and had been working with them in doing some significant technical work around project objectives, confirming the study area and investigating other sources of flood risk. Alongside flooding from the River Thames, the EA were looking into the risks associated with surface water flooding and ground water flooding.

The EA had also investigated other partnership funding sources. Whilst there was confirmed funding from the EA and RBWM, EA hoped to find alternative potential interested parties who would likely be positively impacted by this scheme and thus contribute.

The EA were also conducting much technical work and data gathering, ensuring that it had the right level of information to do robust assessments which were necessary in identifying the preferred options for the project.

The EA were planning to arrange some public events at some point in late-2023, likely a date in the end of November 2023, to invite residents and give an update on EA's activities as well as receive feedback from communities; therefore, starting the engagement process.

Stuart Mollard then showed a timeline summarising the Outline Business Case, which was split into four blocks:

- Project Definition (Summer/Autumn 2023),
- Optioneering (Autumn 2023 – Spring 2024),
- Short List Assessment (Spring 2024 – Summer 2025)
- Preferred Option(s) Identified (Summer 2025 – Summer 2026)

The DHEFIM was reaching the conclusion of the Project Definition phase, which would involve a public engagement event. The next project phase, Optioneering, would involve formulating a long list of options and reducing it down to a short list of options. Moving into the Short List Assessment stage, the EA would then consult with the public to receive their views on the shortlist of options until a preferred option (or options) has been chosen. Once completed, in the Preferred Option(s) Identified stage, EA would then arrange for the technical justification for the preferred option(s) to provide the Outline Business Case.

*(Councillor Coe had entered the meeting virtually at 6:31pm)*

Stuart Mollard then explained that the approach framework for stakeholder engagement was inform, consult and involve; ensuring that the public was involved at key stages. The EA also planned to establish an external stakeholder engagement group. They planned to set this up after the public engagement events to see if there were any key individuals which were interested in being involved, and thus form the group from the people who put their interest

forward at the events. From this group, the EA hoped to have a representative sample of people who would be impacted by the scheme.

To conclude, Stuart Mollard displayed the points of contact for the DHEFIM:

[Datchet to Hythe End flood improvement measures - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)  
([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

For further information, or to provide feedback please contact:

- [THM.Schemes@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:THM.Schemes@environment-agency.gov.uk)
- [flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk)

Or call the Environment Agency customer contact centre on 03708 506 506; or Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead on 01628 683 800.

Any concerns about a pollution incident, or a blockage in the river, call the Environment Agency's 24-hour hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Councillor Larcombe expressed concerns about the £10 million funding for flood defence, elaborating that he raised this at the recent Full Council meeting, and it was revealed that there was less than £1 million for flood defence in the budget. He asked who told the EA that there was £10 million in the fund as there was £53 million in the fund previously.

Ben Crampin clarified that the £900,000 was for the contribution for the Business Outline Case of the DHEFIM. The rest of the money, he was told, which was previously committed to by the previous administration came from borrowing. He added that while commitment had not ultimately been made by the new administration, officers had not been told any differently that the plans would be changing or there was no funding. From this, the project was carrying on as planned. Ben Crampin added that he had been talking with Councillor Coe regularly about the scheme, including a recent meeting between himself, Brianne Vally and Stuart Mollard with Councillors Coe and Werner, Leader of the Council, to brief them on scheme. A future action for officers was to go back to Cabinet for an official opinion on the scheme.

The Chair added to the point that the £2.5 million per year was in the budget but would not come into effect until 2024-2025.

Councillor Larcombe then asked why he had not been involved in any discussions despite stating that he was appointed on the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Stuart Mollard replied that part of the DHEFIM scheme was searching for key stakeholders. The EA sought to contact key stakeholders in advance of the public engagement events in late-November 2023, and invite them to the events and possibly meet them before the public engagement events so they that they could be informed.

Stuart Mollard informed that Councillor Larcombe was listed as a stakeholder, and he offered to make a commitment to contact him and forward a briefing to him on what was being proposed and then take part in the public engagement events where the proposals would be presented.

Councillor Larcombe responded that it was "too little, too late". He commented that River Thames Scheme Channel One was taken out of the DHEFIM scheme due to the Borough not allocating £53 million, elaborating that money was put into the scheme in 2017 but was then halted in 2020 without notice. He then informed that he conveyed to the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee that the River Thames Scheme was no longer coherent in spite of the Committee approving the finance for the scheme in January 2023.

Councillor Larcombe then stated that the River Thames Scheme had been designated as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) and that it was in the pre-application planning stage with the EA seeking a development consent order. He then announced that he

would actively ensure that the EA's request for a development consent order would be denied on the grounds that the River Thames Scheme was incoherent.

Councillor Larcombe opined that "history [was] repeating itself" as with the Jubilee River scheme, claiming that it fell apart because it was designed and built wrong and was consuming millions of pounds.

Councillor Larcombe then announced that he recently discovered that the Berry Hill Bridge (a footbridge across the Jubilee River) no longer existed, having been removed around two years prior due to it falling apart and had not been replaced. He said he was asking questions on how much it cost to remove the bridge and who paid for it, adding that Bridge Number 12 further downstream was falling apart.

Councillor Larcombe concluded that the EA had failed to learn from the mistakes of the Jubilee River scheme, and that he would relay this to the planning inspectorate in regard to the EA's request for a development consent order for the River Thames Scheme.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson (Datchet PC) raised a series of points. He first stated that he had not received any feedback or been involved in the meetings between the EA and RBWM. Secondly, he then listed the three main flooding issues in Datchet:

- At the Eton End area / Railway Arch
- The River Frontage, near the entrance to the Eel Pass construction.
- Datchet Common Brook – the objective to stop water flowing from Datchet Common Brook into central Datchet.

With winter approaching, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asserted that he had raised for the last four years that these issues needed to be addressed but they had not. He stated that Thames Water would not communicate with him; and that he had no dialogue with the previous administration concerning their intentions with Network Rail in regard to the underpass in the Eton End area. He also raised that the EA had not yet submitted an application to take the land in Southlea Road alongside Poplars.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson relayed local concerns that water levels would rise and flood the back of Datchet. Despite raising these issues as well as producing reports which described the flooding issues, no action had taken place and he had not received any dialogue. Reflecting Councillor Larcombe's point, he conveyed that the only resolution was to ensure that all three sections of River Thames Scheme were working.

Responding to Councillor Larcombe and Parish Councillor Ian Thompson's points, Brianne Vally replied that there was no representative for the River Thames Scheme in attendance at the meeting and that none of the EA officers present were the best people to respond on any specific queries or points. Nevertheless, she offered to forward the relevant contact details if Councillor Larcombe did not possess them.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to forward the contact details of the relevant officers for the River Thames Scheme to Councillors Larcombe and Ian Thompson.**

In regard to the bridges across the Jubilee River, Brianne Vally believed that the removal of the Berry Hill footbridge was covered in an update a few years prior when it was being removed. She added that most bridges along the Jubilee River were under the ownership of local authorities, with the Berry Hill footbridge was under Buckinghamshire Council's ownership and that they removed the bridge. She offered to forward to Councillor Larcombe the relevant details on the ownership and maintenance of bridges in the area.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to forward the relevant details on the ownership and maintenance of bridges around the Jubilee River to Councillor Larcombe.**



Brianne Vally informed that some of the initiatives and reports which Parish Councillor Ian Thompson had shared over the years had been forwarded to the EA's framework consultant, Jacobs, to explore potential options, particularly as the Bypass Channel was no longer happening. She also highlighted that there was an opportunity to attend the EA's public engagement session in November 2023 to raise points with other project team members.

In regard to Datchet Common Brook, Brianne Vally informed that the EA's catchment coordinator had written to Thames Water on improving the area, namely vegetation clearance. She added that recent works by RBWM around the Datchet Common Valve was an attempt to investigate the option and understand the viability.

In terms of contacts, Brianne Vally referred to the external stakeholder engagement group mentioned earlier in Stuart Mollard's presentation, explaining that the EA believed that it was more appropriate to extend the engagement event so that a wider group of people could benefit. She added that it was the EA's intention to continue with this external stakeholder engagement group and that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson was welcome to attend and have a more two-way communication. While she highlighted that she had been giving updates on the progress of the DHEFIM scheme at every Flood Liaison Group meeting in the last couple of years, she acknowledged that there needed to be a system of two-way communication whereby the Flood Group meetings were more one-way.

Responding to the question on money, Councillor Coe informed that the Council did not possess a positive pot on money and that it was always money which was borrowed. He offered to ask Councillor Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance, about the details of the finance with flood defence.

**ACTION: Councillor Coe to ask about the financial details concerning flood defence.**

Councillor Larcombe responded that the Full Council meeting during the previous evening revealed that the Borough did not have any money but rather a debt of £203 million. He then raised that the River Thames Scheme development costs had been in excess of £70 million and that nothing had been done to reduce the risks of flood defence.

Parish Councillor Mandy Brar (Cookham PC) asked about the Micro-Hydro scheme on the River Thames. Brianne Vally replied that her remit was in flood risk management and that she was not always cited on the EA's assets. She then suggested that Parish Councillor Mandy Brar could email her queries to herself, and she could then forward them to the appropriate EA staff.

**ACTION: Parish Councillor Mandy Brar to email her queries about Micro-Hydro scheme on the River Thames to Brianne Vally, who would then forward them to the relevant EA staff.**

Brianne Vally then gave an update on the situation with the Thames Catchment:

- In midst of the warm weather in October 2023, the Borough received only 6% of the average rainfall for October, though more rain was expected in the next few days.
- Natural river flows had decreased at all sites. Brianne Vally highlighted that weekly [water situation local area reports](#) could be found on the gov.uk website.
- Regarding the situation in Eton Wick, Brianne Vally referred to her responses on the subject earlier on in the meeting, though she added that she was happy to receive any more questions.
- On the maintenance of the Jubilee River Flood Alleviation Scheme, Brianne Vally informed that a programme of maintenance activities was expected to be carried out, with some of the works taking place on the North Maidenhead Bund, including vegetation clearance. There would be some further work in which Marsh Lane and Taplow weirs were expected to be upgraded by 2024.

- The EA were reviewing their public safety risk assessment for the Jubilee River, driven by recent fatalities that had taken place along the river.

Before starting her update, Natasha Gibbs, Hertfordshire North London Environment Agency (EA), informed that she was Brianne Vally's counterpart who covered Wraysbury and Horton areas of RBWM from the Colnbrook River side. She reported that:

- The maintenance and conveyance cuts within the Colnbrook River had been completed.
- The EA were following up some potential blockages and overgrowth near Copper Mill Road Bridge.
- Natasha Gibbs herself was working on some larger catchment scale modelling for the Lower Coln catchment (from the M4 to where the Coln River joined the River Thames). It was expected that an updated version of the modelling would be made available by around April 2024, thus updating the surveys on the flood risks in the area since the 2012 survey.
- The EA was in a period of automation for its flood alerts and flood warnings, whilst it was experiencing industrial action, which was the cause of some residents receiving false flood warnings in the Colnbrook and Lower Coln. There was an issue at the EA's Horton Mill telemetry site on the Colnbrook which was then resolved, reassuring that it was a one-off fault. The automation period was to take place until 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

## UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

David Harding, Thames Water, gave a general update. He stated that the fortunes of Thames Water were similar to the EA, whereby they were weather dependent. The only news from Thames Water was that it was preparing its BR24 Business Plan. Major investment was being submitted and there would be local consultations in due course. David Harding conveyed that there was not much to update.

The Chair asked if he was in regular contact with the Borough and other bodies when doing his projects. David Harding confirmed this, stating that he had regular communication with Ben Crampin, RBWM Flood Risk Manager. He added that whenever there was a significant project, the project team would do their own communications with all the local stakeholders.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked why Datchet was being ignored by Thames Water for many months on the clearing of Datchet Common Brook, particularly as the winter flooding season was approaching. He explained that the Borough has been clearing the siltation in the Barrel Arch system to allow capacity within the centre of Datchet. He then conveyed that the Datchet Recreational Ground ditch fed into the Barrel Arch system as well as directly linked to the Datchet Common Brook. From this, when floods took place, siltation flowed from Datchet Common Brook into the Recreational Ground ditch and Barrel Arch system.

On this basis, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson conveyed that he was unable to receive a response from Thames Water in regard to resolving these issues, asserting that this was being dealt with at cost of Datchet Parish Council and the Borough.

The Chair then asked David Harding what Parish Councillor Ian Thompson could do in regard to communication.

David Harding responded that he was aware of the issue, which was on one of Thames Water's reservoir sites, and that it was being dealt with by his predecessor. He stated that he tried to have conversations with his colleagues regarding this with little success. He suggested that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson email him the following day and pick it up from there. He added that it would likely be a conversation which would involve the EA because the issue was not a flooding mechanism that he had much knowledge on, nor did the officers who managed the reservoir site.

The Chair suggested to add this action for the next meeting.

**ACTION: Parish Councillor Ian Thompson and David Harding to communicate with each other on the flooding issues in Datchet.**

In regard to landowners in Eton Wick receiving financial contributions for weed clearance from Thames Water, Councillor D. Davies asked if this was something which David Harding was aware of and whether Thames Water would be able to meet this request in spite of their financial situation. David Harding replied that he had sent an email to the landowners earlier in the day that Thames Water had made a financial contribution and that it was an ongoing discussion about the extent in which stakeholders contribute financially.

Councillor D. Davies stated that this would involve a meeting with all the stakeholders and agree each one's financial contribution. He suggested that he could arrange this.

**ACTION: Councillor D. Davies to arrange a meeting with Thames Water and Eton Wick landowners and stakeholders in regard to the financial contribution to weed clearance.**

Laura Regazzacci asked about where the Pipeline Project stood in the list of priorities at Thames Water, stating that the project was supposed to be forwarded to Eton Wick for consultation but had never taken place. David Harding replied that nothing had been set in stone until the business plan was to be published. Nevertheless, he was still pushing the Thames Water Capital Delivery Team on the final decision, adding that he would continue to push this.

**ACTION: David Harding to forward an answer on the Pipeline Project at Eton Wick to Laura Regazzacci.**

The Chair then asked if there was any idea of the timeline for the project development plan. David Harding suggested that he could circulate the next milestone for the business plan.

**ACTION: David Harding to circulate the next milestone of Thames Water's business plan.**

## UPDATE FROM RBWM

Ben Crampin presented an update which covered an overview of the flood investigations in the last quarter, an update on some projects and work on Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

In the last quarter (August-October 2023), the weather had been much dryer with less rainfall; as a result, there had been a decrease in the number of Total Drainage Cases compared to the previous quarter. This, Ben Crampin stated, provided the Flood Team a chance to "catch [their] breath" for a brief period compared to the high number of cases earlier in the year. Some of the themes which were identified over the year relating to these cases included an increase of surface water highway flooding. As a result of this, there were many cases whereby highway systems were acting as catchments, whereby water would flow to a low point and then overwhelm the existing systems.

The RBWM Flood Team had been working closely with VolkerHighways in addressing the issues throughout 2023, such as blocked drainage systems and gullies. In addition, it was also identified that there were areas in which the system worked well but it was prone to collecting a lot of surface water from highways, which then posed a risk to property. From this, the RBWM Flood Team was ensuring that property floods were being recorded into a new Property Flood Database so that it could start bidding for money towards, for example, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) to investigate any scheme which could be implemented to reduce flood risks. The evidence being collected from these

investigations would allow the Flood Team to be able to determine the areas which required work and then to move onto some flood mitigation schemes.

Moving onto the DHEFIM short-term measures, starting with the Datchet Barrell Arch, Ben Crampin reported that the contractors notified him that most of the work had been completed, though he was waiting for the reporting from them to confirm the completion of the maintenance work before taking the next steps. He expected a report on the removal of siltation, including CCTV surveys of the system following the silt removal. The report would also identify any areas for other necessary remedial works or any structural issues, which would then be forwarded to the relevant stakeholders (e.g., National Highways, landowners etc.) or the Flood Team. Ben Crampin then offered to catch up with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the report once the former had reviewed the information.

**ACTION: Ben Crampin to catch-up with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the contractors' report on the Datchet Barrell Arch.**

On the Wraysbury Drain, Ben Crampin reported that he had investigated the issue, which included reviewing planning application to see if there was any recorded detail of the downstream areas to identify what enforcement (if any) was possible and appropriate. In addition, Ben Crampin conducted an on-site inspection where the Wraysbury and Horton drains split and towards Douglas Road Bridge and publicly accessible points at the Splash and Windsor Road. He discovered that there was water present in the Wraysbury Drain up to approximately Douglas Road (where the water levels started to decrease) but was dry.

The next steps were to understand what was in the watercourse along those points and interact with nearby residents to, for example, investigate private gardens. The Flood Team had been inhibited from conducting these next steps due to the rainfalls throughout 2023 and the Flood Team needing to do its statutory duty of investigating flooding issues.

Ben Crampin then moved onto the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) update, a major objective in 2024. He explained that the LFRMS was a statutory document which outlined how the Borough was going to manage local flood risk. As it was last updated/published in 2014, Ben Crampin was keen to give the Strategy a revamp to ensure it was in line with the relevant strategies, notably the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (last published in 2020), as well as bring it in line with the Borough's priorities.

Ben Crampin highlighted that the LFRMS would primarily focus on local flood risks, such as flooding from local water courses, surface water and groundwater flooding; and that there was no requirement for the Strategy to include flooding from the River Thames and fluvial flooding. While the LFRMS would not include management of fluvial flooding, it would nevertheless include some elements which would cross over between RBWM and the EA, such as cooperation with, for example, Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM) and other schemes.

Ben Crampin then outlined what the new Strategy would include:

- The objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009),
- The measures proposed to achieve those objectives,
- How and when the measures were expected to be implemented,
- The costs and benefits of those measures, and how they were to be paid for,
- The assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy,
- How and when the strategy was to be reviewed,
- How the strategy would contribute to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.

Ben Crampin added that the Flood Team would be working with internal Borough teams, its external partners (e.g., Environment Agency and Thames Water) as well as local communities and parish councils to receive their input.

Ben Crampin sought to have the LFRMS as a multi-agency document by including various Borough departments (i.e., other RBWM teams), stakeholders (e.g., Borough Councillors, community groups), organisations (i.e., the EA and Thames Water) and authorities (i.e., Parish Councils) as part of its creation. This was to ensure that the Strategy (and therefore flood mitigation in general) would encompass various individuals and organisations within the Borough rather than exclusively RBWM itself.

Ben Crampin informed that the Flood Team were planning to do some engagement with the parishes and communities in two stages. The first stage would confirm the flooding issues and flooding areas, which would likely be reviewed by a couple of 'drop-in sessions' with one possibly located in Windsor and another in Maidenhead. The second stage would have more targeted consultations, with roadshows across the Borough presenting the draft principles and draft objectives of the Strategy as well as receive feedback.

Ben Crampin then concluded his presentation with useful contact information:

- Threat to life – call **999**.
- Flooding to the highway, call RBWM Highways – **01628 683800**.
  - Sewers and foul water, call Thames Water – **0800 316 9800**.
  - Main river watercourse, call the Environment Agency – **0345 988 1188**.
- Non-urgent enquiries but flood related: [flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk)
- RBWM Out of Hours Emergency Duty – **01753 853517 (CCTV)**
- RBWM in hours Duty Emergency Planning Officer – **01635 503535**
- RBWM Emergency Planning email – [Emergency.Planning@RBWM.gov.uk](mailto:Emergency.Planning@RBWM.gov.uk)

Emily Merritt, Emergency Planning Officer, then gave some updates from the Emergency Planning Team. She informed that she had sent out invitations for the annual upcoming flood wardens meeting at the end of November 2023. She requested that she or Laurence Ellis be notified if any flood wardens had not received the invitation and that they then forward their details.

Emily Merritt then reported that there was a large multi-agency exercise was arranged by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum around flooding on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The aim of the exercise was to test the multi-agency flood plan and the emergency response arrangements. It also provided an opportunity to test internal adverse weather plans and adjourning flood and storm annexes. In line with this exercise, at the start of November 2023, RBWM were conducting an internal exercise which would test its internal arrangement, such as its emergency operation centre, how the Borough would be managed, and how this would feed into the multi-agency environment. As a result of this, any learning from the multi-agency and internal exercises would be fed into internal plans, which would be updated as necessary to improve responses to flooding incidents.

The Chair suggested that Emily Merritt should write to all the Parish Councils (particularly the clerks) who could then contact the flood wardens or forward their details of the flood wardens to ensure they were engaged. He suggested to write to the clerks of the parishes. Emily Merritt informed that the Emergency Planning Team had a database of the flood wardens which covered most (but likely not all) the parishes; but she nevertheless agreed to contact the Parish Councils in regard to the flood wardens.

**ACTION: Emily Merritt to contact the clerks of Parish Councils in regard to the flood wardens.**

Dick Scarff, Chair of the Cookham Society, asked Ben Crampin about the EA-published surface water flooding maps, namely the current situation with the maps and whether they

were modified by RBWM or were only the basic data in which the EA produced. Ben Crampin answered that it was likely the EA had produced the basic data. While RBWM was able to submit updates to the data set, it was not a standard practice, usually happening when maintenance works were done in an area and modelling was conducted as a result of this. If RBWM were to conduct some modelling for a specific area (in contrast to national modelling), they would submit this to the EA to incorporate this data. However, due to the costs, this was not a general practice.

Ben Crampin also added that the national modelling was being updated. Brianne Vally elaborated that the update would not only encompass surface water flooding but also river flooding where detailed modelling was not available. She believed that the data was probably 10-to-15 years old, with data for areas upstream of the catchments needing significant updating. Fortunately, Brianne Vally stated, the lower Thames was one of the most intensely modelled part of the country.

Brianne Vally then offered to provide an in-depth update on NaFRA2 (National Flood Risk Assessment). The Chair suggested this could be shared with Dick Scarff.

**ACTION: Brianne Vally to forward an update to Dick Scarff on NaFRA2 (National Flood Risk Assessment).**

Dick Scarff then asked about the progress on the plans for the surface water drainage in Cookham. Ben Crampin replied that a map had been prepared and he would forward this tomorrow.

**ACTION: Ben Crampin to forward the map for the surface water drainage in Cookham to Dick Scarff.**

Dick Scarff then asked about a report which was presented to the Flood Liaison Group about the flood management at Battlemead Common in January 2021. Ben Crampin replied that he was aware of the conversations, but it was mostly Jason Mills, Natural Environment Manager.

Councillor Larcombe commented that when he was on the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), he was sent to other meetings, representing Wokingham, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Hampshire, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead, and West Sussex. He then asked if Ben Crampin was going to meetings in which he or anyone was not invited to. Ben Crampin replied that the meetings had not taken place as far as he was aware. He stated that he been speaking with his main contact for Thames advisors from the Thames RFCC, Alistair Wilkinson; discussing with him on reinstate those meetings. He stated that he would ensure that Councillor Larcombe was included in those meetings.

**ACTION: Ben Crampin to ensure that Councillor Larcombe was included in the county partnership meetings.**

## UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Referring to the report he had earlier raised concerning flood management at Battlemead Common from January 2021, Dick Scarff conveyed that the paper suggested that Cookham would receive a hydrological management plan for Battlemead but nothing had been materialised yet. Ben Crampin requested for the report to be forwarded to him and he would then ask officers who were present at the time on the status of this.

**ACTION: Dick Scarff to forward the report on flood management at Battlemead Common to Ben Crampin, who would then investigate its status.**

The Chair requested for the presentations to be circulated to Flood Group members, to which Laurence Ellis confirmed he would do.

**ACTION: Meeting presentations to be circulated to attendees after every Flood Group meeting.**

The Chair commented that Stuart Mollard’s DHEFIM presentation did not cover the effect of transport links as part of the project background, stating that it was a key point to take into consideration when looking into the project. Brianne Vally replied that this had been picked up through various discussions and was being investigated as part of the Outline Business Case of the DHEFIM.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair requested for a pre-meeting a few weeks before the next scheduled Flood Group meeting (23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024) with himself, Councillor D. Davies as Vice-Chair, and the Flood Group officers, to keep a check on the arising matters. Ben Crampin confirmed that he was happy to have these pre-meetings be organised. Laurence Ellis added that having pre-meetings were possible, though added that it was up to the availability and commitment of the interested parties. The Chair, Vice-Chair and the officers confirmed their commitment.

**ACTION: Pre-meetings with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Flood Group officers to take place before each scheduled Flood Liaison Group meeting.**

The meeting, which began at 6.01 pm, finished at 7.33 pm

Chair.....

Date.....