

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

Tuesday 23 January 2024

**Present (virtually):** Councillors David Buckley (Chair), Devon Davies (Vice-Chair), Ewan Larcombe, and Richard Coe; Parish Councillors Ian Thompson (Datchet PC), Riccardo Ludovici (Eton Town Council), Andrew Spillane (Wraysbury PC), Malcolm Beer (Old Windsor PC), Anna-Louise Regan (Cookham PC), Louvaine Kneen (Bray PC) and David Burfitt (Hurley PC)

**Also in attendance (virtually):** Stuart Mollard, Brianne Vally, Natasha Gibbs, Joe Cuthbertson, David Harding, Bob Austen, Claire Taylor, Laura Regazzacci, Dick Scarff, Liam Bulson, Mike Williams, Jim Cooke, Liam Bulson, Councillors Mark Howard and Mandy Brar

**Officers (virtually):** Laurence Ellis, Ben Crampin, Emily Merritt and Chris Joyce

### Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Councillor Buckley, welcomed everyone to meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

The Chair requested for a review of the list of attendees, to which Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer (clerk), responded that he would investigate.

**ACTION: Laurence Ellis to review the email and attendee list for Flood Liaison Group.**

Apologies for absence were received from Duncan Parker.

### Minutes

Councillor Larcombe raised that an action in the minutes from the previous meeting inaccurately stated Ben Crampin was to “ensure that Councillor Larcombe was included in Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) meetings,” stating that he was already a member of the RFCC, and that this discussion was in reference to the county partnership meetings. He also highlighted that this action had been left off the action list.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were a true and accurate record providing the amendments were made.**

### Actions Arising From Previous Minutes

-	<u>ACTIONS</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>
1	<b>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.</b>	Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen informed that she provided some photographs of the drain cover to Ben Crampin and David Harding in November 2023, stating that it did not have ‘Colt Telecoms’ labelled on it as previous thought. She speculated that there may have been some misunderstanding on which drain cover she was referring to that needed to be

		<p>sealed as the drain in reference had 'Thames Water' labelled on it.</p> <p>Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen added that the issue was that sewage poured out of the drain when there was a high level of water.</p> <p>Agreeing that there may have been a misunderstanding, David Harding suggested to arrange a joint site visit. Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen agreed to the suggestion.</p>
2	<p><b>Thames Water to update Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on Thames Water's response to the Datchet Common Brook.</b></p>	<p>David Harding believed that he had shared some details of a colleague from Thames Water who managed the reservoir to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson after the last meeting in October 2023. He believed that the next step was for Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to then contact this colleague.</p> <p>Parish Councillor Ian Thompson informed that a meeting had taken place with the aforementioned colleague, James Townsend. From this meeting, the objective was for James Townsend to forward the proposals relevant to clearing the Datchet Common Brook and the discussion regarding the Flap Valve. However, he stated that he had not received any response in regard to his proposals.</p> <p>David Harding said that he would chase this up with James Townsend, with the Chair recommending that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson chase this up as well.</p> <p>When asked by the Chair on whether there would be any issue with him overseeing this, Ben Crampin replied that he could be brought in if it continued to fail as the Borough could help facilitate this. Ben Crampin also recommended that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson keep him posted regarding this.</p>
3	<p><b>A further update on weed clearance around Eton Wick in the next meeting agenda in January 2024.</b></p>	<p>Brianne Vally reported that Jeanette Wooster, the catchment co-ordinator for the area, had taken the lead in coordinating EA's internal response. She stated that Jeanette Wooster attended a meeting in December 2023 which covered weed clearance on some fencing during closed fishing season. In addition, a Lower Thames Catchment Partnership meeting (which many EA officers were planning to attend) was scheduled on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 focusing on issues related to Eton Wick with a site visit by the EA alongside this.</p>
4	<p><b>A further meeting between EA officers, Laura Regazzacci and relevant Councillors on weed clearance and flooding issues at Eton Wick.</b></p>	<p>Laura Regazzacci stated that the next focus would be the Lower Thames Catchment Partnership meeting. She informed that Eton Wicks Waterways Group (EWWG) had a meeting with the various</p>

		<p>landowners on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 to plan the next season of weed clearance.</p> <p>The Chair suggested to carry this action over to the next meeting.</p>
5	<b>Ben Crampin to relay to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the funding for flood defences in the Borough in the last 4 years.</b>	Ben Crampin had not had the chance to forward the information. He suggested that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson email him the next day to clarify what information he wanted in which he would then collate.
6	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Ben Crampin informed that this action was related to street drainage rather than necessarily to the recent flooding in January 2024. He had an on-site meeting with Councillors Brar and Howard before Christmas 2023 to discuss the issues and to inform them on where this was placed on the priority list of the Highway Drainage Capital spending. He added that he would keep them updated on any developments.</p> <p>Councillor Howard confirmed that the meeting had taken place with the aforementioned issues being discussed. However, he requested for the issue surrounding Burchetts Green Road to be brought back with the added speculation that a collapsed drain was prohibiting the flow of water.</p> <p>Ben Crampin confirmed that the issue at Burchetts Green Road was recorded on the priority list and believed that he understood the cause of the issue, though a response would take place once the spending capacity was available.</p> <p>The Chair suggested to carry this action over to the next meeting in April 2024 as there could be more developments over the next few months. Councillor Howard agreed, stating that he had some items which he had in communication with Ben Crampin.</p> <p>In regard to flooding at Cookham High Street, particularly a drain outside the Forge Motor Company, Parish Councillor Anna-Louise Regan raised that the pavements were being redone around the turn of the financial year (circa. April/May 2024) and hoped that there was some sort of coordination whereby the area was visited at the same time.</p> <p>Ben Crampin noted this and would ensure that it was coordinated, adding that Cookham High Street was an issue he had been investigating with VolkerHighways.</p>
7	<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>Ben Crampin and Claire Taylor were supposed to meet up in the previous week to discuss the issue, but this had been postponed due to the responsive work around the recent flooding across the Borough in early-January 2024.</p> <p>Ben Crampin suggested to Claire Taylor to reschedule this meeting in the current week.</p>
8	<b>Ben Crampin and Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to arrange a conversation on the relevant flooding issues in</b>	While Ben Crampin and Parish Councillor Ian Thompson had met a few times to discuss some issues, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson conveyed that there were still some serious flooding issues in

	<b>Datchet.</b>	Datchet to discuss and that another meeting was required.  Ben Crampin suggested to message him to arrange a meeting.
9	<b>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.</b>	Brianne Vally informed that this discussion would be carried over in the Lower Thames Catchment Partnership meeting on 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024.  However, Councillor Devon Davies reported that a fence may no longer be necessary as the landowners at the meeting on 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024 conveyed that they no longer wanted it.  The Chair suggested to carry this action over to the next meeting.
10	<b>A meeting between EA officers, Ben Crampin and Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury Councillors on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures</b>	COMPLETED – A meeting was held on 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2023.  Ben Crampin added that he did not attend this meeting due to being unwell at the time. Nevertheless, he confirmed a meeting occurred with James Thorpe (from RBWM), Brianne Vally and Stuart Mollard (both from the EA). The Chair confirmed that he himself and Councillors Larcombe and Grove alongside Councillor Coe were in attendance as well.  Brianne Vally added that Richard Hancock stood in for herself at this meeting due to being unavailable.
11	<b>Brianne Vally to forward the contact details of the relevant officers for the River Thames Scheme to Councillors Larcombe and Ian Thompson.</b>	COMPELTED – An email was sent on 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 with the email address for the River Thames Scheme having recently changed: <a href="mailto:enquiries@riverthamescheme.org.uk">enquiries@riverthamescheme.org.uk</a> -
12	<b>Brianne Vally to forward the relevant details on the ownership and maintenance of bridges around the Jubilee River to Councillor Larcombe.</b>	COMPLETED – An email was sent on 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023.
13	<b>Councillor Coe to ask about the financial details concerning flood defence in the Borough.</b>	COMPLETED – Councillor Coe reported that the situation had not changed to a large extent. The public figure of £10 million, which was promised by the previous RBWM administration after they pulled out of the River Thames Scheme, did not exist as a pot of money. It was a political pledge made by the previous administration which was reasserted by himself and Councillor Werner (Council Leader) at a Cabinet meeting.
14	<b>Parish Councillor Mandy Brar to email her queries about</b>	Brianne Vally shared some information in an email with Parish Councillor Mandy Brar on 7 <sup>th</sup> November

	<b>Micro-Hydro scheme on the River Thames to Brianne Vally, who would then forward them to the relevant EA staff.</b>	<p>2023, but did not receive a response on her specific enquiries.</p> <p>Parish Councillor Mandy Brar said that she would pick this up again.</p>
15	<b>Parish Councillor Ian Thompson and David Harding to communicate with each other on the flooding issues in Datchet.</b>	<p>Parish Councillor Ian Thompson reported that this discussion had taken place with James Townsend (as previously mentioned); but raised that there were still serious issues with flooding defences in Datchet.</p> <p>David Harding suggested that Parish Councillor Ian Thompson contact him to move this action point forward.</p> <p>Parish Councillor Ian Thompson stated that he had already contacted David Harding and that the matter was moved to James Townsend, hence why he had a meeting with the latter rather than the former on the proposals to the flooding issues in Datchet. He then suggested that David Harding communicate with James Townsend to relay the information to him.</p>
16	<b>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.</b>	<p>Councillor D. Davies informed that Councillor Wilson had communicated with David Harding in regard to financial contributions from landowners. David Harding confirmed this update.</p> <p>Laura Regazzacci believed that there would be further requests from landowners. She elaborated that actual cost of weed clearance along Roundmoor Ditch and Boveney stream was far greater than the suggested amount because it required two cuts: one in the early part of the year and another in early-September. At the moment, she explained, the EWWG, with the help of landowners, were searching for better quotations. After this was to be completed, the landowners would approach Thames Water.</p> <p>From this, Laura Regazzacci believed that this action was incomplete.</p>
17	<b>David Harding to forward an answer on the Pipeline Project at Eton Wick to Laura Regazzacci.</b>	<p>David Harding believed that there was some communication between Brianne Vally and Richard Dean, followed by Brianne Vally informing that Thames Water were progressing a solution for Slough sewage treatment works that involved continuing to discharge at the current locations.</p> <p>Laura Regazzacci informed that she had not heard anything about a new financial plan from Thames Water. She conveyed that she wanted to know if the case for installing a pipeline at Eton Wick was part of the programme, or whether it could be; and if so, in what context. She added that this pipeline project</p>

		<p>was nearly going to go ahead with much preparation, and that this project was a solution to the constant flooding in the summer. Being an issue high on EWWG's agenda, Laura Regazzacci expected a constructive response.</p> <p>When asked by the Chair on whether the pipeline project was an active project, David Harding replied that it was currently not part of the capital programme.</p>
18	<p><b>David Harding to circulate the next milestone of Thames Water's business plan.</b></p>	<p>David Harding reported that there was no update on any local scheme. With the next milestone, an initial business plan was submitted with the response pending, though he confessed that he was unaware of what the next milestone was.</p> <p>As suggested by the Chair, David Harding said he would search for the next milestone and potentially present this later on in the meeting during 'Item 5 – Update from Thames Water'.</p>
19	<p><b>Ben Crampin to catch-up with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the contractors' report on the Datchet Barrell Arch.</b></p>	<p>Ben Crampin had not forwarded this yet. He stated that he had been going through the details received by RBWM Flood Team and had been trying to get clarification on finalising the works before sending it through.</p> <p>Ben Crampin suggested that he would bring the details he received so far to their meeting in the near future.</p>
20	<p><b>Emily Merritt to contact the clerks of Parish Councils in regard to the flood wardens.</b></p>	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Councillor Howard stated that he had not received anything on this and that Cookham's flood warden was not involved in communication in regard to recent flooding. He then requested for the email to be resent.</p> <p>Emily Merritt informed that she sent the email in November 2023 to all parish councils based on the emails in the system. She added that if any email addresses in the internal system were incorrect, then they would need to be updated.</p> <p>Emily Merritt suggested that she could resend the email to all parish councils. Councillor Howard said it only needed to be resent to Cookham Parish Council rather than all parish councils, reiterating that the email was never seen at Cookham Parish Council.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that this could be linked with Laurence Ellis reviewing the email list.</p> <p>Parish Councillors Mandy Brar and Andrew Spillane conveyed that some changes had been made at their Parish Councils; and thus asserted the need to ensure the email list was updated. Parish Councillors Andrew Spillane then highlighted that the names in the flood plan needed to be updated.</p> <p>When asked by the Chair on who would be responsible for this, Ben Crampin advised that it would be the Emergency Planning Team and suggested to Emily Merritt to share the Emergency Planning inbox, in which she shared in the Zoom inbox.</p>

21	<b>Brianne Vally to forward an update to Dick Scarff on NaFRA2 (National Flood Risk Assessment).</b>	COMPLETED – Brianne Vally email was sent on 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023. She also offered to present more details at a subsequent meeting if people were still interested to find out more.
22	<b>Ben Crampin to forward the map for the surface water drainage in Cookham to Dick Scarff.</b>	COMPLETED – Ben Crampin had forwarded the map.  However, Dick Scarff requested for more information on surface water drainage in Cookham. Ben Crampin then suggested to pick this up after the meeting.
23	<b>Ben Crampin to ensure that Councillor Larcombe was included in the county partnership meetings.</b>	After reiterating the incorrect wording of the action, Councillor Larcombe explained that these were partnership meetings in which he represented Berkshire, North Hampshire and West Sussex. He added that these meetings had not taken place since May 2023.  Ben Crampin confirmed that these county partnership meetings had not been taking place for a while. Since the last Flood Group meeting in October 2023, he had been working to revitalise these meetings, elaborating that officers had an initial meeting before Christmas 2023 to get this restarted. He also had a meeting later in the week to discuss a potential terms of reference. From there, elected councillors would be brought together to finalise the agreement.  Ben Crampin added that he would ensure that Councillor Larcombe was included in this briefing and also have a meeting with him and Councillor Coe to get these meetings up and running.
24	<b>Dick Scarff to forward the report on flood management at Battlemead Common to Ben Crampin, who would then investigate its status.</b>	Dick Scarff had forwarded the report, adding that he was waiting for Ben Crampin and Jason Mills to respond.
25	<b>Meeting presentations to be circulated to attendees after every Flood Group meeting.</b>	COMPLETED – Meeting presentations had been circulated to Flood Group members and will continue to do so after every meeting.
26	<b>Pre-meetings with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Flood Group officers to take place before each scheduled Flood Liaison Group meeting.</b>	COMPLETED – A pre-meeting between the Flood Group Chair, Vice-Chair and officers had taken place on Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2024.  The Chair summarised that his main focus was to make Flood Liaison Group meetings more productive wherein it could feed into the Council, possibly through to the Place Overview and Scrutiny panel, as well as review the terms of reference.

*(Parish Councillor Mandy Brar joined the meeting at 6:18pm)*

**ACTION: Laurence Ellis to review the terms of reference for Flood Liaison Group to investigate on how the meeting could be more effective, such as feeding into the Place Overview and Scrutiny panel.**

Outstanding actions:

1. **David Harding to circulate the next milestone of Thames Water's business plan.**
2. **Ben Crampin to ensure that:**
  - **Councillors Larcombe and Coe were part of the briefings to revitalise the county partnership meetings.**
  - **Councillor Larcombe was included in the revitalised county partnership meetings.**

Datchet Parish:

3. **David Harding and Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to chase up James Townsend on:**
  - **Thames Water's response to the Datchet Common Brook and Flap Valve, with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson keeping Ben Crampin updated on the progress.**
  - **Flooding issues in Datchet being relayed to James Townsend.**
4. **Ben Crampin to liaise with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on:**
  - **The funding for flood defences in the Borough in the last 4 years.**
  - **The contractors' report on the Datchet Barrell Arch.**
  - **Arranging a conversation on the relevant flooding issues in Datchet.**

Bray Parish:

5. **Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen and David Harding to arrange a joint site visit to the drain cover near the Jolly Gardener pub in Bray.**

Eton Wick:

6. **Progress on weed clearance at Eton Wick, including:**
  - **Update on the Lower Thames Catchment Partnership meeting on 29th February 2024.**
  - **The fencing at Dorney Common, namely whether there was any preference for the installation of one from the landowners.**
  - **Further update on the financial contributions for weed clearance at Eton Wick from landowners.**
7. **Ben Crampin to inform Claire Taylor on the flooding issues at Moore's Lane, Eton Wick, and the section of the Roundmoor.**
8. **David Harding to forward an answer on the Pipeline Project at Eton Wick to Laura Regazzacci.**

Cookham Parish

9. **Flooding issues at Burchetts Green Road and Cookham High Street:**
  - **Ben Crampin to update on any developments at Burchetts Green Road and Cookham High Street, including a response to the drain at Burchetts Green.**
  - **A coordinated visit to Cookham High Street, in particular a drain outside the Forge Motor Company.**
10. **Parish Councillor Mandy Brar to email her queries about the Micro-Hydro scheme on the River Thames to Brianne Vally, based on Brianne Vally's previous email, who would then forward them to the relevant EA staff.**
11. **Emily Merritt to resend the email to Cookham Parish Council on the flood wardens and update the names in the flood plan.**

- 12. Ben Crampin and Dick Scarff to liaise on further information regarding surface water drainage in Cookham.**
- 13. Ben Crampin and Jason Mills to investigate and respond to the report at Battlemead Common.**

### Update from the Environment Agency

Stuart Mollard, Project Manager for the DHEFIM (EA), presented an update on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM). He informed that the DHEFIM was in its Appraisal Stage (January to June 2024), which was split into four key elements, encompassing the next couple of years. The Project Definition (Summer to Autumn 2023) had been completed and the Environment Agency (EA) was in the Optioneering Stage (Autumn 2023 to Spring 2024).

Stuart Mollard also provided the project's progress in the last three months:

- Project objectives had been updated and the study area had been confirmed,
- Public engagement events took place in Wraysbury and Datchet in November 2023.
- Some potential funding partners had been identified who may be potential beneficiaries to the scheme. This would also be linked to the developing engagement plan.
- Some technical work had also taken place in the last three to six months, which then fed into the Appraisal Stage. These included:
  - Groundwater and surface water flood risk.
  - Desk studies on geo-technical and geo-environmental aspects.
  - Examined the scheme within the context of land use planning,
  - Examined aquifer recharge feasibility,
- Developed some additional ground investigation proposals, namely investigate what information was available from previous investigations in the area and identifying some gaps.
- Continued discussion to ensure that EA flood modelling was proportionate and adequate for what it was being used for.

The intended end result of the Appraisal Stage was to create a draft short list of options which would then be shared. At the moment, the EA had a long list of potential measures which they would filter out the non-feasible measures. The filtered list would then be subjected to a detailed assessment and modelling whereby each optional measure would be assessed against the project objectives and the criteria of fitting within a capital expenditure program. The end result would be a shortlist of potential optional measures.

Once the shortlist was near completion, the EA would engage with stakeholder groups and local communities by sharing the proposals and then acquire feedback from them before finalising a list of potential measures before forwarding this list.

In regard to the work surrounding the stakeholder engagement, Stuart Mollard informed that it was important to keep the public informed as well as consulted and involved throughout the process, which was the reasoning behind the public engagement events in Wraysbury and Datchet in November 2023. Alongside these public events, a [new project website](#) was created which provided material and updates of the key stages.

Stuart Mollard also informed that the EA would conduct a major consultation exercise in the summer of 2023 on the shortlist of potential measures in which it would then be finalised based on the feedback. Another consultation on the list of preferred optional measures would take place in summer 2025.

Stuart Mollard then announced that he sought to set up a group whereby the EA could liaise with the local community, under the working title of 'Community Liaison Group'. After asking volunteers on whether they would like to become part of this group, 10 people had replied that they would be interested. As such, the EA would send invites out in the next few days. The

first meeting was planned to be held in mid-February 2024 in Windsor. He explained that the purpose of this was to promote a two-way discussion group, allowing people to provide feedback and get involved. He offered to elaborate further of this group at the next Flood Liaison Group meeting as well as share details with anybody who was interested in being part of it.

Brianne Vally, Flood Risk Advisor for RBWM (EA), then gave a brief report on the DHEFIM and the recent flooding in January 2024. She explained that as part of the DHEFIM, the EA continued to work with its partners to understand the flood mechanisms in the affected area and information would continue to emerge over the coming weeks. The EA would then review the gathered available data linked to the January 2024 flooding event to ensure that it adequately understood, respond, and recover from a similar flooding event. Brianne Vally also highlighted that while the EA were determined to reduce the risk of flooding, it was not possible to protect against every eventuality.

Stuart Mollard added that the aim was to make use of the available data around what was flooded, where it was flood and why it was flooded, which would then help the EA further understand the ground conditions and the inter-relationships between the river water, water on the flood plains, groundwater and what happens when flood events took place.

Before starting her presentation, Brianne Vally conveyed her appreciation to community members and some Flood Group attendees for meeting with the EA's Community Information Officers as well as forwarded sympathies to those affected by the recent flooding event.

Brianne Vally then gave an overview of the flooding event in January 2024. Starting with the current situation, she informed that the Thames Catchment had received 72% of the average monthly rainfall with the catchment still saturated. River levels had dropped but nevertheless remained high with tributary rivers likely to react with further rainfall. Therefore, Thames River levels were likely to remain high, particularly if more rainfalls occur. As of the meeting, there were no flood warnings in the Borough and the groundwater alert in the eastern part of the Maidenhead area was no longer in force due to declining water levels.

Brianne Vally then explained the timeline of the flooding event across the Thames Valley in January 2024:

- The Borough received a number of storms from late-September 2023 to early-January 2024 which then caused the ground to become saturated.
- Flooding began in January 2024 with rain falling on already saturated ground. The EA received word on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 that there was intense rainfall in many places whereby tributary rivers had higher river-levels and consequently caused the Thames river-levels to rise. As a result, a number of communities were affected. With continuous rainfall being received, the River Thames water levels continued to rise for several days.
- Groundwater increased in some locations with the EA still doing operational response work to protect properties in West Berkshire and Great Shefford.
- Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 73 flood warnings and many more flood alerts were issued.
- An initial review of the January 2024 flooding had revealed that the flood levels from the recent flooding were similar to the flooding in January 2004 and slightly below the February 2014 flooding event.
- As with other parts of Thames Valley, some communities within the Borough were significantly impacted, particularly Cookham and Wraysbury, but also some affected properties in Bisham, Old Windsor, Windsor, Maidenhead, Datchet, Bray, Hurley, White Waltham, and Waltham St Lawrence. The EA continued to work with the Borough to collect this data.
- So far, data revealed that 150 properties across the Borough had been affected, including 59 internal property flooding.

- The EA continued to work with its professional partners to understand the flood mechanisms in the affected area and information would continue to emerge over the coming weeks.

Brianne Vally then gave an overview of the EA's response to the flooding:

- Monitored groundwater conditions, where data was available, and fluvial catchments.
- Issued flood warning where appropriate to warn and inform communities.
- Both in advance and during the flooding event, EA operations staff cleared assets, rivers and streams, where appropriate and safe to do so to enable the free flow of water.
- Deployed Community Information Officers in affected areas.
- Supported Local Resilience Forum activities at Strategic and Tactical level across Thames Valley and at the Tactical level in Surrey.

The EA also continued to operate and clear its assets:

- Thames weirs were fully drawn, allowing the river to act in a natural state.
- Operated EA assets along the Lower Colne and Colne Brook according to its operating procedures
- Began operating the Windsor, Maidenhead and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme, which included the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel early-January 2024. As part of this, the EA had made regular gate movements in line with its operating procedures as the levels increased.
- Closed the Cookham flood gates on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and operated pumps at Cookham and Myrke Ditch.
- By 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the EA had made the maximum gate movements possible, and the Jubilee Flood Relief channel was running at full capacity. At this point, the EA put out a flood warning for the Windsor and Maidenhead area and informed the local MP.

Brianne Vally then explained the EA transition from response to recovery:

- 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – stopped pumping at Myrke Ditch.
- 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – stopped all pumping operations at Cookham.
- 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – made the last gate operation and returned the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel to normal operation (10 cubic metre per second). In addition, all pumps at Cookham/Mryke Ditch were returned to depots. Footpaths and Marsh Lane car park were re-opened.

Aware of some concerns relating to the impact of the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel affecting communities downstream, Brianne Vally reassured that the EA sought to ensure that flood responsive measures did not move flood risk from one community to another. She added that the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel was part of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme (MWEFAS) which reduced the risk of flooding to approximately 3,000 properties in Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton. In addition, the EA operated the weir gates at Taplow to control the amount of water being diverted into the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel. Essentially, the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel ensured that communities downstream were not adversely impacted by flooding.

Brianne Vally also informed that an independent Mechanism of Flooding Report mentioned that “the primary impact of MWEFAS [was] to advance the timing of the flood peak by 5-6 hours in the reach down to Old Windsor, reducing to 2-4hrs below Staines.”

In terms of the EA's upcoming activities, Brianne Vally informed that the EA were:

- Carrying out an internal debrief to reflect on what went well, what did not go well, and any recommendations for improvement.
- Supporting the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum multi-agency debrief and the Borough's section 19 report, where appropriate.

- Establishing its recovery command and control structure, which would include restoring EA staff, systems and assets as quickly and efficiently as possible, where appropriate ready for future incidents.

Brianne Vally reassured that the EA would continue to work with the Borough to mitigate local flood risk across the EA's area boundaries in parallel with flood-protection plans in Surrey and south-west London.

Brianne Vally concluded her update by encouraging any residents to report on the impact of flooding to the Borough to gather data as part of investigations into the flooding incident. She also highlighted that this could also be reported to the EA through the hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Councillor Coe asked a couple of queries. He first asked for confirmation that there was no gate movement on the Jubilee River at nighttime; to which Brianne Vally confirmed, elaborating that there was no gate movement between 10:00pm and 7:00am mostly due to operational health and safety reasons.

Councillor Coe then asked about how the standing operating procedures of the Jubilee River was established, namely what was the input of numbers and modelling when it was first set up. Brianne Vally explained that a public inquiry into the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme (MWEFAS) started in 1992, which was then finalised in 2002. From there, some operating procedures which were put in place at the time had evolved since then; though, in spite of this, the operating principles were kept in line with the review of the flooding event in 2003. She added that the EA were working to update some of the information in the public domain in regard to the operation of MWEFAS and suggested that Councillor Coe could be a 'sounding board' on whether the updated information on the Gov.uk website answered some of his queries.

Regarding the speed of water being let through into the Jubilee River, Councillor Coe then asked whether the EA allowed water to flow through at an earlier stage during a flooding event or managed the water flow at a slower pace from the same start point. Joe Cuthbertson, Local Flood Risk Manager (EA), replied that the main changes which were made after reviews of the flooding events in 2003 and 2014 included changes to trigger levels at various points across the Jubilee River. In terms of changes to operating models, originally the EA operated at 20 cubic metres per second at a time; this had been reduced to smaller increments, whereby gate movements were enacted to allow an additional 10 cubic metres of water at a time. Essentially, the EA would start managing Jubilee River flow at its base flow and then increase in units of 10 cubic metres as the river flowed.

Councillor Coe then asked whether operating procedures would start earlier due to the smaller increments. While needing confirmation from technical leads to give an accurate answer, Joe Cuthbertson believed that operating procedures required a more frequent operation rather than an earlier one throughout a flooding event. During the height of the recent flooding event, the EA were operating three-to-four times a day.

Councillor Howard highlighted that there was much ignorance around what was happening with the Jubilee River, namely how it was being used and its impact; stating that many social media users were alleging that the EA were not managing the flooding. He suggested that EA personnel attended public meetings to inform people on how the Jubilee River worked, arguing that it would remove confusion as well as improve the EA's reputation of engaging with communities and reassuring them that the EA was in control.

The Chair conveyed that effective flood information needed to be publicised so that residents were more aware and prepared for it, pointing out that some major infrastructural flood defences would not be implemented until 2033-35 and that more flooding events were likely to take place until then. Hence, he explained, he sought to improve the feeding of information through the Flood Group. He suggested that Brianne Vally forward the operating procedures

of the Jubilee River to Councillor Coe, which could then be shared by other Flood Group members. He also suggested to bring back Councillor Howard's item to the next Flood Group meeting.

**ACTIONS:**

- **Brianne Vally to forward the Jubilee Flood Relief Channel operating procedures to Councillor Coe, and potentially share this with the wider Flood Group.**
- **Public awareness on how the Jubilee River was managed to be discussed at the next Flood Group meeting.**

Councillor Coe highlighted to the EA that there was a general impression amongst some of the public that the Jubilee River delivered more water faster to Datchet which then led to other areas being flooded. He suggested that this may require an explanation and be rectified if there was an issue.

Parish Councillor Andrew Spillane (Wraysbury PC) raised that communication from the EA was different during the recent flooding event compared to 2014, namely what the peaks would be and the timings of these peaks. He requested to have better understanding of why the EA's communication was different.

Parish Councillor David Burfitt (Hurley PC) highlighted that there was a sudden surge of water over a 6-hour period in Hurley, and then asked what caused this sudden surge. Brianne Vally responded that it was likely caused by the tributary rivers feeding into the River Thames and thus causing the river level to rise as a result. She offered to forward flood hydrographs on the water curve. She added that the increase in river levels at Marlow as well as off the Jubilee Flood Relief channels had similar, particularly at a considerable amount due to the recent intensive rainfall.

Joe Cuthbertson said that a few residents had remarked about river levels surging and added that it would be helpful for the EA to receive feedback on where flooding took place, how quickly it took place and to what depth. He reminded attendees that flooding events were always different whereby Thames flooding was influenced by which tributary catchments received heavy rainfall and when. For the flooding event of January 2024, the catchment became saturated after the wettest 6-month period in southeast England from July to December 2023, according to the Home Office, which was then followed by a widespread, heavy rainfall on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024. These factors would have caused a rapid rise in river levels; nevertheless, the EA would review all the data of the flooding and then compare and contrast this with previous flooding events.

Mike Williams, Wraysbury Flood Team, attempted to raise a couple of points but poor internet connection meant he could not be heard. The Chair suggested to add his points to the Zoom chat or email them.

Update from Thames Water

David Harding, Customer and Stakeholder Manager for Home Counties (Thames Water), briefly explained the flooding event of January 2024 from the perspective of Thames Water, stating that Thames Water experienced the same conditions described by the EA.

David Harding reported that the flooding event affected sewage assets in some communities, particularly in Wraysbury. Alongside private drainage which used gravity, the public sewage systems in many of these areas consisted of 'vacuum sewage systems', which used chambers and sealed pipes to dispose of human waste through suction. This was partly because the area had a flat topography (where sewage would not gravitate easily) as well as generally having elevated below ground water as a result of saturated river gravels. He stated that he received reports from residents from the Wraysbury area that sewage was leaking out into the flood waters, and then conveyed that as they these sewage systems were below

ground, they would be affected if the ground was underwater whereby sewage waste would likely mix in with flood water.

David Harding then informed that Thames Water deployed 340 tankers during the flooding event to vacuum sewage areas across the catchment to pump out the collection chambers to maintain sewage system; however, this was unable to occur in areas with high flood depths as either the tankers would create little difference or were inaccessible.

Thames Water received feedback from the EA and RBWM that there were a lot of reports of issues, and thus would liaise with them on prioritising and coordinating clean ups.

Regarding an earlier question on the Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) price determination, David Harding informed that they would issue a draft determination in May/June 2024, which would then be reviewed by Thames Water. From there, Ofwat would issue a final determination in December 2024.

Parish Councillor Mandy Brar (Cookham PC) asked what happened to Thames Water's pumping station in Lightlands Lane, Cookham during the recent flooding event despite being sent warnings 8 years prior, stating it was not safe and that it would build up again. She also highlighted that some residents still had sewage in their gardens which had not been cleared up. David Harding replied that he was not part of the conversations from 8 years ago; nevertheless, he informed that Thames Water operatives did not visit the pumping station until flood waters receded because there was an SSE sub-station nearby which was flooded as well, and therefore did not visit due to concerns of high voltage of electricity being mixed with water.

Regarding sewage in resident gardens, David Harding asked whether this was caused by a spilt sewage system or due to properties being under contaminated flood water. Parish Councillor Mandy Brar replied that it came from the Thames Water pumping station, whereby it packed up and spilled over sewage water into resident gardens as far across the road.

The Chair suggested to arrange a meeting of all flood agencies (EA, Thames Water etc.) with the Parish Councils to discuss local flooding issues, similarly to one being held at Wraysbury Parish Council on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024. He offered to help out if necessary.

**ACTION: A meeting between the Parish Councils and flood agencies (EA, Thames Water and RBWM) to discuss local flooding issues, with the Chair helping out if necessary.**

Councillor Howard requested for the contact details of the officers from the flood agencies. The Chair then asked if Chris Joyce, Assistant Director of Placemaking Partnerships and Sustainability, could come back on this. The latter responded that this could be picked up offline, whereby he would provide the contact details of the various organisation and facilitate this.

Parish Councillor David Burfitt asked about the status of the Hurley pumping station, stating that trucks had been regularly pumping sewage. David Harding speculated that the Hurley pumping station was still affected by the high ground water levels and the catchment draining down where it would then enter sewage systems. Parish Councillor David Burfitt then stated that it may be more serious, stating that he heard a rumour that the recently installed pumps were being affected by diesel in the water. David Harding responded that he was unaware of this and that this would be a pollution incident which was separate to the flooding. Parish Councillor David Burfitt requested for this to be investigated, specifying the location as the pumping station at Shepard's Lane, Hurley.

The Chair asked for clarification on whether sewage drain in a resident's garden spilling over into their garden and contaminated flood water flowing into their garden classified as issues for Thames Water. David Harding replied that Thames Water would clear up sewage

contamination in their garden regardless of how it got there with priority being given to residents who had sewage flooding inside their property. He added that a river, like River Thames, spilling over its riverbanks and covering large areas of land with water would wash up various deposits like silt, litter, sediments, debris and sewage, which would then be left scattered after the water had drained away. As such, David Harding stated that Thames Water would not be able to clear up every mess on hectares of affected land. Nevertheless, he reassured Thames Water would endeavour to clear-up where possible.

### Update from RBWM

Ben Crampin, RBWM Principal Flood Risk Manager, and Emily Merritt, Emergency Planning Officer, both presented an update from RBWM: the latter focused on the flooding response from RBWM while the former focused on the recovery stage.

Emily Merritt first explained the timeline of the flooding response from Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) and RBWM's internal response:

- **2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024:** TVLRF activated a partner activation teleconference (PAT) for the likely impact of Storm Henk.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024:** RBWM held its first flood coordination meeting in preparation of Storm Henk and forecasted rainfall.
- **5<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** TVLRF activated a tactical coordinating group (TCG) and a strategic coordinating group (SCG). Following from updates from the TCG and SCG as well as the north Thames Valley catchment in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire being impacted by the storm, RBWM enacted their virtual Flood Coordination Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to support the response.
- **From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 onwards:** TVLRF were holding twice daily TCG and SCG meetings and a major incident was declared for Thames Valley due to impact being seen across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. RBWM continued to hold virtual internal coordination meetings over the weekend to support the response which involved some critical decisions.
- The Cookham Causeway Plan on standby on **6<sup>th</sup> January** and then activated on **7<sup>th</sup> January 2024**. An overnight virtual EOC meeting took place during the night of **6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024** to manage flood warnings.
- **8<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** An in-person EOC meeting as well as several other multi-agency meetings were held concerning the flooding impact in Wraysbury and Old Windsor. Later on, Emergency Services were invited to join the EOC to form a Tactical Coordination Centre (TCC). At night, a multi-agency tactical coordinating group developed evacuation plans for Wraysbury. Furthermore, a multi-agency SCG was held for Wraysbury alongside a Rest Centre being set up at Windsor Leisure Centre for potential evacuations. Alongside this RBWM carried out preparation ahead for any potential evacuations.
- **9<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** In the early morning, the evacuation process began with vulnerable residents alongside an uptick in 999 calls being received by the Fire Service.
- **12<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** The Cookham Causeway was closed in light of the receding flood waters. EOC meetings came to an end while the TVLRF command and control structure stood down on **11<sup>th</sup> January 2024**.
- **15<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** The first meeting on the recovery process for RBWM took place.

Emily Merritt informed that there was regular communications and updates with parish councils and flood wardens during the flooding response. She added that a multi-agency debrief as well as an RBWM internal debrief were taking place. In addition, another debrief with Parish Councils and flood wardens was set to take place to reflect on the events and the response measures.

Before covering the Recovery stage, Ben Crampin informed that known areas impacted by flooding from River Thames and groundwater were most prominently Hurley, Bisham, Cookham, Wraysbury and Old Windsor. Approximately 59 internally flooded properties were reported to either the EA or RBWM.

In regard to the Flood Recovery Phase, Ben Crampin informed that RBWM had established a Recovery Coordination Group, which included a number of cells.

Ben Crampin explained each cell:

- **Neighbourhood Recovery**, which focused on the physical recovery of the flooding event in terms of street cleaning, missed bin collection and road re-openings. Any issues, such as missed bin collections, could be reported at [Highways@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:Highways@rbwm.gov.uk).
- **Community Support**, which worked with Public Health and Wellbeing to provide support to affected residents and support vulnerable residents as well as work with Parish Councils and Community Groups to help residents. The main point of contact was [volunteer@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:volunteer@rbwm.gov.uk).
- **Flooding Recovery** would liaise with the EA and other agencies throughout the recovery phase to share and collate data in order to unlock any potential government funding. There would also be a Section 19 investigation report to investigate the causes and impact of the flooding event and any roles and responsibilities that agencies or individuals have to the flooding. This would involve meetings with residents, local groups and Parish Councils. The main point of contact was [Flood.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:Flood.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk).

As part of the Flood Recovery Grants, Ben Crampin requested on the properties affected by flooding – the address of impacted property, the date of flooding, a brief description of the impact and any available photos and videos – to be sent over to him. He stated this information could be sent over with the following email addresses:

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

Ben Crampin then concluded his update 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)

Concerning the gathering of information and data, Councillor Howard asked for reassurance of when this was happening, how it would happen and what would be done, stating that many people wanted to be heard. Ben Crampin replied that the Flood Management Team was collecting data from residents reporting through the Flood Enquiries inbox, which would be added to an information spreadsheet and then passed on to the EA. Information would also be collated through the Section 19 investigation report, which would involve going out on-site to meet affected people and would also be passed on to the EA as well.

Ben Crampin offered to be notified by Councillor Howard of any particular residents or groups who wanted to meet flood officers and he would then arrange meetings with those residents to ensure they gathered the information.

The Chair informed Councillor Howard that there were similar public meetings in Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury parishes with ward councillors, describing them as an effective method

for people to discuss flooding issues with parishes providing an extra link. He stated that he would feed back to Ben Crampin and Chris Joyce on any particular residents the Borough should pick up data from.

Chris Joyce reassured that the details of the debriefing process would be published shortly. As part of the 'hot debrief' (immediate feedback) over the next few weeks, the intention was to meet all of the Parish and Borough Ward councillors in each area affected by the flooding. This would involve a survey process to collate large volumes of information which would then be filtered to allow a more detailed conversation in each of those areas based upon the points raised. The 'cold debrief' (longer-term feedback) would take place over the next couple of months. The overall process, Chris Joyce reassured, would include many opportunities for communities, parishes and Ward councillors to feed in information to ensure the Borough learnt from the events as well as improve its emergency response plans.

While acknowledging the formal debrief process, Councillor Howard asserted that the communication needed to take place very soon, stating that more rainfalls were likely between the present day and the end of winter; otherwise, there would more public dismay or misunderstanding. Chris Joyce replied that this would take place during the 'hot debrief' over the next few weeks and that details on this would be published shortly.

### Update from the Parish Councils

Councillor Larcombe conveyed that it was the fourth time that his friends, family and constituents were flooded and critically commented that the same process was being followed. Referring to the Section 19 investigation, he requested for the Section 19 investigation report from the 2014 flooding event to be circulated. Councillor Larcombe announced that he would advocate for the reintroduction of dredging of the River Thames as recommended Mechanisms of Flooding Report from Clive Onions, stating that the River Thames no longer had capacity due to the riverbed having risen. He also critically pointed out that building a new flood alleviation scheme would cost millions of pounds as well as take many years to establish.

**ACTION: The Section 19 investigation report from the 2014 flooding event to be circulated amongst Flood Group attendees.**

The Chair requested for dredging to be added for discussion at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Dredging to be discussed at the next Flood Group meeting.**

Speaking for Wraysbury, Parish Councillor Andrew Spillane raised that around 10 properties in Wraysbury had been breached with many more experiencing power outages and contamination from spilled sewage. He asked if there was any clarity on the criteria to receive government funding for being affected by flooding.

Parish Councillor Andrew Spillane mentioned that Thames Water's response had been good in regard to trucks and engineers at Wraysbury's pumping stations nearly every day, crediting David Harding. With that said, he requested further potential support with the clear up, such as using fly-tipping trucks to help clear items which they lost in the flooding (e.g., fridge freezer or furniture in their garages), adding that Wraysbury Parish Council could help with that.

Speaking for Hurley, Parish Councillor David Burfitt expressed that EA and RBWM gave great support to Hurley during the flooding event, stating that the EA help line was helpful as well as regularly receiving reports from RBWM.

Parish Councillor David Burfitt then raised a couple of points. He raised that there was a motorboat stuck on the protective polls at the weir in Hurley for a fortnight. He also asked if there was an update on Temple Footbridge.

Concerning the stuck motorboat at Hurley weir, the Chair informed that it was not in the Flood Group's remit but speculated that the EA would be working on this in the background if the lock keeper and nearby residents had reported it to them.

In regard to Temple Footbridge, Brianne Vally stated that this was discussed at Flood Group previously and had no further update from what was previously circulated. When the Chair asked Parish Councillor David Burfitt if he had access to the previous correspondence on this, to which he replied that he believed he had. She also shared a weblink on an update on the Temple Footbridge from Gov.uk in the Zoom chat.

Speaking for Datchet, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson raised some critical points in regard to flooding defence in Datchet. He first raised that there was a discussion and presentation from the EA in Datchet in November 2023 relating to the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM). He stated that a number of residents conveyed that they did not understand what was going to be provided. He said that residents only knew what sort of flood defences were required in Datchet when he brought along his flood defence plan and that the EA's provided material had no relation with his plan, alleging that the EA did not understand that the needs in the plan were required.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson strongly expressed that the needs for Datchet flood defences had been forwarded to the flooding agencies (i.e., Environment Agency and Thames Water) since 2014 with little-to-no progress being made. He also critically brought up the promise of £10 million in flood defences which turned out to have never existed. He alleged that the EA had already possessed the data for Datchet as shown from a survey they sent out based on this data.

From this, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson then pointed out the flooding which had taken place in Datchet, namely at Eton End, Southlea Road and Horton Road. He then criticised the issue at Horton Road in regard to Datchet Common Brook being rotated to various individuals at Thames Water over the years (with it now passing on between James Townsend and David Harding) and thus not being resolved. Regarding Southlea Road, he stated that the water flowed as expected from Poplars and alleged the EA was aware of this despite there being much data on this.

Conscious of the time, the Chair interjected to inform that the Flood Group's remit and terms of reference would be reviewed and that he sought to push forward the required measures. While agreeing with his points, the Chair advised Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to push his points through the communication channels.

Continuing, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson then raised he was personally asked by David Belington from the EA in 2022 that Datchet Parish Council provide a document for consultation with the EA. He explained that while this was provided on behalf of Datchet Parish Council with agreement from the Parish Councils in Wraysbury, Old Windsor and Horton, he stated that he received no response or acknowledgement of this being reviewed. He then critically highlighted that there were plans for another consultation on the River Thames Scheme (RTS), despite having responded to one already, and asserted that action was required. He also lambasted that this new consultation did not list Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury as areas what could be affected.

Speaking for Cookham, Councillor Howard gave some complimentary feedback in regard to RBWM's responsive measures in Cookham, particularly at the early stages. With that said, he then gave some points for improvement:

- Improve communication which gave updates on the situation, particularly the EA SMS text alert system which appeared to not work properly.
- Some individuals on the ground appeared to be unaware of the detailed parts of the RBWM Emergency Plan and suggested that this needed to be improved upon.
- Revisit some parts of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, stating that it needed to be updated.

Councillor Howard then raised that large hay bales covered in plastic sheeting and fencing across Battlemead Common impeded the flow water, whereby the hay bails would float to a single spot at the river and block water flow. He requested for this to be rectified, such as removing the plastic wrapping. He then highlighted that a 6-inch wire fencing had been trapping debris which then formed little dams across the common areas of Cookham. As a result of all this, the water in Cookham remained for a longer period. He stated that Cookham would like to engage with the agencies at Cookham.

Councillor Howard's final point was that manhole covers at pressure sewage systems needed to be watertight and airtight, finding that the system kept filling up with water.

Speaking for Bray, Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen requested for how the discharge of the tributary rivers going into the River Thames were managed as a topic from the EA to be discussed at the next Flood Group meeting, explaining that river water sometimes discharged in some areas, such as Ascot Road, Bray. She then briefly thanked the work of the flooding agencies.

The Chair reiterated the request to Laurence Ellis for the topic to be added to the next meeting, in which the latter suggested that it could be part of the EA update item.

**ACTION: The management of discharging the tributary rivers going into the River Thames to be covered at the next Flood Group meeting.**

Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer commented that flooding issues would not be resolved unless Surry County Council contributed and was brought into DHEFIM scheme, stating that they needed to be included in the partnership as Windsor and Maidenhead would not be able to financially afford the scheme on their own (and that Surrey would also receive considerable benefit from the Scheme); otherwise, he argued, time would be wasted. To reinforce his point, he added that some flooding place had taken place along the A308 and A30 roads, which included within Runnymede Borough (and therefore under Surrey County Council's jurisdiction). Agreeing with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson's comments, there was little action taking place despite much discussion.

While slightly disappointed with Parish Councillor Ian Thompson's critical comments on how public engagement in Datchet was received, Brianne Vally nevertheless took it on as informative feedback. She stated that the EA were mindful that some residents may not find the engagement events and panels they had arranged as helpful as they could be. She hoped that Stuart Mollard's earlier update on DHEFIM Scheme showcased to the forum that progress was taking place. While agreeing that there had not been much 'on-the-ground' flood mitigation measures for Datchet and Wraysbury since 2014, Brianne Vally hoped that the EA's updates and the background work to set up the Community Liaison Groups would go a long way to ensure communication channels open with communities. She also offered to answer any queries through direct email outside of the meeting.

In response to Parish Councillor Malcom Beer's comment, the Chair agreed with the point on funding and was conscious of this in midst of the Borough's financial situation. Nevertheless, he reassured that there were plans in place which he hoped would go forward.

The Chair reiterated that he wanted to positively move Flood Group forward and ensure change was being made.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 8.23 pm

Chair.....

Date.....