

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: Councillors David Cannon (Chairman), Gerry Clark, Ewan Larcombe, Gary Muir, Parish Councillor Martin Coker, Parish Councillor Jim Cooke, Parish Councillor Mike Williams, Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson, Parish Councillor Jane Perry, Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer and Colin Lemmings

Also in attendance: Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor Mandy Brar, Councillor Donna Stimson and Councillor David Coppinger, Laura Regazzacci, Claire Taylor, Brianne Vally, Emily Merrit, Dick Scarff, Parish Councillor Benta Hickley, Parish Councillor Len Carlton, Parish Councillor Helen Philip

Officers: Oran Norris-Browne, Joseph Hitchman and James Thorpe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Carolyn Richardson, Parish Councillor Crame and Denise Kinsella.

MINUTES

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 be a true and accurate record.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Actions from previous meeting	Updates
Denise Kinsella to contact Datchet Parish Councillor Ian Thompson regarding arranging a meeting with David Groves.	Completed - The meeting took place.
Councillor Larcombe to email Brianne Vally with concerns over the large cage at Windsor park gauge.	It had been recorded as complete in the Oct minutes. Update shared in August 21 - The fence was put up in anticipation of new hydrometry and telemetry equipment. The new level sensor had now been installed. The fencing was also erected to prevent boat mooring and vandalism of the sensor so the EA could continue to monitor river levels.
Brianne Vally to circulate consultation details with the Flood Group	Completed - Shared 3 December 2021
Brianne Vally to provide the group with the latest changes to the Jubilee river operating procedures.	As mentioned at the October meeting, minor changes were made to the EA's operating procedures with the aim of reducing (to almost zero) the requirement to make gate movements at Taplow weir overnight (10pm-7am). This was primarily to improve operator safety for the lock and weir keepers (and also took into account

	the comments received from local communities after 2013/14).
Brianne Vally to provide the group with information on the repair works at Manor Farm weir.	Completed - The works occurred in 2021. The main works took place within the channels and there was no since increase in the flood risk levels.
Brianne Vally to find out if Environment Agency can provide advice on where to locate flood warning signs and if the schematics could be obtained.	Completed – EA will be using their permissive powers to replace and renew the boards. Contact would be made with Cookham Parish Council soon to confirm designs of the board.
Denise Kinsella to pass Councillor Larcombe's question regarding the Dorney pipeline to Christopher Butterfield for a response.	Completed – Councillor Larcombe was contacted by Christopher Butterfield.
Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer to email Denise Kinsella regarding the flooding in Old Windsor.	FURTHER ACTION
Sue Fox to update Old Windsor Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on the progress of the planned works at the A308 Straight Road.	FURTHER ACTION

ACTION- Denise Kinsella to contact Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on arranging a meeting.

ACTION- Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer to contact James Thorpe regarding the issue on the Straight Road.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally, Environment Agency, stated she had 4 updates including an overview of the catchment situation, Flood Risk Management Plan, an update on some works and finally an update on Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures project. After a dry January in 2022, the Thames catchment area received 28% of the average rainfall for January. The local river levels were currently normal or below average.

Brianne Vally thanked all respondents to the consultations on the Flood Risk Management plan that closed on 21 January 2022. She added that before the final plan was published, 2 separate reports would be published. This included a summary of feedback that was received and the second one would be a 'you said, we did' report, outlining what actions were taken following on from the feedback received. The river basin management plan consultations were still ongoing for 3 further months and would end on 22 April 2022. It focussed on the current state of the water environment.

Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer raised concerns about local authorities having to fund their sections of the channels. He added that it was impossible for Windsor and Maidenhead to pay into the Channel One Scheme. Brianne Vally acknowledged this and said that this would involve a direct change in the funding formula and beyond the direct remit of the scope, but she said these concerns would be looked at.

Brianne Vally said that there was a number of works currently ongoing in Cookham and Datchet. At the North Maidenhead bund, vegetation was removed in September 2021, followed by an ecological survey and a topographic survey that was undertaken in January 2022. This would help inform further assessment.

Brianne Vally stated that there were 2 bunds in Cookham (Moors and Sailing Club) that had been identified as being below the required flood defence level, which was mainly due to trafficking and rutting. The works would consist of being topped with soil, turfing, and seeding in Spring 2022. A section of the Cookham Flood Wall was observed to leak during an earlier flood event. Investigations consisted of Ground Penetrating Radar Surveys (GPRS). The results of the investigations were currently being interpreted.

Additionally, works were taking place on a Public Right of Way behind the Cookham Flood Wall to prevent it from becoming boggy, to ensure the safety of the Environment Agency operatives when they accessed flood assets.

She added that a project was currently ongoing to repair the embankment on the Myrke ditch as vegetation had failed to establish, leaving a membrane exposed. Further works were also being carried out where the A4 (Bath Road) crossed the Jubilee River, however the majority of this fell under Buckinghamshire.

Councillor Larcombe said that the Myrke bank had already been rebuilt in 2004 or 2005 for a cost of £1.3 million. He added that the design and construction was sub-standard and expressed his concern as to why it had taken so long to rectify this. Brianne Vally said she would provide updates to the group as and when she received them.

Councillor Stimson noted that the embankment was longer than the section to the south of Battlemead Common and asked if only this section required works. Brianne Vally clarified that following surveys, only this section of the bund was shown to be below the required level of conditions.

(Parish Councillor Martin Coker joined the meeting)

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson said that the Myrke Ditch suffered several pollution incidents. He also asked the Environment Agency to prioritise looking at the bund that was causing flooding on to South Lea Road. Brianne Vally said that this was not currently part of the programme of works in the same way that the Cookham bunds were. However, Datchet was an area of focus and discussions could occur going forward.

Brianne Vally stated with reference to the Datchet to Hythe End flood improvement measures project that the Environment Agency were bringing on board a framework contractor to implement a technically and economically viable option to reduce flood risk in the wards of Datchet, Horton, Wraysbury and Old Windsor. She added that in the last few months they had also reviewed the overall governance of the programme, which was important in establishing any programme of works. It was essential in obtaining programme approvals and funding as work proceeded.

Dick Scarff said that he was concerned about flooding at Battlemead Common and asked for reassurance that there would be no adverse results caused from the planting of vegetation. Brianne Vally confirmed that she could not categorically refute this, however admitted that the risk here was negligible.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella, Thames Water had given her apologies for the meeting. She submitted a written update for the group, which the Chairman read.

The Chairman said on behalf of Denise Kinsella that Money Row Green, which was of particular interest to the group, had seen all the manholes that had been highlighted with having issues had now been changed. These were due to possible standing or flowing surface water that may have caused inundation into the sewer.

The update went on to state that Thames Water had completed CCTV surveys of additional lengths. However, this had not shown any additional areas where infiltration may have been impacting the sewer. Since Thames Water completed the clean last year which removed a large amount of silt amongst other things from the sewer, Thames Water were not aware of any further flooding to customers with the storms that had been present throughout the winter.

As always, Thames Water continued with their planned maintenance programme to check and clean the sewers where required. Also, the 'bin it don't block it' campaign continued, which group members may have seen through the use of a new TV advert where a popular nursery rhyme tune had been altered to promote the message.

Councillor Rayner asked Brianne Vally if she was able to provide the group with an update on the Thames Water sewage treatment works in Eton Wick. Brianne Vally said that she was aware that Thames Water had scoped environmental impact assessment reports to Buckinghamshire Council. All works would fall under permitted development, meaning no planning permission was required.

ACTION- Councillor Rayner to contact Denise Kinsella regarding progress on the Thames Water project in Eton Wick.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

James Thorpe, Service Lead for Sustainability and Climate, began by introducing himself to the forum and explaining his team's roles and how Sue Fox's role was now being incorporated into his team. He clarified that a new officer had been appointed to replace Sue Fox, and that they would be in post on 14 March 2022.

Jo Hitchman said that he had been making recommendations to the borough to undertake ready for the new Flood Risk Manager when he joins on 14 March 2022. He added that support was also being provided to the parks and countryside's team in relation to Battlemead Common to ensure that flood risk would not be exacerbated.

Jo Hitchman said that his team reviewed all major planning applications within the borough and provided comments with regards to surface water flood risk. Since October 2021, 49 of these had been issued.

Councillor Brar asked if it was possible to organise a training session for Cookham hub as there had been no training for a few years. Emily Merritt agreed to pass this on to Carolyn Richardson offline.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen asked who was responsible for clearing blocked ditches and how would people go about finding out who the landowner was. Jo Hitchman replied by saying that this information should be passed to him and that he could then check who the landowner was and encouraged people to report any blocked ditches to him.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen then asked if watercourses were allowed by landowners to be channelled into ditches. Jo Hitchman replied by saying that this was correct, however changing the artificial flow to the water should not be undertaken.

Councillor Stimson asked for clarity on who reports should go to on blockages involving fowl sewage. Jo Hitchman confirmed that this would be directed at Thames Water.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked for updates on the progress of works on the Barrel Arch in Datchet, the Datchet Common Brook and the Eton End Tunnel. Jo Hitchman said that a meeting was held on 31 January 2022 with a project manager and that moving forward a programme could be made to create the best working practices.

ACTION- Jo Hitchman to contact Parish Councillor Ian Thompson with information on the Barrel Arch works in Datchet.

Jo Hitchman said that in relation to the Eton End Tunnel, work was challenging as this involved liaising with Network Rail. This had now been deemed as a large project and it therefore fell under the Environment Agency's projects rather than the boroughs. Parish Councillor Ian Thompson added that the sandbags that had been placed there in 2014 were deteriorating and needed replacing. He stressed the importance of this in protecting Datchet from flood risk.

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen put on record her thanks to the RBWM officers and Councillor Walters for all their help with dealing with issues in Moneyrow Green and Stud Green. She looked forward to working closely with the group in the future.

Parish Councillor Martin Coker encouraged his fellow Parish Councillors to review their flood risk management plans to ensure that they were all correct and up to date for the public.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson said that Datchet Parish Council had sent in their Flood Risk Management plan to the Environment Agency.

Parish Councillor Jim Cooke echoed Parish Councillor Martin Coker's points regarding the Flood Risk Management Plan. He also asked for the Emergency Planning Team to act swiftly in issuing feedback on their proposed plans. The Chairman stated that they had been dealing with staff shortages due to illness, which may have led to this delay occurring.

Laura Regazzacci stated that she and Claire Taylor had undertaken flood warden training and that they would be working with Eton Town Council to formulate a Flood Risk management Plan. She added that they were also awaiting the results of a hydrology report, where a survey was conducted in 2021.

Colin Lemmings said that there was flood training that had been put in place by Marlow and this covered surrounding areas. He noted that this would be taking place on 15 February 2022. Parish Councillor Martin Coker added that this would also occur in Cookham.

Claire Taylor asked Brianne Vally if she would consider sharing the planned works on where the A4 (Bath Road) crossed the Jubilee River. Brianne Vally replied by saying that she would keep her posted.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The group noted that the next meeting would be 21 April 2022 at 6:00pm. The group agreed that this would remain as a virtual meeting.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.25 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....