

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: Councillor David Cannon (Chairman), Councillor Gerry Clark, Councillor Ewan Larcombe, Parish Councillor Jim Cooke (Bisham), Parish Councillor Ian Thompson (Datchet), Parish Councillor Colin Lemmings (Bisham), Parish Councillor Jane Perry (Cookham), Parish Councillor Mike Williams (Wraysbury) and Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen (Bray)

Also in attendance: Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Mandy Brar and Councillor Leo Walters, Laura Ragazzacci, Brianne Vally, Victor Freeney, Denise Kinsella and Emily Merritt

Officers: Laurence Ellis, Ben Crampin, Brianne Vally and Denise Kinsella

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Duncan Parker and Bob Austen.

In reference to the drowning of a young boy in the Jubilee River in the previous week, Councillor Baldwin suggested the Forum hold a minute's silence to reflect on the tragic event. The Chairman agreed. The Panel held a minute's silence.

MINUTES

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2022 were a true and accurate record.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Actions from previous meeting Minutes	Updates
Denise Kinsella to contact Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer on arranging a meeting regarding the flooding in Old Windsor.	Denise Kinsella had contacted Parish Councillor Malcolm Beer. They will discuss the next steps.
Brianne Vally to give an update of the timeframe of the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures Project.	Completed – Brianne Vally gave an update during the meeting.
Brianne Vally to provide a list of members of the Programme Steering Group.	Completed – List circulated to Forum members.
Councillor Larcombe to email Ben Crampin of the location of the drains on Horton Road, Horton in preparation for a site visit.	Completed – Councillor Larcombe and Ben Crampin undertook a site visit.

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

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally, Environment Agency, gave a verbal update. Starting with the catchment situation, as of the previous day, the Thames Catchment received about 60% of the average rainfall for June. Despite this, the river flows had decreased at all sites across the Thames

River catchments where data was available. She stated the data is available under water situation reports on the gov.uk website if anyone required more data.

Brianne Vally then moved onto works being conducted primarily in the flood elevation scheme in parts of Maidenhead, Windsor, Eton and Cookham Flood Alleviation Scheme as well as works around the Jubilee River. This scheme reduced the flood risk to approximately 3,000 properties.

Brianne Vally then explained that the retaining walls of the Jubilee River channel south of the A4 Bath Road were deemed to be in poor condition. Therefore, Bam Nuttall (contractors to EA) would be making repairs, starting in mid-July and to be completed by September 2022. She reassured that there should not be any road closures or disruptions.

Brianne Vally conveyed that there were some repairs on the Moor Bund and Sailing Club Bund and the flood wall in Cookham. Work on the bunds were substantially completed with some seeding and turfing being carried in the near future. Work had also started on installation of an access track to facilitate the deployment of pumps in the event of a flood. This was expected to be completed by mid-August. On the Cookham flood wall, several surveys and inspections took place to analyse any defects and to make repairs. Repairs to defects in mortar joints and seals and regular monitoring was the chosen recommendation. While a schedule on these repairs had not been formulated yet, Brianne Vally stated she would be able to provide an update on these repairs at the next Flood Liaison Group meeting.

Brianne Vally then stated that work needed to be done on the north Maidenhead bund (south of Battlemead Common). An assessment was being carried out, mostly involving hydraulic modelling of the area. She stated a detailed assessment and report was being prepared with the initial outputs of that work expected to be available in the autumn of 2022.

Brianne Vally then presented an update on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures Project. She started off by covering the EA Project Lifecycle. So far, Strategic Assessment (Gateway 0 on the EA Project Lifestyle) had been completed.

Brianne Vally then gave a summary of the upcoming works culminating by the completion of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC). She explained works that had taken place to date including putting adequate resources in place and setting-up the project team, establishing the principles of the governance arrangements between EA and RBWM. The purpose of this stage, the initial assessment, was to confirm the strategic context for the project, making the case for change and obtaining direction of travel for this project. The EA were finalising the scope and procurement, which involved reviewing and obtaining data from the River Thames Scheme project team. After this would be completed (by July 2022 according to the schedule), EA would work with its contracted partner Jacobs to develop the Strategic Outline Case. This was to be scheduled from August to November 2022.

The next stages were to review and approve the Strategic Outline Case (December 2022 to February 2023) and then sign it off by March 2023. The Environment Agency informed the Forum that it would not look to commission new technical information at this stage. Brianne Vally explained that Jacobs will be reviewing economics and damages assessment data to inform the amount of government Grant-in-Aid funding this project was eligible for on top of RBWM's contributions. Jacobs would also carry out a coarse review of the flood risk management options including options received by members of the public following the joint EA/RBWM letter which went out on 9 February 2021.

If the Strategic Outline Case would be approved, the EA Project Lifecycle would move onto the 'Appraisal' stage (starting with the Outline Business Case). Several options would be analysed to optimise the best value for money.

The Chairman asked when the viable options for the EA Project would be reviewed as well as when the public would be informed about this. Brianne Vally responded that the technical

assessments by Jacobs would be done between August and November 2022, namely the damage and initial benefit assessments, and then analysing the options for the next stages.

The Chairman then asked if there was opportunity for interested parties, such as Parish Councils, to submit suggested ideas to EA. Brianne Vally stated that EA were seeking to establish a stakeholder engagement group towards the end of the Strategic Outline Case stage and at the beginning Outline Business Case. At around spring 2023, EA would seek to establish direct forums to discuss the works and options.

The Chairman suggested that Parish Councils go to RBWM and Brianne Vally with any suggestions that they would like EA to consider.

Councillor Baldwin asked if Brianne Vally or Thames Water could speak to the investment requirements to prevent the discharge of raw sewage when the systems had to cope with flood water. Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, gave the answer by stating that it was a long-term objective which Thames Water was working on to prevent this issue. The Chairman suggested that Denise Kinsella circulate a document to the Forum, including Councillor Baldwin.

ACTION: Denise Kinsella to circulate information regarding river discharge to the Panel and Councillor Baldwin.

Councillor Baldwin followed up by asking who RBWM would need to contact in EA to open up resources so that they could fully participate in planning applications. Brianne Vally replied that she would provide some contact details to direct Councillor Baldwin's enquiries.

ACTION: Brianne Vally to provide contact details to Councillor Baldwin on resources for planning applications.

Councillor Brar asked Brianne Vally when the new flood boards for Cookham would arrive. Brianne Vally was uncertain of the exact time. She explained that while replacement flood warning signs for Cookham and Bisham were ordered, the signs did not meet the EA's expectations. Once EA had resolved this, Brianne Vally stated she would be able to confirm the estimated time frame.

Councillor Walters asked if Brianne Vally was aware about the nature of the flooding in Holyport and Moneyrow Green and was working on a scheme to alleviate this. Ben Crampin, RBWM Flood Risk Manager, stated that the answers would be given during his RBWM update later on in the meeting.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked a couple of questions. Firstly, he asked if Brianne Vally was intending to bring the communities on the Thames riverside into the discussions with RBWM regarding the scheme proposals that EA were intending to put forward. Secondly, he also asked if the parish communities of Wraysbury, Datchet, Horton and Old Windsor as well as communities in the Runnymede area were to be included as part of the discussions. Brianne Vally replied that there would be an external stakeholder engagement group which was intended to be a gateway for passing on and receiving information directly from the relevant areas.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson then asked precisely when the work would begin. Brianne Vally stated it was hard to determine at the moment; but she stated that once the Strategic Outline Case was completed, EA would then have a better understanding of what the next phases were and then ultimately work would begin. Victor Freeney, Environment Agency, explained each stage of the EA Project Lifecycle, namely what work would be done at each stage. He added that there were several stages in the Project Lifecycle that needed to be completed before construction could start and therefore exact dates could not be determined yet.

Laura Regazzacci asked if Brianne Vally was aware Cain Bioengineering Hydrology Report of the Eton Wick catchment. Brianne Vally stated she was aware of the report was in production. She then stated she was open to taking a look at it if Laura Regazzacci forwarded it to her.

ACTION: Laura Regazzacci to forward information relating to the Cain Bioengineering Hydrology Report to Brianne Vally.

Regarding river channel one being removed due to a lack of partnership funding, Councillor Larcombe asked if a similar situation would occur again. Brianne Vally replied that funding for channel section one was unaffordable. She then explained that EA were collecting data from the wider River Thames Scheme, in which she believed the data for channel section one would be revisited. As far as she was aware, Brianne Vally was uncertain of the funding position changing or whether it would make it to the next stage of the EA Project Lifecycle. Victor Freeney then explained the economic appraisal, namely the sources of funding for projects and schemes.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella, Thames Water, gave a verbal update.

- On the Eton Wick Project dealing with the Slough Sewage Treatment Works, further design refinements were needed to be undertaken, namely the sewage treatment upgrades and pipeline upgrades.
- Over the last couple of months, Thames Water had been working alongside a contracted consultant, Cain Bio-Engineering, to work around reducing the water levels. Some options which were looked into included proactive maintenance and weed clearance. Weed maintenance trials took place with successful results.
- Thames Water were also looking to install flood level monitors in the next few weeks. Denise Kinsella hoped to provide an update on this by the next meeting.
- On Moneyrow Green, some work took place last year (2021), including some sewers being cleared and manholes being sealed to prevent the infiltration of ground or surface water.

Regarding an earlier request for Denise Kinsella to circulate a report on stakeholders, Councillor Baldwin asked Denis Kinsella if she could also provide data, timelines and anything else she could provide. Denise Kinsella agreed.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson asked whether clearance would take place in Datchet Common Brook and the Myrke ditch as there had been a build-up of blockages in the water course which could increase the risk of flooding. He then stated that while Thames Water employees had investigated the build-up, which was over two years ago, no maintenance took place since the last meeting. Denise Kinsella said she would raise this issue with the team which was responsible for this and then report back to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson. Parish Councillor Ian Thompson hoped the clearance would take place before the winter season.

ACTION: Denise Kinsella to raise the issue of the build-up at the Datchet Common Brook at Thames Water and report back to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene asked if work had taken place with Stud Green and Fifield. She elaborated that there was a culvert in Manor Grove, Fifield which gets blocked every winter and then causes floods. Uncertain about whether work was going to occur or had taken place in the areas, Denise Kinsella asked if Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene could email her the locations and the explain the issues so she could investigate. Ben Crampin suggested he received the email as well. After that, Denise Kinsella and Ben Crampin would investigate the issues.

ACTION: Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene to email Denise Kinsella and Ben Crampin on the flooding issues in Stud Green and Fifield in which they would investigate the issues.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Ben Crampin gave a verbal update.

- The main focus for the Flood Risk Team in the last few months was improving the grant-in-aid schemes and deciding where this aid should be spent. There were two projects in early stages that RBWM were seeking to push forward in the next couple of months. One of the projects was a surface water study around the Holyport, Fifield and Stud Green area.
- Consultations took place with the EA on other areas, namely the Flood Risk Management Plans as well as looking into the new national modelling being undertaken by the EA.
- The Flood Risk Team were seeking to develop and invest in the flood function within RBWM. This would involve recruiting two new officers to the team: a flood risk officer and a SuDS specialist. The former would be leading investigations on flood issues; meanwhile, the latter would take on the role of statutory consultee for drainage within the planning process for major planning applications.
- Some work took place on short-term measures on the Datchet Hythe End Scheme.
- Some works on the Wraysbury drain had been completed. A plan for the next steps for the Wraysbury drain was to be put together by the end of July 2022. This would likely include both landowner engagement and some maintenance work from RBWM.
- Some initial surveys had taken place on the Datchet Barrell Arch. The results conveyed that no structural issues had been found, with only some minor lining in a few areas recommended. The next stages were to remove the silt within the Datchet barrel arch and then complete the survey and check if any more remedial was required.
- On the flat valve on Penn Road at Datchet Common Brook, RBWM Flood Risk Team had engaged with JBA Consulting to do modelling work around the flat valve to better understand the impacts it may have. A kickoff meeting was going to be held with JBA Consulting in a couple weeks to discuss the project further before maintenance work took place.
- Ben Crampin stated he had visited areas of the Borough as well as meeting with RBWM and Parish Councillors to investigate any flooding issues in the last few months. He was open to being invited by any of the local councillors to discuss local flooding issues in certain areas.
- Section 19 investigation report at Moneyrow Green had been completed. A few things needed to be sorted before the report could be published. This included developing the website to create somewhere for these reports to be published.
- A review of RBWM duties had been completed. While the Council was fulfilling these duties, there were some areas for improvement. One of these was the flood risk asset register for the Council. Ben Crampin planned to send out a questionnaire to RBWM Councillors over the next month or so to better understand where the flood risk assets were within the Borough. The reported assets were to be reviewed and determine whether they were appropriate to add to the flood risk asset register. The questionnaire would be passed to members of the Flood Liaison Group.
- Ben Crampin announced he created a central mailbox for flooding within the Borough where flooding issues could be reported. This would be accessed by the new flooding officers. The email address was flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk.

Councillor Larcombe commented that £13,500 was spent on cleaning a piece of the Wraysbury drain recently, and that it was dry at The Green. Ben Crampin replied that he would investigate the next time he would visit the area. Councillor Larcombe followed by asking what was happening at Feathers Lane, where the watercourse was blocked and was culverted illegally. Ben Crampin replied that the issue was identified and would form part of the forward planning for the Wraysbury Drain.

Councillor Baldwin commented that he was shocked by the lack of progress in dealing with the flooding issues in Borough since a site visit which occurred a couple of years ago in which these issues were raised. The Chairman replied that legal letters were issued identifying landholders and agreed progress had been slow.

Councillor Walters and Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene wished to take on Ben Crampin's suggestion that he visit Bray to do some flood investigations. Ben Crampin suggested to organise this outside the meeting.

ACTION: Ben Crampin, Councillor Walters and Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene to organise and visit Bray to investigate flooding issues in the areas.

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson made a couple of comments. Firstly, on the Datchet barrel arch, he was concerned about that the results of Ben Crampin's survey conveyed that there was little remedial work needed on the arch. He elaborated that VolkerHighways Ltd had conducted thorough survey of the Datchet barrel arch. The results presented a number of items that needed some rectification (some of them being urgent). Secondly, he requested that the notice for the start of maintenance work to be about at least a month beforehand (rather than a day before) so that residents could be advised. He followed that a program and dates would be appreciated. Ben Crampin replied that he would ensure plenty of notice was given ahead of any future works. He then said that once the silt was removed from Datchet barrel arch, they would do a final check to ensure nothing had been missed.

Councillor Baldwin wondered if there was any crossover between the responsibilities for flood defence and the local fire authority. He followed by wondering if there were synergies which could be exploited. Ben Crampin responded that it was something he would look into in terms of forward planning; but was something that would be looked into further down the line when larger tasks were to be completed. This may be similar to some work being undertaken by Surrey County Council where flooding issues were raised within Fire and Rescue's Safe and Well visits to vulnerable residents within the Borough.

The Chairman asked if there was an update from Emergency Planning. Emily Merritt, Emergency Planning Officer, replied that there was no update. The Chairman requested to Emily Merritt to engage with the flood wardens ensure there was ongoing communication between them in the parishes and Emergency Planning. Emily Merritt said she would, stating that if they would seek to contact them if they emailed the Emergency Planning inbox. The Chairman specified that he was referring to the long-term ones from Wraysbury and Horton who had expressed concern, Duncan Parker and Dave Francis.

ACTION: Emily Merritt to reach out to flood wardens in the parishes, Duncan Parker and Dave Francis.

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Parish Councillor Ian Thompson started the item by raising to Brianne Vally that the flood alert boards in Datchet were rusting and the sealed information in the signs had fallen away. He then asked Brianne Vally when replacements boards could be installed and if this could be done before the upcoming flooding season in the winter. Brianne Vally replied that this issue had been raised in a number of meetings. She stated that EA were seeking to replace those signs. She offered to highlight the sources of funding as well as provide the PDF of the signs.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene explained that the parish council set up a flood working group, which discussed flood issues and included local residents. She asked Ben Crampin if he would like or would be free to attend one of these meetings. Ben Crampin replied he was open to attend.

The meeting, which began at 6.03 pm, finished at 7.34 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....