

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

Thursday 13 April 2023

Present (virtually): Councillors David Cannon (Chairman), Ewan Larcombe and Gerry Clark, Parish Councillors Louvaine Kneen (Bray PC), Ian Thompson (Datchet PC), Colin Lemmings (Bisham PC), Mike Williams (Wraysbury PC)

Also in attendance (virtually): Bob Austen, Doug Alexander, Emily Merritt, Joshua Hardcastle, David Harding, Natasha Gibbs and Richard Hancock

Officers (virtually): Laurence Ellis and Ben Crampin

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Laura Regazzacci, Eton Wick Waterways Group (EWWG).

MINUTES

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2023 were a true and accurate record.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

ACTION: David Harding to update Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on Thames Water's response to the build-up at Datchet Common Brook after a specialist had surveyed the site.	David Harding stated that he had several meetings with co-workers who managed the reservoirs and assets. It was mentioned that the remaining dredging work would be over £150,000, which was in the process of being approved. David Harding had not updated Parish Councillor Ian Thompson yet because he hoped for a more concrete update. David Harding forwarded his email to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.
ACTION: Ben Crampin to chase up Councillor Walters on whether he wanted to meet for a site visit in Bray to investigate flooding issues in the area.	Ben Crampin chased up Councillor Walters but had not received a response. He stated that he could try again.
ACTION: Brianne Vally to contact Councillor Clark or a Cookham representative after the meeting regarding the action relating to concerns surrounding the culverts in Cookham.	COMPLETE – Councillor Clark had not received any feedback. Richard Hancock reported that Brianne Vally had been in discussion with Mr Rogers and Barbara Andrea, asset performance team member, had been in contact with Councillor Brar and Mr Wallace. Richard Hancock stated that he could get Brianne Vally to contact Councillor Clark once she returns.
ACTION: Parish Councillor Ian Thompson to forward details of the flooding issues	COMPLETE – Parish Councillor Ian Thompson had a meeting with Ben Crampin

surrounding the drain near Datchet Village Green to Ben Crampin, who would then forward these details to VolkerHighways to allow them to investigate the issue.

in which they visited the problematic areas around Datchet. From this, Ben Crampin would take away these issues, including the Barrel Arch works

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Richard Hancock, Environment Agency for Thames Side Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, gave an update on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures (DHEFIM).

On the EA Project Lifecycle, the Environment Agency (EA) had been working through the strategic assessment and then towards the strategic outline case (SOC), which had been prepared and submitted to the Large Projects Review Group (LPRG). Feedback had been received from LPRG in which EA were reviewing before the SOC being recommended to the area director for approval.

Richard Hancock then stated that there was a successful case for there being viable alternative options to mitigate flood risk, but EA were nevertheless reviewing the feedback from LPRG before recommending approval.

Scoping for the next stage of the project (Outline Business Case) had started with agreement of EA's internal assurance process as there was a strong case to put forward.

Richard Hancock also reported that two relevant parish councils were visited with the remaining relevant councils being visited after the local elections on 4 May 2023.

Richard Hancock also highlighted that Victor Freeney no longer worked with the communications and engagement side of the project. As such, a replacement would be recruited.

Richard Hancock then reported that an external stakeholder group would be arranged during the Outline Business Case stage of the project and after the local elections.

The Chair asked which were the two relevant parish councils in which Richard Hancock visited. The latter replied that he visited Old Windsor and Wraysbury with Datchet and Horton being the remaining parish councils to be visited.

On the Business Outline Case, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson (Datchet PC) asked what sum was available by RBWM for flood defences which could go into the Business Outline Case. Ben Crampin, Flood Risk Manager, replied that approximately £10 million had been accumulated for the EA in relation to the DHEFIM project. He added that RBWM were also in contact with the EA on when they needed this money. The Chair added that there were EA funding streams and other stakeholders in addition.

Joshua Hardcastle, Asset Performance Officer, EA, gave an update on the pioneering works along the Colne Brook. He reported that the primary aim of the project was to improve flood conveyance within the area while also being mindful of preserving habitats. He showed photos of the work which the external contractor had conducted, such as removing debris and hanging trees.

The Chair requested for Joshua Hardcastle to share the presentation document with the clerk, Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer, who would then circulate it to meeting attendees. He also requested to Parish Councillor Mike Williams (Wraysbury PC) for this document to be distributed amongst flood wardens.

ACTION: Joshua Hardcastle to share the presentation document on the Colne Brook Pioneering works with Laurence Ellis who would then circulate it to Flood Group members and flood wardens.

For a general update on the strategic overview, Richard Hancock reported that there had been a reasonably wet winter, with 150% of the long-term average rainfall within the Thames catchment. On the whole, it was one of the wettest rainfalls during March on record.

The catchment was saturated and would react accordingly, namely flood alerts and warnings may be issued and it being further compounded by the automation of the flood warning system in response to industrial action across the public sector.

The Chair asked if industrial action was continuing, to which Richard Hancock replied that it was likely still active and there would be additional dates of industrial action in late April.

Parish Councillor Mike Williams asked for confirmation on whether the Jubilee River top gate had been operated on. Richard Hancock replied that he could investigate this. He added that there was a flood alert where individuals could sign up to which would then inform when the gates were activated.

Parish Councillor Mike Williams (Wraysbury Parish Council) asked about flood warning service notifications. Richard Hancock answered that residents could register an area of an interest within the flood warning service and then receive the notification of when the Maidenhead and Windsor Flood Alleviation Scheme gates were activated. He stated that he could forward him the instructions on how to register. The Chair requested for this to be forwarded the clerk, Laurence Ellis, and for this to be circulated to all meeting attendees.

ACTION: Richard Hancock to forward instructions on signing up to the flood warning service to Laurence Ellis, who would then circulate this to Flood Group attendees.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

David Harding, Customer and Stakeholder Manager (Thames Water), reported that the recent heavy rainfall had created a lot of surface water and flash flooding. Due to the long dry summer in 2022, it did not appear that there had been much aquifer recharge which meant that there had not been a lot of the groundwater infiltration into sewers and the associated flooding from this. However, the lack of a recent aquifer recharge raised the risk of water resource problems in the next summer.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene (Bray PC) raised that there had been some flooding in some Borough wards, namely Holyport and Moneyrow Green. It was confirmed that the cause of the flooding in Moneyrow Green was a hydraulic overload, rather than a blockage. She also mentioned that residents raised concerns that there was sewage pumping out of a drain cover near the Jolly Gardener pub. There was a request from residents for this to be sealed. She asked if this could be resolved. David Harding replied that Ben Crampin had contacted him in 2022 regarding the drain cover near the Jolly Gardener and a Thames Water Network Engineer had looked into this.

The Chair requested that David Harding to liaise with Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene once an update had been received.

ACTION: David Harding to update Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneene on the drain cover near the Jolly Gardener pub.

Parish Councillor Mike Williams raised that a few roads in Wraysbury had been flooded during the recent rainfall. He also stated that the drains near the village green in front of the village hall were not working, partially because they were soak-away drains and were not linked to the main system. He asked if this was an RBWM or Thames Water issue. Ben Crampin

requested for this to be reported through the RBWM website and if it was Thames Water's responsibility, he would liaise with them.

ACTION: Parish Councillor Mike Williams to report on the issue of drains in Wraysbury through the RBWM website, followed by Ben Crampin confirming who was responsible in resolving this.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Ben Crampin, Flood Risk Manager, started off by highlighting that there had been significant rainfall at the start of 2023, from January to March. As a result, the number of drainage issues reported to the Borough had increased by three times compared to the same period in 2022. There was also an increase in reporting of property flooding, particularly in the south of Maidenhead and Ascot.

For the next financial year of 2023-24, a new Flood Risk Officer had recently been appointed and was in the process of collecting information to inform the Flood Team's work. The Team also had a new lead contractor within VolkerHighways. Ben Crampin had working to train them and get them up to speed.

Ben Crampin also mentioned that he had been working on setting up the pipeline of projects for the year, namely the project timescales for the quick wins (short-term measures relating to the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures) and the Grant-in-Aid program, as well as a Highways Capital Programme to work out where money would be spent around borough to mitigate the impact of flooding. He added that he was working on a resilient data collection process to ensure an efficient collection of information on flood-affected areas.

Ben Crampin then gave brief updates on short term DHEFIM measures:

- Maintenance works and surveying had recently started on the Datchet Barrell Arch, particularly around Churchmead School. Further work would continue until traffic management permits were in place, which was predicted to be around late spring 2023.
- Progress had been made on the Wraysbury Drain with some enforcement with downstream landowners that uncovered some pipework underneath some dumped material. The Flood Team were discussing with the Legal Team to discuss the next steps. Ben Crampin mentioned that he was reviewing previous surveys of the Wraysbury Drain with EA to understand the existing information on the watercourse, which would then help with the next steps. The Flood Team were waiting for a second quote for the works at Windsor Road bridge.
- Modelling work on determining the suitability of the Penn Road Flap Valve project had been completed. However, JBA's technical note indicated that the Flap Valve would not be effective to mitigate flood risk in Datchet. The next step, Ben Crampin explained, was to review JBA's technical note and resolve this.
- Other Flood Team priorities for 2023/24 included improving the comms works (namely improving the website and factsheets); improving processes, such as the Ordinary Watercourse Consent; build additional team resilience (such as recruitment and training); and continue to develop the Grant-in-Aid programme.

Ben Crampin concluded his update by displaying contact details for flood enquiries and emergencies.

The Chair requested for the presentation to be circulated amongst Flood Group members.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to circulate Ben Crampin's presentation to Flood Groups members.

Parish Councillor Louvaine Kneen asked what the best email address was to notify the Flood Team on any flooding issues. Ben Crampin replied that it would be flooding.enquiries@rbwm.gov.uk, and that this was on the presentation slide.

Parish Councillor Mike Williams asked if it would be possible to have a diagram or map on where the activities were taking place with regard to works related to the Wraysbury Drain. Ben Crampin replied that this was something that could be done. He said he could provide the map he shared during the last meeting by forwarding it to Laurence Ellis who would then share it to the Forum.

ACTION: Ben Crampin to forward a map of the projects related to the Wraysbury Drain taking place to Laurence Ellis who would then circulate this to Flood Group members.

UPDATE FROM THE PARISH COUNCILS

Parish Councillors Louvaine Kneen and Colin Lemmings reported that there were no updates from Bray and Bisham Parish Councils.

Reporting for Eton, Bob Austen informed that Eton Town Council were having discussions with Thames Water regarding weed clearance around the Boveney water course, which was an ongoing process.

After thanking Ben Crampin for his work, Parish Councillor Ian Thompson relayed a question from Datchet residents on how much money had been spent on flood defences within the Borough in the last 4 years. Ben Crampin replied that he could look into this and relay this back to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson.

ACTION: Ben Crampin to relay to Parish Councillor Ian Thompson on the funding for flood defences in the Borough in the last 4 years.

Reporting for Wraysbury, Councillor Larcombe conveyed his concern on the flooded drains in front of Wraysbury Village Hall. He explained that water levels were high due to a blockage at Hythe End. He also highlighted that the ditches along Wraysbury Village Green were full of water to such an extent that The Green was on the verge of flooding. Ben Crampin took note of these issues and stated that he would relay them to VolkerHighways so they could investigate them.

ACTION: Ben Crampin to forward the flooding issues in Wraysbury which Councillor Larcombe highlighted to VolkerHighways.

The Chair announced that this would be his last meeting as Chair of Flood Liaison Group, and thanked members and officers for their work and participation.

The meeting, which began at 6.02 pm, finished at 6.53 pm

Chair.....

Date.....