

TATTENHALL & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

INCIDENT REPORT – FLOODING JANUARY 2021

INCIDENT REPORTED

- Phone call was received between 6.30 and 7pm on Wednesday 20th January from resident of Old Mill Place stating she was trying to obtain sandbags to prevent flooding of the properties, she advised that she had rung a number of agencies and had just got recorded messages.

ACTIONS

- Clerk rang CW&C Highways Emergency Line and reported need for assistance including sandbags. Requested call from CW&C to confirm what actions they would take and timescales to report back.
- Clerk contacted Chairman and agreed to call emergency virtual meeting.
- Virtual meeting (zoom) was established at 7.30pm, Clerk emailed details to all Councillors and phoned a number of Councillors to request attendance.
A number of Councillors were unable to attend but agreed to be contacted by phone as required.
- CW&C rang Clerk at 10.15pm reporting due to pressures elsewhere they were not able to offer assistance, the Clerk confirmed the fire service were on site and evacuating properties.
- It is understood a number of residents were evacuated to the Barbour Institute and Pheasant at Burwardsley.

VIRTUAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE – Pat Black, Sheila Chapman, Iain Keeping, Esther Sadler Williams, Ann Wright (Clerk)

- Meeting considered actions and events based on limited information being received.
- Barbour Institute was opened for anyone requiring shelter and advertised on Facebook (Tattenhall/News Update)
- Alison's was opened providing shelter and advertised on Facebook.
- Primary School was made available and advertised on Facebook.
- Request was received that boats to evacuate people – 2 boats were acquired and went to site; it was understood these were not needed.
- Cheshire fire & Rescue attended the site and managed the situation.

CAUSES/OUTCOMES

- Large rainfall resulting in increased flow in Mill Brook and overflow of Mill Pond.
- Gully next to Mill Brook reached capacity causing flooding.
- Water reached level of ground floor windows and caused flooding of properties and vehicles.
- CW&C Cllr Mike Jones reports the issue is mainly the water from the spinney coming backwards to Mill Place that caused the flooding, it was bubbling up in the road (the F&RS thought it was the sewers). When the river went down, the water level in Mill Place dropped. When this last happened, Cllr Jones had wanted a one-way valve on the end of the pipe and the EA refused to pay the £500. I suggest the PC purchase and fit this; I will fund in full from my members budget estimated cost £1000-1500.
- Newall Close culvert reached capacity. The culvert is 2 concrete tubes approx. 10 metres long and 1 metre diameter. When the water level in the culvert rises above the top of the tubes then flow becomes limited as described by Poiseuille's Law. If water flowing into the culvert from the Mill Brook and the storm drains exceed this flow rate, then the water level will rise and flooding will eventually take place. The culvert under

Newall Close is effectively acting as a dam or at least a bottleneck. Possible solutions involve increasing the flow. Increasing the diameter of the tubes would have a huge effect - eg doubling the radius would increase the flow x16. Increasing the diameters would be very costly, putting an additional drainage tube in might be less costly, pumping up and over could be possible but from conversations with the fire service at the time was that the water flow into the system hugely exceeded the capacity of their pumps and they did not even attempt it. If the bottleneck cannot be bypassed, then reducing the flow into the system is all that can be done - which has been the existing (failed) plan. Increasing the capacity of the mill pond might work i.e., increase the height of the dam. Water came over the top of the dam.

EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPONSE

- Cheshire Fire & rescue attended from Audlem and remained on site until Scottish Power arrived to decide whether the power needed to be turned off (post 11.30pm).
- A second engine arrived early in the evening and 2 specialist rescue crews (one a boat) who said they were diverted because of the seriousness of the situation.

LEARNING POINTS

- The Community rallied with information being circulated via Facebook and Volunteers WhatsApp group.
- Ability to call a virtual meeting was very helpful.
 - Councillors need access to Council Zoom account should the Clerk not be available.
 - In the case of a power cut councillors need to be able to access the meeting by phone.
- High visibility vests 'Tattenhall & District Parish Council' required so that Council members can be identified.
- Communications
 - Require one nominated person on site (if safe) to feedback information to centre as to requirements and needs of the situation.
- A number of residents were not aware alternative routes out of Old Mill Place.
- A number of residents on Old Mill Place are over 60 and the need for on-going support has been highlighted, many residents were in shock and struggling to come to terms with the events, the impact of a known friendly face should not be underestimated.
- It was reported that 42mm of rainfall fell over the 24 hours of the 20th January, approx. 76mm since the weekend. 2020 saw the largest amount of annual rainfall record in Tattenhall 33 inches¹, as such the expectation is the rainfall is increasing resulting in increased flood risk.

ACTIONS

- Expert assessment with costed solutions.
- Install simple depth marker on the concrete side of the tubes in the culvert would give early warning - as soon as the water level reaches the top of the 2 tubes then flooding is imminent.
- To consider installation of alarm system to raise alarm when Brook etc reaches critical level to allow for flood defences to be implemented and cars to be moved.
- Specific plan to be created in partnership with CW&C and Cheshire Fire Service for flooding which all residents to be aware of in properties with a flood risk including contact numbers.

¹ Information based a rainfall recorded at Poplar Hall Farm, Gatesheath, Tattenhall.

It should be noted once the fire service was on site they took over the situation and it would be helpful to understand their process and to be prepared for it.

- The Park Primary School are considering allowing use of their premises in the event of this situation arising again. The school will consider lodging school keys with a member of the Governing board or member of school staff who resides in Tattenhall, in case the event occurred over the weekend, in school holiday or out of school hours at the next Board of Governors meeting.
- Form Flood Support Group of PC members, residents who can offer support and a friendly face.
- Address lack of support and communication from CW&C.
- Consider installation of one-way valve at Spinney.
- Consider permanent barrier along the upper path behind the Old Mill Place houses (either within the boundaries of the Hall Mill Pond, or residents' side of the path) containing it and directing any future flow into the Mill field and away from all the properties in Mill Brook place this is a future on going costly potential serious problem for residents.
- The main aim to install barrier to safeguard the Old Mill Place properties without increasing the threat to other residents on the High st. with excess flow.
- Initially need to check drains are cleared and redirect any future flow with new barriers away from all the properties below the Mill Pond level.

Ann Wright
25-01-2021

FURTHER INFORMATION

Appendix 1 – Report of Anthony McGrath

APPENDIX 1- TATTENHALL RESILIENCE - INCIDENT OBSERVATIONS

After 2 days of heavy rain the Mill Brook started to flood onto the High Street by the war Memorial during the afternoon of 20 Jan 2021. Levels continued to rise and by 6 pm the properties in Old Mill Place were severely flooded. Cheshire Fire and Rescue responded with a fire engine, 2 specialist crews and an incident controller. They accessed the flooded properties by boat and initially contacted all 30 affected residents and recommended they evacuate. The Fire Service used the Green Room at the Barbour as the Incident Control Centre.

The Barbour Hall was opened, as was Alison's café. The Primary School said they were available if needed. A call was put out for blankets and very quickly blankets, towels sleeping bags and easy erect beds were delivered. In the event only 3 people were evacuated, the others decided to remain and were told to ring 999 if they needed further assistance.

By 11pm the specialist fire and rescue crews had left. One crew remained until Scottish Power arrived to decide if the electricity needed to be turned off to the properties. Arrangements were being made for the evacuees to be put up overnight in the Barbour but Mike Jones used his Council contacts and arranged for them to be transferred to the Pheasant Inn.

Points for the Parish Council to Consider

1 The Tattenhall Community Resilience responded well, if ad hoc. There was no emergency controller (although in this incident that role was taken very well by the Fire Service). No one asked for the emergency equipment grab bag.

By 8pm there were 4 people from the Resilience Group with Pat Black liaising from home, 3 people from the Barbour, a first responder, 2 people from St Alban's.

2 There was no supply of sandbags, and no means of obtaining. (the houses opposite the Barbour were on the point of being flooded)

3 There are too many people to thank for their efforts, but it would be a nice gesture from the parish council to –

4 Send out an acknowledgement to everyone who provided towels and bedding and food.

5 Send a letter of thanks to the Village Indian who brought down hot food for the evacuees (the fire service enjoyed it as well!)

6 Send a letter of thanks to the Pheasant inn for accommodating the evacuees at such short notice late at night.

7 Send a letter of commendation to the Fire Service. Their Incident control was excellent and their overall response was first rate

8 Send a letter of thanks to Graham Marsden, the Barbour Caretaker. He did a great job of laying on refreshments and organising the rooms and sorting potential overnight accommodation in the Barbour.

AVMcGrath