

Notes of Flooding Meeting

Barbour Institute Wednesday 15th January 2025

PRESENT

Chairman Cllr Jonny Kershaw

Stuart Bateman – Cheshire west & Chester (CW&C) Principal Engineer

David Brown – Environment Agency (EA)

Gareth Owen – CW&C Team Leader Highways – Climate Adaptation

Karl Farrow – CW&C Highways Team Leader

CW&C Cllr Mike Jones

Public – 120

CW&C Cllr Mike Jones gave a short presentation which highlighted that Bolesworth Estate was working with CW&C and the EA to address flooding issues. He acknowledged that flooding impacts everyone, residents, businesses, children trying to get to school and the local economy.

He highlighted the works done by Tattenhall Wildlife Group (TWiG), working with the Estate and the EA upstream of the village to slow the flow of water so the high flow does not hit the mill pond concurrent with other water flows thereby reducing the peak water. It was reported that over recent months Bolesworth Estate have been working with tenants to clear ditches and have completed works to clear the ditch end of Rocky Lane on both sides of the A41. Stuart Bateman confirmed that CW&C have checked the culvert there which runs under the A41 and confirmed it is flowing as expected.

Cllr Jones stressed that CW&C, EA and Bolesworth Estate are working together to rectify issues.

He reported that works have now been done by Redrow to correct the issues which had led to properties flooding on Castlefields emphasising these works were the responsibility of Redrow not Bolesworth Estate.

Cllr Jones addressed flooding issues on Frog Lane which are complex. A Victorian brick-built culvert had collapsed which has now been repaired however this has pushed flooding issues further down the Lane and more works and ditch clearing will take place as soon as possible. (note this has been completed by the Estate)

It was emphasized that there is no single solution to flooding issues in and around Tattenhall and that CW&C, EA and Bolesworth Estate are working to come up with long term solutions.

David Brown from the Environment Agency gave a presentation explaining works that have been upstream with TWiG and the Estate to slow, hold back the flow of water into the village during periods of heavy rain.

Questions & Answers

The following were stated as part of the question and answer session.

Rocky Lane

Stuart Bateman reported that there are 2 areas that flood on Rocky Lane, outside the BT exchange and near The Righi. In November 2024 the area around the Righi was jetted and the drains were running clear however silt and detritus has built up again. The area is due to be jetted, and the embankments rebuilt at the end of January beginning of February.

It was stated that it is very difficult to impose weight restrictions on rural roads due to agriculture vehicles needing access into the fields. Although Stuart Bateman agreed to

investigate this suggestion as this believed to be breaking up the bank and causing soil to enter the gullies.

Investigation of the drains by the BT exchange had shown a blockage and the drains are due to be excavated in the next couple of months to resolve this problem.

Keysbrook Culvert

It was noted that EA have done some maintenance works in the area.

David Brown confirmed that those who own land either side of the brooks have riparian responsibility to keep brooks clear of blockages.

Gareth Owen reported that the Keysbrook culvert had been cleared of blockages. During the next financial year, it is planned to install a screen to stop large items going into the culvert and a camera to monitor the flow/blockages.

It was discussed that planning conditions cannot be imposed on developers to address issues for example improvements to the culvert as part of a planning approval. It was explained that drainage and flooding issues have to be addressed as part of the planning application whereby the water discharge across the site is no more than the discharge on the existing land, before the application is decided and permission can be given.

If a developer installs retention ponds or underground storage tanks, they may be able to demonstrate that the new development will not increase water flow and would not be required to make amendments to the culvert.

It was noted that relacing the culvert would be very expensive normally due to other services underground in the culvert's vicinity.

Residents were encouraged to report blockages and where possible provide photographs.

It was reported that discharge rates have now been amended, as such a 1 in 100 years storm discharge rate will have a percentage increase due to climate change based on the area. This is what developers must comply with.

It was confirmed that Redrow had not constructed the attenuation pond to the specifications approved as part of the planning application, it was reported works had now taken place to correct this but that legal matters relating to this are still on-going.

Chester Road Gatesheath

Flooding was highlighted as also taking place on Chester Road at Gatesheath. It was agreed officers would be given more details about this flood location.

It was asked if any assurance could be given that works being undertaken across the village, would stop flooding. It was noted no guarantee can be given, it might be stated that the defences will prevent a storm or rainfall to a certain level but if rainfall exceeds that level flooding could occur again. Works are intended to mitigate and minimise the impacts of flooding. It was noted that is why the works are referred to as flood risk management rather than flood defences. It was recognised that there is no magic answer and that it is an on-going challenge.

Tattenhall Centre

The sheer amount of water flowing through the centre on the High Street is not what would be expected off the hardstanding area at the rear of Tattenhall Centre. Gareth Owen reported he has looked at the issue and identified that the sewerage pipes which run through the Centre go from 750mm, split to 450mm and 525mm reducing to 150mm under

the High Street. As such he confirmed he will be visiting the site and contacted Welsh Water.

It was highlighted by a resident that the flooding through the Centre comes off the fields at the rear of the Centre and has only become an issue since the flood works were done upstream of Tattenhall.

Gullies

It was reported that the gullies were last cleared in July 2024. CW&C has 87,000 gullies to maintain, they are emptied once every 2 years other than where there is a high risk of flooding and then it is annual.

A resident stated that the level of silt in a gully is not an indication of how well the gully is working. He confirmed a number of gullies have been reported on a number of occasions which have not be rectified.

It was stated some gullies are simply blocked by leaves and natural detritus and residents were encouraged to clear them when it is safe to do so, otherwise they should be report on-line or via the Cheshire West app. If there is an imminent risk of flooding it should be reported on 0300 123 7 036. It was stated that CW&C will provide sandbags where possible.

David Brown stated that the flooding on the High Street from Tattenhall Centre is unlikely to have resulted from works undertaken, the timing may just be a coincidence. It is more likely the fields are so waterlogged the runoff is running downhill through the Centre.

It was raised that there are a number of flooding pinch points in and around Tattenhall and that more development is likely to be proposed and delivered as such it was asked that a strategic plan be developed with community involvement.

It was asked if the Bolesworth Estate has a conflict of interest in that it is working to reduce flooding but also proposes development on their land. It was stated by a representative of Bolesworth Estate that any development brought forward would meet the planning requirements including around drainage and flooding mitigation.

It was raised that residents cannot rely on the planning system to protect them as the Castlefields flooding demonstrates. Gareth Owen explained that Schedule 3 of the Flooding & Water Management Act 2010 puts the responsibility on the Local Authority, in this case CW&C, for flood mitigation and would therefore give the authority more control over developers and development. However, the Government has not ratified this part of the Act in England, it has only been put in place in Wales. He stressed the need for Schedule 3 to be enacted and he encouraged people to lobby for this to happened.

Rainfall

It was emphasized that rainfall intensity is a very important factor across the country noting that all roadside gullies both existing and new have been built to the same standard and with increased rainfall intensity will fill more quickly. It was stated that there is a need for national standards to be reviewed and updated. To change gullies nationwide would cost billions.

Ditch Clearance

It had been reported at meeting with Bolesworth Estate in October the minutes of which had been published on the Council's website indicated that ditch clearance would be taking place. Since then there has been another round of hedge cutting and the ditches do

not appear to have been cleared. The flooding/pond is still full on the left of Frog Lane when traveling out of Tattenhall which overflows and floods the road.

It was confirmed that Bolesworth Estate are working proactively with tenants to clear ditches however the waterlogged land is making it difficult to get equipment on to fields. It is hoped that the land will be drier during the spring/summer months allowing works to take place.

It was noted the impact of having your home flooded should not be underestimated, it is not only devastating but life changing causing anxiety whenever it rains and that this has not been acknowledged.

It was stated the fact the flooding takes days to disperse is one of the key problems facing Tattenhall.

Newton Lane

A resident of Newton Lane reported that they have been subject to flooding over the last 5 years even though the CW&C has repeatedly cleared the drain. It was reported that water is continually flowing into the farmyard contaminating valuable animal feed.

It was reported that works are scheduled for Newton Lane end January/February.

It was suggested flooding issue would not be left unresolved in urban areas. David Brown emphasized that flooding is not specific to Tattenhall with flooding being experienced in Chester (Parkgate Road) and Northwich among other places.

Old Mill Place

A resident of Old Mill Place explained the long history of flooding issues for these properties, it was explained that she has been in conversations with various bodies including CW&C, Environment Agency and Highways who have all made promises none of which have been delivered.

It was noted in 2022 the bore hole in the car park was capped and now there is a continuous pooled area in its vicinity.

It was highlighted that water is coming up into properties and their gardens.

It was confirmed that CW&C has obtained funding from central government to undertake works to protect the Old Mill Place Properties, the planned works include raising the path at the rear of the dwellings to act as a bund against the flooding and to create raised areas on the High Street to prevent flooding entering the site from that direction.

David Brown confirmed that EA provides licences for extraction and provides guidance on the capping of boreholes safely but does not carry out extraction.

It was reported that CW&C have undertaken survey of the area and have not identified any ingress of water from the mill pond drain.

It was stated there are 3 issues impacting Old Mill Place:

1. Overtopping of the Mill Pond
2. Groundwater around the capped borehole in the car park.
3. Flooding from Highway

It was noted the retaining wall for the properties is in fact a rock outcrop.

It was noted that groundwater is the responsibility of the landowner not CW&C or EA.

Gareth Owen agreed that he would investigate if CW&C can take action against the property management company for Old Mill Place if it can be demonstrated it contributes to the properties being flooded.

The Cllr Kershaw confirmed the Parish Council will continue to pursue flooding issues and work with all parties to formulate a flooding strategy from Tattenhall which will also seek community involvement.

He thanked all for attending the meeting.

Ann Wright
Clerk to Tattenhall & District Parish Council
21/01/2025.