

Notes of Flood Response Working Group Meeting Held via Zoom 10th February 2021

Present.

Parish Council

John Bailey, Iain Keeping, Neil Matthews, Ann Wright (Clerk)

Old Mill Place Representatives

Duncan & Nikki Barraclough, Peter Jones, Mr & Mrs Lavender, Mr & Mrs Layfield

Bolesworth Estate

Tom Wallbank

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Adam Ryder – Flood Risk Management & Project Officer

Cllr Mike Jones

Welcome & Introductions.

Mrs Layfield explained that they had been residents of Old Mill Place for 17 years and over that time their back garden has become wetter and now can grow rushes and other water plants, the flood on the 20th January had resulted in their ground floor being flooded and the loss of their two cars.

Mrs Layfield confirmed that Barratts had undertaken a survey of the drains previously and had confirmed that they were adequate. During the 17 years they have lived in the property it had flooded twice and was very close to flooding in 2017.

Tom Wallbank confirmed he was representing the Bolesworth Estate which owns Century House and the first building on Old Mill Place where Ditzzy Rose is located, he had also previously lived at Old Mill Place.

Nikki & Duncan Barraclough are the owners of Ditzzy Rose Makery.

Peter Jones represented Illingworth Seddon who have offices at Old Mill Place.

Mr & Mrs Lavender are residents of Old Mill Place.

Chairman

Cllr Keeping was appointed Chairman of the working group.

Objective

To identify and, where possible, introduce measures to mitigate flooding in Old Mill Place.

It was explained that there is need to limit the objective to allow the Group to focus on the flooding of Old Mill Place, although it was noted that other areas of Tattenhall had also flooded on the 20th January however, Old Mill Place was the only area to suffer internal damage to properties and had resulted in 5 residents becoming homeless. It was noted that properties on Old Mill Place had been flooded twice since 2000, the site had flooded before 2000 when it was a commercial property.

It was noted that any works undertaken to address this issue must not result in flooding elsewhere in the village.

Membership

It was noted that the intention was to keep the working group small again to retain its focus.

Membership was proposed as:

3 Parish Councillors

CW&C Officer with responsibility for flooding matters
CW&C Cllr Mike Jones
2 representatives from Old Mill Place
1 representative from Bolesworth Estate

It was agreed that future meetings would be held in public and that members of the public would be invited to speak.

It was reported that the Bolesworth Estate had worked in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) and tenant farmers to elevate the flood risk in the centre of the village and had created a flood management area which include timber leaky dams and that this had helped the situation. Mr Wallbank confirmed there was a meeting scheduled for later in the week to discuss a second phase of these works with the Sandstone Ridge Trust and EA.

It was reported that most of the farmland bordering the lower sections of the Mill Brook is grassed and that there is some arable land further up. It was noted that productive farmland needs to be retained.

CW&C Cllr Jones joined the meeting.

Methodology

It was noted the flooding was the result of several complex issues.
It was raised if it was possible to appoint one expert to address all the issues and provide a report and recommendations of how to mitigate these issues.

Section 19 Report

Mr Ryder confirmed that CW&C will be commissioning a consultant to investigate the flooding in CW&C, why it occurred, what happened, and how agencies responded and make recommendations.

The Section 19 Report will include recommendations which the responsible agencies are obliged to implement.

Section 19 Reports must be undertaken following flooding as a duty of the Local Authority resulting from the Flood Management Act 2010.

It was noted that CW&C are in the early stages of commissioning the report which will be Borough wide, focusing on areas of flooding including Tattenhall.

It was reported that over 100 properties were flooded in CW&C on the 20th January.

Timescales

Mr Ryder was unable to provide a timescale for production of the report.

It was asked what could be done to speed up the process.

It was asked if the Group could be influence the scope of work relating to Tattenhall and areas are investigation.

Mr Ryder confirmed that he would take account of information and areas of concern highlighted by the Group.

It was asked if the Parish Council should consider appointing its own consultant. It was noted this was unlikely to produce different conclusions although the conclusions may be produced sooner than the CW&C report. However, CW&C would not implement any actions

until their report had been finalized.

It was asked what would be done in the meantime to protect properties from flooding while the report is being commissioned and produced.

It was requested that timescales and milestones must be included in the scope of the report.

It was asked of all the agencies involved, CW&C, EA, Welsh Water, United Utilities, which was in a position of management and control. Mr Ryder confirmed the report will address which agency is responsible for what.

Cllr Jones suggested the report could take up to 12 months to be produced.

It was suggested that the methodology used to address this issue would be a risk management process and as such there was a need to identify the various risks likely to result in flooding.

Identification of Hazards

It was noted that there are issues on the site with boreholes and water seeping up from the sandstone however, it was understood that EA are already investigating this matter and although it may impact drainage on the site it was unlikely to be impacting the flooding as had been noted by EA.

It was noted that mill race had been replaced by the culvert and piped under Breen Close into the Mill Brook which could have limited flow and if the level of the water in the Mill Brook rose above that of Old Mill Place this would result on water flowing back to Old Mill Place.

Correspondence existed from 2001/2 which raised the possibility that the pipe was not adequate for the flow of water. It was not known if any further work had been undertaken on the pipes as a result of this.

It was raised if holding water back on higher land before entering Tattenhall was the correct approach and whether it could result in a greater flow into the village if the defenses are breached.

It was stated that the report would consider mitigation measures in detail to ensure they do not create additional flood risks.

It was noted following the 2000 floods EA had agreed the most cost-effective measures were to hold back the water and arguably that had worked until now, it was suggested further measures were needed.

It was confirmed that phase 1 of these works had been completed and that as stated earlier phase 2 was now subject to discussion.

It was asked who is responsible for the clearing of drains. It was confirmed that that landowners are the riparian owners on their land and are responsible for maintaining land drain etc.

It was noted that CW&C is responsible for clearing of drains and culverts under the highway. Mr Ryder confirmed he would established when they were last cleared by CWC and the clearing regime.

It was noted that a large flow of water is still 'struggling' to flow over the weir and it was suggested that the weir and culvert should be widened to accommodate more water flow. It

was noted that such actions could not be undertaken without thorough investigation as it could have unintended consequences.

It was noted that more trees have been planted in the area and asked if their roots may have resulted in damage.

It was noted that there was need to wait for the experts report and findings.

It was asked if any temporary measures could be undertaken in the short-term including a possible early warning system or a supply of sandbags to be used to divert or reduce flow of water.

It was noted that the length of time it will take to produce the report is very disappointing given that properties and livelihoods are at risk now and as the flooding issue has been going on for so many years.

Cllr Jones confirmed that he will be pressuring CW&C to speed the process up.

Mrs Layfield confirmed they had a bundle of correspondence and paperwork on the flooding, it was agreed these would be forwarded to the clerk who would forward to Mr Ryder.

Mr Ryder confirmed that he wanted to work with the Parish Council to keep them informed and resolve the issue.

The following hazards had been identified on the agenda:

1. Persistent heavy rain
2. Excessive water flow into Mill Field
3. Overflow of Mill Brook into Mill field
4. Mill pond dam overflow
5. Breaching of Mill pond dam
6. Flooding of Mill Field
7. Water flowing into Old Mill Place from Mill Field
8. Impaired drainage of Mill Field
9. Excessive flow of water into Mill Brook from Flacca Field drain
10. Excessive flow from field run-off through Tattenhall Centre down High Street
11. Excessive flow from Village centre down High Street
12. Sewer capacity exceeded in High Street
13. Impaired drainage of Old Mill Place
14. U-tube effect on drain between Old Mill Place & Mill Brook behind Breen Close

It was noted the Mill Field is a crucial part of the investigations as when it floods the water cascades into Old Mill Place. (2, 3, 6 & 8)

Consideration needs to be given to water overflowing the dam and if this has or will result in the dam being damaged (4 & 5).

Water draining from the development at the Flacca, car park and field needs to be considered (9)

It was noted the Mill Brook adjoins the Keys Brook to form the Goldbourne Brook which joins the Alford Brook and then joins the River Dee.

It was confirmed that EA classify the Mill Brook as a main river.

It was noted the EA had been contacted in the last 12 months regarding water seeping up carrying oil and iron residue.

It was stated the capacity of the High Street surface drains needs to be investigated and whether drains had collapsed or were blocked (8 & 12).

It was noted that EA (Manchester) had been contacted on the 1st February and had not been aware of the classification of the Brook.

Mr Ryder confirmed that EA will be a stakeholder in the Section 19 reported. It was understood that EA representatives had attended the site since the 20th January and had stated that they were producing a report on the flooding.

It was understood that EA representatives had attended the site since the 20th January and had stated that they were producing a report on the flooding. Mr Ryder confirmed he was not aware if this and would contact EA.

It was reported the drains on Old Mill Place had been cleared earlier in the day by First Port who had reported the drains were silted up and were inadequate in places.

It was noted the hazards would be refined for submission to CW&C. It was noted all attending the meeting would receive a copy of the notes of the meeting and hazards information and it was asked that those attending from Old Mill Place pass this information onto other residents and businesses.

Residents reiterated how critical it is that Section 19 reported is produced as soon as possible and not delayed by bureaucracy. Noting that residents and businesses are unable to obtain insurance, have lost possessions and cars, agreed sales of properties have fallen through and house values have dropped. All these factors are impacting on the mental health of residents.

It was noted that there needs to be some form of temporary solution to protect properties now as much as possible in addition to a permanent solution.

It was highlighted that there is no easy solution, and that the advice of the experts is needed to address these issues.

Concerns were raised that when planting took place up stream of wildflowers and trees that heavy plant machinery was used and that this may have damaged the land drains when undertaking the works.

It was noted that the current situation is unacceptable; noting that EA had stated the risk had reduce from a 1 in 25 years event to 1 in 100 years event and that since 2000 rain fall had significantly increased. It was noted that works will never completely remove the flood risk but will reduce or mitigate that risk.

It was asked what funding was available for residents and business that have been impacted by the flooding. Mr Ryder confirmed he was investigating this issue. It was noted that CW&C had written to residents offering means tested support.

Future Meetings

It was agreed that the Council write to the Chief Executive of CW&C, Andrew Lewis and copy Cllr Jones asking that the matter is expediated and dealt with as a matter of utmost urgency. It was agreed that Mr Lewis be invited to attend a site visit and meeting with the

working group and residents.

It was agreed a letter should also be sent to Edward Timpson MP seeking his support.

The below date was agreed for the next meeting and that Mr Ryder was asked to provide an update the appointment of the consultant at that meeting.

Th Chairman thanked all for attending the meeting including My Ryder and representatives of Old Mill Place whose input had been very helpful.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 10th March at 7.30pm via ZOOM.

Ann Wright 11/02/2021