

North Cadbury & Yarlington Parish Council

Report on Flooding Issues and flood related developments

November 2023, Mareike Beyer

The Environment Agency issued three flood warnings for the Cam during October. There were also two flood warnings in November so far but these seem to mainly affect the lower reaches of the Yeo.

There was heavy and prolonged rain on Saturday 28th of October. The Cam rose again to an unusually high level. Issues with serious flooding were noted in and around Yarlington, Woolston, North Cadbury and Sandbrook Lane. At Sticklepark the road was flooded at full width and to a height of 33cm (see picture below). Several properties came close to being flooded again, and we know that flooding of 2 houses recurred in Shepton Montague. Parish councillors were out and about recording issues and speaking to distressed members of the public and sandbags were put into place at several properties in anticipation of Storm Ciaran a few days later.

Cllr Vinney contacted Paul Rawson for a meeting and walk about to point out several issues spotted after Saturday's rain fall. This meeting was also attended by Ed White and myself. Paul Rawson gave assurance that EE will work with us to help solve these issues.

Cllr Vinney also emailed John Nicholson from Highways who then visited the area and met with PCs on several days during the week. In Sandbrook Lane he proposed to widen the drains underneath the road. I will follow this up with him. I understand that he also promised to solve issues in and around Yarlington, Maria and John will know more about this.

Gauges

Gareth Varney (Technical Specialist, EA) and Paul Ellison (Community Engagement Officer, SRA / Civil Contingency Unit) visited the area on 9th Nov to further inspect possible locations for two telemetry gauges in our parish.

The EA is currently working with the SRA to deliver a pilot project to trial a 'direct to community' flood warning service to see how effectively they can provide a warning service where there currently is none (e.g. in rapid response catchments) using new technology and other innovative approaches.

This pilot was started a year ago and will run for a total of 5 years. The Cam catchment has been added into the limited number of communities the EA are looking to cover with the pilot due to the flooding experienced this year.

The EA are planning on doing all this within the funding provided by the SRA for this project this financial year, therefore no funding needs to be applied for installation or operation over the next 4 years.

The intention is to install these gauges in Blackford as well as 2 or 3 other potential sites in the Yarlington / North Cadbury area. There will also be a rain gauge in Bratton Seymore.

EA/DEFRA funding for NFM (Natural Flood Management)

Fwag (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) have now submitted an EOI (Expression of Interest) for EA/DEFRA funding for NFM intervention for the Cam catchment area, in partnership with YRCT (Yeovil Rivers Community Trust), Somerset Council and the SRA (Somerset Rivers Authority).

Maria and I actively supported the preparation of the EOI by contacting landowners who might be willing to express an interest in the potential of NFM intervention features on their land. I am very pleased to say that over 20 relevant landowners responded positively and were willing to support the EOI, this included 5 of the major landowners. We also received help from many local residents and it was wonderful to see how the community came together to support the process.

Section 19

Paul Ellison reported that an investigator for the Section 19 has now been appointed. It is hoped that a draft report might be available by May next year. Paul Ellison is happy to be a point of contact for any questions with regards to the Section 19. Any videos or photos relating to the events of May 9th would still be useful and can be emailed to flooding@somerset.gov.uk.

LCN flood working group 15th November

This was an online meeting attended by 7 representatives of local parishes. It was also attended by Paul Ellison (SRA/CCUnit).

Each attendee gave a short introduction of their background and interest in joining the group. We then took turns commenting on several topics centred around flooding issues, potential measures to mitigate flooding, community involvement, flood surveys, emergency planning, Section 19 and potential support. I have attached the note of the meeting below.

An Emergency Flood Plan Workshop is scheduled for Monday 8th January 10.30am-12noon at The Shambles, Market Place, Castle Cary. Parish Council members and other community members interested in this are welcome to attend.



Flood working Group Notes – Wednesday 15th November.

Attendees:

Chrisitopher Le Hardy – Rimpton
Tim Adams - Compton Pauncefoot & Blackford
Lucie Reader – Pitcombe
Judi Morison – Castle Cary
Lisa Davis – Castle Cary & Sparkford
Mareike Beyer – North Cadbury
Ewan Jones – Bruton
Paul Elliston – Community Engagement Officer

Apologies:

Nick Garrett – North Cadbury
Mark Hutton - Pitcombe

Great discussions throughout the meeting, after introductions of attendees the areas picked from the intros are:

- Emergency Planning
- Community Flood Scheme
- Blowing Out Gullies
- Local Landowners ditches/drains
- Natural Flood Management
- Scientific Levels – Rainfall, Met Office
- Section 19

There was a lot of discussion regarding the above, here are the points I've noted.

Emergency Planning

Ensure emergency plans are up to date and fit for purpose, share ideas and create plans where needed. Christopher has provided some great information from Rimpton Parish Council, this will be share with these notes. Also mentioned, Martin at Queen Camel has spent a lot of time developing a plan and would be happy to share information.

Blowing out Gullies

A lot of road drains and gullies are blocked solid and filled with leaves, especially this time of year. Some parishes have been successfully getting volunteers and residents to check their local area and clear drains where able to do so.

Local landowners

Run off was mentioned, the amount of water which runs off roads and fields with nowhere to go, causes major issues. Speak with landowners, inspect ditches, create and maintain.

Natural Flood Management

There is a live Expression of Interest that has gone in for the Cam Valley aiming to secure funding for NFM work.

Telemetry

The SRA is currently funding a pilot project with the Environment Agency to monitor streams to measure height through river level gauges as well as rainfall intensity with the aim of providing communities with their own bespoke flood warnings.

Section 19

Anna Meares has been appointed as the investigator. Paul Elliston will be supporting this and will give an overview of the process and timeline at a future meeting.

Going forward:

Workshop to support parishes with Emergency Flood Plan.

Good idea to map the area.

Report all hotspots/issues.

Update from the Environment Agency

Actions:

Terena to share all email details – listed at end of notes.

Terena to email Lucie and Mareike with LCN invite.

Terena to email map to Lucie.

Thank you all for your input during the meeting and for providing details after. Here are some useful links:

[2. Communities Prepared – Somerset Prepared](#) A template for a community emergency plan

[Parish Online](#) (all Clerks should use this!)

[The Land App](#) (local Farmers & Landowners quite likely already have this) for researching Riparian Responsibilities via Land Ownership / Cadastral Parcels etc.

<https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding>

<https://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/get-involved/>

The [Frome Floodplain Reconnection Project](#) (Funded by Section 106 Contributions from Housebuilding)

Next meeting will be Emergency Flood Plan Workshop, Monday 8th January 10.30am-12noon at The Shambles, Market Place, Castle Cary.