

Flooding in Sea Hill Lane

Sea Hill Lane is very prone to flooding at the lower northern end of the lane mainly due to the topography of the land. The main concerns at this point are that several houses were built three to four hundred years ago lacking modern footings and damp courses thus susceptible to problems with flooding. This is also mirrored in Mill Lane.

There is a spring line from Langdon Hill which feeds the local streams and in the time of heavy rains combined with high winds causes local flooding. Sea Hill Lane is mostly a sunken lane and so any surface water runs naturally down to the lane through the substrata of the fields. Unfortunately, this is exacerbated when the hedges are flailed (usually late at night) with the detritus not cleared up and left to rot in the verges. This in turn widens the verges and reduces the road width so that any water that does run down the lane totally misses any gullies which are covered by vegetation and detritus. Due to cut backs Dorset Council Highways no longer carry out side-verging, in fact their manpower I believe has reduced by over 25% in the last decade with underutilised machinery left unrepaired or sold off.

Also, riparian landowners are to blame for some of the flooding by carelessness or lack of responsibility letting hedge/tree cuttings etc fall into the stream. There is a metal grid at the foot of Pettycrate Lane stream as it turns into Sea Hill Lane which is supposed to collect any debris before it goes into the nearby culvert. From this grid I have removed an assortment of detritus including part of a fence, chicken wire, gallon plastic container and a gin bottle plus long bramble cuttings and twigs which had built up damming the stream causing it to overflow onto the road.

At the top of Pettycrate Lane there is a bund diverting the water from the unmade-up section of Pettycrate around the back of Holme Cottage and The Larches into the drainage ditch from the field behind Welderley. The landowner/tenant farmer of this field built a brick open culvert to take away the water from his land and fed into the council gullies. Unfortunately, the resultant volume of water results in much of this water overflowing and totally missing the two nearby gullies. In addition, when Ridwood was extended the surplus surface water was diverted to go into the stream causing even more water to flow down to the culvert.

Just before Christmas I reported to Dorset Highways that several gully's in Sea Hill Lane were blocked and need jetting. These gully's were still blocked on 20th January so I requested an update with a reply that "The officer dealing with your enquiry has been notified of your request for further action". On 14th February still not hearing anything definite I then forwarded it by e-mail to my Highways contact Simon Roberts and on 18th February his colleague rang me to say that a works order had been raised and all should be completed by March 6th subject to further flooding elsewhere!