

St. Mary Bourne Parish Council

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## **Flood & Emergency Group Meeting**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**3:00pm at The Committee Room, The Village Centre, St Mary Bourne**

Present from FEG: Dave Burlison(DB), Sarah Cooney(SC), Patrick Foote (PF), Clem Jones(CJ), Ed Makgill(EM), Maxine Owen(MO), Dave Peart(DP).

Present from SW: Floyd Cooper (FC), Luke Osborne (LO), Bobby Wilmot (BW) & Scott Howe (SH)

The meeting opened with apologies for a couple of anticipated late arrivals.

**Splashguard at Tudor Cottage:** After an incident at Tudor Cottage in SMB, where SW operatives had installed a splash guard which was later driven over by the resident, DB advised that he been contacted by the resident and they are in discussions with Southern Water who are aware of the incident.

**Update on 24/7 Tankering:** The FEG asked the SW team to confirm whether 24/7 tankering was indeed occurring at all current tankering sites, as it seemed locally that 24/7 tankering was not happening at all sites, only the War Memorial. Residents at Applegate had reported that sewage was still leaking from manholes while the tankers were not there at night and Stoke residents had also confirmed that the tankers were still leaving just after 8pm. The SW team present confirmed they had given instructions for ALL to be 24/7, so would follow-up. FC agreed to ensure that most effected residents would be advised of the increase. FEG to follow-up too.

**ACTION:** SW to confirm ALL sites would be 24/7

**ACTION:** SW to speak to residents

**ACTION:** FEG to speak to residents :- **Action Update: Complete, 24/7 now in all areas.**

**Disinfecting:** The FEG requested that SW provide details of how the areas and property polluted by sewage was going to be disinfected on an ongoing basis. All agreed that it is not a very environmentally friendly process, and everything possible should be done to prevent disinfectant reaching the water course or Bourne Rivulet. SW/FC advised that SW are looking to get agreement from the Environment Agency on their planned process, and advised that it was tricky to find the balance between effective disinfection using a strong enough solution while ensuring least damage to the surrounding environment. SW are looking to see if a 'Clean+Remove' process is possible.

Specific actions will be taken at Bridge Cottage in Stoke to clear up the polluted garden and river bank there, and a team from SW is visiting the residents on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 24 to find a solution from them. The residents of Bridge Cottage are also requesting that a one-way valve might be added to their system in future to prevent the specific issues they have had this year. They are expected to raise it with the SW team.

**Location of Tankering:** It was discussed whether the tankering would work from different man-holes than are currently being used to give residents with tankers working outside their properties some relief especially now that it is a 24/7 process. DB explained that the complaint that had been made by the resident at Wayfarers had been withdrawn, so it would now be feasible for the tankering to occur from there instead of outside Spring Hill Lodge. There was a

discussion with SW/BW that that information had not yet filtered down through the SW system, but she would ensure it was updated, and SW/LO would ensure the changes were made on the ground. FEG advised that until this years complaint, this was the location that the tankers usually used.

**ACTION:** SW/LO to understand whether the tankering would be as effective outside Wayfarers Cottage, and move it to there if feasible. **Action Update: Complete, tankers moved**

**Sewer to Sewer Pumping at BVI:** SW/LO advised that the initial set up at the BVI had not been a fantastic success, so on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the distance of the overpumping from sewer to sewer had been extended along the road. The traffic lights have been adjusted to three-way to accommodate the BVI customers accessing and leaving the car park. CJ suggested that the problem with the sewer in that area was that there are slumps in the pipe that allow silt to build up and block the flow. SW/LO agreed that this was the case, the pipe had been surveyed the previous dry-season and there is a work order in their system for the required work to be carried out in the dry-season of 2024.

**ACTION:** SW/FC & SW/SH follow-up to ensure this happens, post April 24 and prior to

### **Stoke Over-pumping:**

Possible over-pumping at Stoke was discussed. SW/FC updated the group on the proposal from SW to over-pump into the Bourne. He advised that the set-up was know as Groundwater Treatment Works, and involves UV disinfection of the bacteria in the sewage. The process would be to pump from the sewer through the device – a screen, then through a 5 micro cloth filter, then UV disinfection which is tested to achieve 99.9% of bacteria killed. The effluent should be equivalent to what comes out of a normal treatment works. The device does not remove ammonia entirely, but the ammonia is 0.5-0.75 parts per million (mg/litre). This is below the current levels that are permitted by the Environment Agency (EA) at Barton Stacey and Fullerton (The permit there allows 3mg/l). The EA have agreed the process in principle, and a closed trial is being set up to run at SMB pumping station downstream from Vitacress. The trial will go ahead in the Eastern channel. The EA have agreed that it can be added to the Groundwater Infiltration Reduction Plan for the St Mary Bourne Parish Area. The disinfecting needs to be completed ASAP within 2 two weeks of the meeting. I.e. 31-1-24

Concerns were raised about adding anymore water to the Bourne Rivulet, which the FEG advised SW had already broken the backs at Gangbridge, and the land and garages of Green Lodge are already flooding. Any additional water (Over-pumping will occur at 20 litres per second) will obviously cause alarm to residents. SW/FC confirmed that over-pumping could NOT occur if the rivulet had already overflowed.

Further concerns were raised about what is the risk to the rivulet and consequently the environment, if the Treatment Works device fails. What is the risk of pollution? SW/FC assured those present that there are automatic alerts when any part of the device fails, and pumping would stop immediately. An engineer would be despatched at the same time to investigate and repair. SW would have SOND devices (devices in the rivulet that measure pollution) downstream of the works – these send data every 10 minutes to SW datacentre. Weekly there would be Biological Testing which is enhanced further in areas of food production such as Vitacress. SW/FC was asked to ensure that data could be shared if necessary.

**ACTION:** SW/FC to send details of testing process and results.

The FEG then challenged the SW team as to who would benefit from switching from tankering to over-pumping? It seemed a good solution for SW in reducing costs of tankering, and people with 24/7 tankering outside their houses might prefer it, but surely the longer term solution has

to be replacing the sewer entirely? SW/FC agreed to share the cost of the tankering in St Mary Bourne Catchment.

**ACTION:** SW/FC to provide the FEG with details of historical cost and estimated cost for this year for tankering.

**Communication:** DB advised that apart from the people from SW in the room, there is inconsistent communication generally from SW. An example was shared of a letter from Mr Bob Collington MD Wastewater that directly contradicted what the PC is being told by the teams on the ground. The same letter was sent to Kit Malthouse, local MP, so it seems like the people at this level in the organisation are not in touch with what is actually happening on the ground. Residents are being sent letters that are not accurate. SW/FC agreed that he would speak to his superior to get the correct message through. The FEG asked for clarity of the hierarchy in SW, so they can communicate at the correct level and also discuss cap ex projects and annual/ shorter term budgets with the appropriate decision makers in the company.

Many of the questions that the FEG are asking SW/FC is not able to answer as it is not part of his role, but he agreed to make sure that the FEG is linked up to the correct people. SW/FC had planned for other of the SW team to attend the meeting, but unfortunately on the day they were unable to make it.

DB explained that it was very frustrating to have to explain the situation in the area all over again when contacting any of the contact centre numbers, there does not appear to be any history retained on SW's systems. Even basic CRM systems can manage this, why not SW? DB & EM complained that response times are poor, and there is a definite low service level out of hours on the emergency line. SW/BW is now the on-the-ground customer support, and shared a new email address for Hampshire customers which she manages. SW/BW distributed a SW leaflet on Sewer Flooding about what happens if your property is flooded by a sewer which the ground team carry to distribute to people affected.

**ACTION:** SW/FC to provide Organisation Chart to explain how structure of SW works

**ACTION:** MO to contact SW/BW to see if a pdf version is available for the PC files/website.

**Groundwater Infiltration Reduction Plan (IRP):** The FEG challenged SW/FC that the current published plan from 2021 needs updating, and as far as the FEG was concerned that many of the actions listed in the document had not been achieved, or even updated. SW/Fc advised that an up-to-date plan was currently being worked on and should be available in a month or so. The FEG asked questions around what of the surveys listed had been done, was the document used as a project planner, or is there just no project plan in place? Is there any capital spend ringfenced for our area? Where is the accountability? The FEG members have lost confidence in its content, and questioned whether it was just an exercise that SW did to placate the Regulator OfWat? SW/FC advised that he had planned for a member of the Capital Team to attend the meeting, but they were unable to come. SW/FC advised that the IRP was not approached holistically and was not a document his team used routinely.

SC specifically asked SW/FC if he was familiar with the Lambourn Valley trial of Tubagel by Thames Water which was a failure, and Thames Water in the end had to replace the whole sewer in the problem area. With Tubagel being proposed as a possible solution to the issues in SMB Parish, then it would be wrong of SW not to understand what had happened there before wasting time and money doing the same here. SW/FC said he would pass the information on to Keith Herbert who is responsible for the 'Pathfinder Project' which would cover any sewer repair or replacement.

The FEG asked what SW/FC thought the barriers were to replacing the sewer entirely as it can not carry on as it is indefinitely. At this point CJ suggested that the FEG put together a list of

questions that they would like answers from SW for, and email this to SW/FC who can bring in the appropriate people at SW to answer.

SW/SH asked for a copy of the Action Tracker that the FEG uses.

**ACTION:** SW/FC to get update from Keith Herbert on Lambourn Valley trial

**ACTION:** FEG to put together list of questions for SW

**ACTION:** Check Action Tracker is up to date & share with SW/SH

**General Information and Discussion at close of meeting:** SW/FC was asked to confirm what actions he had taken from the meeting, they were listed as follows:

1. Cleaning of cars - FC
2. Barrier incident/splashguard – BW
3. Check 24/7 tankering at Applegate & Stoke – LO
4. Organise tankering from outside Wayfarers
5. Visit to Bridge Cottage – LO & BW
6. Kerbstone and Verge Repairs – FC
7. Provide FEG with Tankering Cost detail – FC
8. Feedback of inaccurate information at MD level from Bob Collington – FC
9. Organisational Chart of SW
10. Communication issues to be discussed between DB & BW
11. Provide 2024 IRP as soon as available – FC
12. Link in Capital Delivery Project Team with SMBPC & FEG – FC
13. Provide planned disinfecting regime and plan – FC
14. Clarify tanker route from all points and return – LO
15. Confirmation of usefulness of jetting in Stoke - LO

DB also asked if there could be an update of actions from the last FEG/SW meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023, which DB has requested updates on numerous occasions.

1. Dye Test to confirm sewer mapping - Shane
2. Levels assessment - Feng
3. Pumped solution feasibility – Floyd/Shane
4. Share info on wetlands - Floyd
5. Follow up on water distribution Job - Floyd
6. Flow rates downstream of dog-leg – Floyd/Andy A