

St. Mary Bourne Parish Council

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Flood Emergency Group Meeting

Thursday 7th December 2023

4:30pm at The Committee Room, The Village Centre, St Mary Bourne

Present: Dave Burlison(DB), Sarah Cooney(SC), Robert Draper(RD) of BDBC, Allan Hitchcock(AH), Phil Jeffrey(PJ), Clem Jones(CJ), Ed Makgill(EM), Maxine Owen(MO), Dave Peart(DP).

EM welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Robert Draper (RD) from Emergency Planning at BDBC, and re-arranged the agenda so that RD could make his way back to Basingstoke promptly for another meeting.

Apologies for Absence - None

Sandbags :

RD led by introducing his role as Regulatory Services Manager, of which part of the role is Emergency Planning Officer. RD reiterated that it was the homeowner's responsibility to protect their own property, and RD made a point of saying that he wished to manage people's expectations of what can be done if flooding occurs, as it is likely to be across the borough if an event occurs, so he would urge the parish to be as self-sufficient as possible. RD described the set-up at Wade Road in Basingstoke where the empty sandbags and sand supply are kept, and stated that BDBC would supply sandbags in an unexpected emergency, but were not obliged to otherwise. It was agreed that sandbags would not be any help in SMB if the flood was from groundwater rise. Where they would come in useful for managing surface water flooding.

Dave Burlison pressed for detail of how many RD would be happy to supply so we could have some ready in the parish, and 70 in number was agreed. RD advised of an estimated cost of approximately £1.50 each. Filled, they are only likely to last about 2 years whether they are plastic or hessian the shelf-life is about the same. RD estimated that the parish is more likely to need about 300 sandbags to manage any significant flooding.

The FEG agreed that EM would investigate the purchase of a number of empty sandbags, and propose the purchase for approval at the next Full Council Meeting on 12th December 2023. The sand required to fill the bags is standard building sand, and can be purchased easily. It was agreed that the purchase should be made as soon as possible ahead of any increase in demand might limit the supply. Long Cable Ties should be purchased to seal the sandbags once filled. A frame would need to be constructed to allow easy filling.

Storage of the sandbags full and empty should be in the newly repaired benches in SMB village centre, and Dave Peart is to liaise with Brian Haigh of The White Hart to request storage of a supply for Stoke.

Water Levels:

A document was circulated by CJ showing recent rainfall and groundwater levels. Similar graphs are available on the Environment Agency website. It was discussed that there is about a 6 to 8 week time gap between rainfall and ground level rise, but the springs in the Bourne Valley can effect these measurements.

The established trigger for the EA to deploy additional flood defences at Spring Hill Lodge is 78.6 Metres. Currently the level is at 78.4. EM confirmed that the Parish Council do NOT need to be involved in this process it is all managed by the EA.

It was discussed that the drain by the War Memorial in SMB needs attention, and would help with alleviating overground flooding. EM is attempting to liaise with Hampshire Highways about this, and has varying levels of success. Cllr Tom Thacker has been linked into these conversations wherever possible to add weight to EM's requests.

Action Plan:

All agreed that all actions were up to date. Version numbers to be edited as appropriate to ensure everyone is using the most up-to-date version.

Southern Water:

EM & DB advised that Southern Water engineers had shared that there was a plan in place to redirect part of the sewer in the centre of SMB. This would take pressure off some of the part of the infrastructure which were backing up and causing problems. DB agreed to chase up Floyd of Southern Water on this.

SC raised the point that the EA had been in the riverbed strimming whilst it was dry. SC took an action to understand the background of what, and when the EA do this, and what parts they have done.

The FEG discussed that the tankers are in the valley already this season, and there are already complaints from residents about the disturbance the tankering causes – narrowing roads, damaging verges, noise & light pollution, and fumes outside people's homes. The group agreed that there needs to be a push to Southern Water to find a different solution.

There was discussion that a member of the public (MOP) was in contact with the PA to the CEO of Southern Water, and there is rumour of some kind of anti-flooding device being funded by Southern water for the Applegate area of SMB. Action taken by DB to speak to MOP.

Highways:

EM reporting to Highways all issues with assets in the Parish. The War Memorial drain needs desilting. There is a silt trap in the garden of the Croft family which hasn't been emptied for years by HCC despite them having all the details of where it is and full access. SC advised the group again that there are similar problems in Stoke when certain drains are not cleared or jetted. DB to supply SC with contact details of relevant people. All should be reported to ensure they are on a maintenance plan.

MOPs are reporting issues themselves directly to HCC, a request for jetting gullies on Baptist Hill has recently been sent with a copy to Cllr Tom Thacker, and it is believed jetting is now imminent at this location.

Landowners:

By the bridge by Holdway Cottages in SMB the trellis fencing that was crossing the river has kindly been removed by the landowner, as it was at risk of obstructing the flow of the river when high, breaking and causing the river to flood. This can be re visited when the river has dried up, hopefully by the summer.

The group concluded that if anything we hear is a problem then it must be reported through to the relevant authority by the FEG/Parish Council AND the MOP. If there is something that can be actioned locally, then it should be actioned. Not everything is within the PC's power to deal with.

DB is managing the issue with the BT Man-hole adjacent to Langley & Crow Cottage.

Communication & Support:

The Emergency contact numbers for the FEG, and outside agencies such as Southern Water and the Environment Agency are available on the website, but might need to be made more obvious. EM & MO to action.

The lengthsman is due in the parish on Friday 15th December and will be instructed to clear the silt from the special grip in Stoke at the bottom of Stoke Hill, and then redig the grips on Egbury Road and Bourne Hill.

ACTION LIST (Also to be added to the Acton Tracker):

1. Confirm order for 70 sandbags to BDBC - DB
2. Organise current stock and storage at SMB – DB & DP
3. Investigate possible storage site for Stoke – DP
4. Investigate purchase of empty hessian bags & sand – EM
5. Gain approval of funding for sandbags from PC mtg on 12.12.23 – EM
6. Update Action Tracker and ensure Version numbers are kept up to date – MO
7. Chase Floyd Cooper of Southern Water re Sewer Works plan – DB
8. Follow up weed cutting regime with EA – SC
9. Follow up re Applegate anti-flood device with MOP – DB
10. Ensure ALL Silt-traps are on maintenance plan with HCC – ALL
11. Statement for Website and Social Media – EM & MO