

2016

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress Report #4 - December 2016

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Mill Lane in Diddlebury flooded but not as severely as in 2007 and it is hoped that this was at least in part due to the stream clearance carried out in October.

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Geoff Neden

10th December 2016

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In the Pye Brook catchment, suitable sites have also been found and discussions with the relevant land owners will soon take place. Old rainfall records at Abdon and Clee St Margaret are being utilised and it is hoped that further level boards and rain gauges can eventually be placed in the catchment which is larger and more varied than that of the Diddlebrook.

The leaky dam structures may look like a build up of driftwood and other rubbish in a watercourse but they are in fact properly designed and constructed. Members of the public are requested therefore not to dismantle these in a well meaning effort to clear obstructions in a watercourse.

Future regular maintenance of the Mill Lane bridge and other drainage structures is being pursued by the FAG and Planning Applications for new housing developments in the area are also being scrutinised to ensure that run off's are not increased as a result of the development.

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My thanks to the Parish Council EMO, Shropshire Council, Bridges Dept and Tom.

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We also liaise with the Severn Rivers Trust, the Culmington FAG and the Friends of the Corve and Teme in Ludlow.

In Bouldon, blocked drains have been cleared and placed on the regular maintenance programme. A survey has been completed and a design is under preparation for diverting flood water round the bridge.

The flow gauge had been installed on the main Diddlebury bridge and the excess gravel beneath the Mill Lane bridge will soon be cleared and leaks in the adjacent wall repaired.

The mapping of drainage features has commenced and drains runs will be confirmed by the use of dye. All this information will then be added to the Shropshire Council data base.
Ascertainment of land ownerships in both catchments is under way.

Work has started on the Shropshire Wildlife Trust survey of the Diddle Brook catchment and it is hoped that the Pye Brook catchment will be next in line.

The Diddle Brook section in Mill Lane was cleared of a build up of silt and weeds by a working party last month. The Diddlebury ducks are back along with a moorhen.

Members of the Group were recently interviewed and videoed for an upcoming feature on flood action groups.

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Stream Clearance Month

May was the designated Stream Clear Up month and work parties carried out clearance operations on the Diddle Brook in Diddlebury and on the Pye Brook in Bouldon and Peaton.

On 3rd May, the Diddle Brook was cleared of excess vegetation from the Mill Lane road bridge to the foot bridge leaving a much wider drainage path for the water. The banks were trimmed to keep the grass under control.

In Peaton on May 20th, a group of 5 cleared quite a lot of wood from the stream and also plastic, metal, asbestos, two dead lambs and rubber roof liner. An informal "leaky dam" was found up stream and more work is required in future upstream of this towards Peaton Strand as well as downstream but this will involve a major work party.

In Bouldon, much hard work had already been done the previous week by the owners of Bouldon farm clearing some large trees which blew down into the stream in the high winds. Then on 20th May eight Bouldon residents cleared large branches and trash upstream of the village by the weir. A good time was had by all who then retired to the Tally Ho where the owner had kindly offered to pay for a meal for them to reward their hard work.

Further working parties will be arranged and members of the Group in Diddlebury also keep the stream bank grass under control between the formal dates.

Notes on trial kick survey carried out at Culmington on 12th May 2016

The trial survey was run by Helen Campbell of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) for the Culmington FAG.

The technique produces results which indicate the quality of the water in the stream and which can be compared with other results from the same place on future occasions – say twice per annum – and hence show whether the water quality is improving, static or deteriorating. Stream water quality can be degraded by such things as leaky septic tanks, incorrect plumbing connections which allow say dishwasher effluent to run directly into streams, agricultural practices such as fertiliser run off, silage pit drainage etc, housing developments in the catchment and so on.

The technique uses a large, framed fine mesh net with a flat bottom which is held down tightly to the stream bed using a long handle. Just upstream of the net, the operator disturbs the stream bed (kicks it) for about a minute and a half. If the sample site contains different types of bed (gravel, mud, vegetation etc) then the sample should be weighted accordingly. The technique is easy, the equipment basic and the test does not take long to carry out.

After the time has expired, the contents of the net are tipped into a large container which already has stream water in it. The small creatures caught can then be individually spooned out into smaller containers and examined against an Identification Field Guide (available on the SWT website – along with survey instructions) to establish which species have been found. Each type is then counted so that the survey produces both the number of species existing at the sample point and the quantity of each one. In general terms, the greater the diversity, the better the water quality.

From what appeared to be the clear water of the Seifton Brook, we found a huge diversity of stream life ranging from Cadis Fly Larvae to leeches, fresh water shrimps etc. It was fascinating to see what had emerged. Hopefully we can use this in time in the Diddlebury Parish Catchments.

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Diddlebury stream clearance 3rd May

A good turnout last night ensured that the stream benefitted. It looks much better now and has a cleaner flow path. Thanks to all who took part.

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May stream clearance programme

Work starts on the Diddle Brook at Diddlebury by the Mill Lane bridge at 6.00pm on Tuesday 3rd May. Please bring garden tools and wellies.

Then on Friday May 20th, clearance work will be carried out on the Pye Brook in Peaton and Bouldon - both starting at 6.00pm. Soup and a visit to the Tally Ho will follow. Volunteers from elsewhere in the Parish would be particularly welcome here due to the small populations of both villages.

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Notice of Meeting

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27th April 2016

Notes on talk given by John Curtin to the U3A in Ludlow, 25th April 2016

John is Acting Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management for the Environment Agency

John's talk related mainly to the floods caused by the three storms over the Christmas period which gave rise to catastrophic flooding in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

He showed slides of the devastation and also provided statistics which illustrated the huge scale of these events which broke many records.

The presentation was excellent overall and gave rise to many good questions which he answered honestly. The satellite views of the three storms were fantastic – showing how the third one was so large that it shifted the jet stream, which had been stuck farther south than normal, far to the north. Some people who were camped at the North Pole went to bed the previous night in temperatures of -5 but woke up to +25!

Whatever one's views are on climate change, the fact is that statistically, severe flooding events are on the rise in UK. The Government recognises this and is planning accordingly within economic constraints.

With particular relevance to our situation, he confirmed that in his view the correct way to deal with flooding is to use a combination of "hard" engineering methods – embankments, pumping schemes, dredging and son on – and "soft" methods by which he means catchment management projects.

The catchment management scheme around Pickering has been in use long enough to have produced meaningful statistics comparing downstream flows after similar rainfall events before and after its installation. These show a reduction in peak flows of up to 20%.

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25th April 2016

Notes from Meeting with Culmington FAG on 14th April 2016

Those present:

Hugh Disley	Chair Culmington FAG
Jayne Disley	Secretary Culmington FAG
Peter Lines	Member Culmington FAG
Suki Gregson Smith	Member Culmington FAG
A N Other	Member Culmington FAG
Graham Harding	Culmington PC
Carol Byng	Culmington PC

Thomasin Sayers	National Flood Forum
Helen Campbell	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Jane Collier	Chair Diddlebury FAG
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The meeting started with feedback from the recent field trip to see the flood alleviation work carried out near Stroud. This had been extremely useful. The different types of structure were seen, and as it had rained heavily for the preceding few days, it was possible to see how effective the measures were. The trip had confirmed to members that what they were trying to do in Culmington was achievable. A slide show will be prepared from all the images taken on the trip and this will be presented at a forthcoming meeting.

Helen Campbell then gave an update on her field work. This is nearing completion with most land owners already on board. She also said that physical work on site should commence in early summer this year using local Contractors. She confirmed that funding was available for both the survey and the follow up physical work. She will be conducting “kick” surveys in local watercourses to determine what wild life is there and asked for volunteers. Dates are to be circulated.

Hugh pointed out that some work done in Culmington Parish will impinge on land in the Diddlebury Parish as administrative boundaries do not coincide with catchment areas. Carol pointed out that cooperation between Parishes was the policy of Shropshire Council.

The rain gauge is now in operation and visible on the same web address as the depth gauge on the bridge.

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Notes on meeting held in Culmington on 26th January 2016

Firstly thanks to those members who were able to attend the meeting. I hope you found it as interesting and useful as I did. I estimate that there were upwards of 40 people present - many of them local land owners.

The meeting was called to show a video produced by a group in Stroud who suffered from bad flooding in the past and who subsequently took action to try and prevent this happening again.

It showed the low tech measures taken, with the cooperation of the landowners, in the upstream catchment.

Although all catchments are different, these are the same measures which in principle could be applied in Diddlebury Parish.

I hope to have a link to the video on U Tube shortly and will circulate this so that those of you who were unable to attend last night can see what it is all about.

After the video, Pete Lambert who is running the current work in the Culmington catchment gave a Power Point presentation on the work his group are doing in Shropshire and in particular in Culmington. This was refreshingly free from jargon and acronyms and clearly showed how small low tech works of many different sorts can make a big difference with the long term benefits not

restricted to flood reduction but also extending to improvements in land use management. The current timetable envisages work on control structures starting in the Culmington catchment by the end of 2016.

There was also useful input from officers of the Shropshire Council and the Environment Agency.

The question of controlling flows in the Corve was raised and it was pointed out that by restricting flood flows in the tributaries using the means illustrated in the presentation, the overall flow reaching the Corve would also be slowed down leading to less flooding of the main river.

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