

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Comments on the Surface Water Drainage Review – survey for Defra

We strongly support the Review and our comments are set out below. These are not in any way comprehensive but they do draw on our own experiences in the field. In view of the importance given by Defra and the EA to Community Input to their projects – including the ongoing one in The Corvedale - we hope that our comments are given due regard.

1 Natural Flood Management (NFM) in general

The unconventional range of procedures used for NFM quite possibly do not fall within existing legislation – as that deals more with conventional engineering and building works - and it may well be that this needs revisiting to keep it relevant.

In particular, it may in some instances be necessary to use Compulsory Powers – with all necessary safeguards - if land owners are otherwise unwilling to allow the construction of NFM structures in situations where their deployment is essential to prevent flooding downstream..

Access across private land to these structures for subsequent maintenance and/or monitoring purposes can also be problematical although it is recognised that outside of emergencies, such access visits should not interfere with normal agricultural practices. Perhaps some sensitive legislation could help with this.

2 Leaky dams

Clarity is required on responsibilities for possible downstream flooding resulting from the failure of one or more leaky dams – possibly constructed on land belonging to several different owners.

Ownership of leaky dams and responsibility for their future maintenance and possible future renewal also requires clarification.

3 SUDS structures

All such structures should conform to the requirements of the Building Regulations which may themselves require amendment to encompass less conventional approaches. The Draft Code of Practice produced by British Water should be the guideline for the design of SUDS features.

LLFA's and/or their Agents should monitor the construction of all SUDS structures which are required under a Planning Approval – perhaps best carried out by the enhanced use of Building Inspectors as they check the rest of the building works at different construction stages.

The Register of Surface Water Assets should include all those Assets on private property which should be formally “designated” and it should be kept up to date with each new owner made aware of their existence, dimensions, location and purpose. A site location plan should be used for this purpose.

LLFA's and/or their Agents should ensure that all necessary ongoing maintenance of SUDS structures (including their eventual replacement) is carried out in perpetuity by the builder and all subsequent owners. To achieve this, the scope of Local Authority Searches should be expanded to include these Assets – their location, dimensions, use and maintenance requirements – using the location plans recommended above. The need to keep such Assets available for inspections should be highlighted to prospective owners who should also be made aware that they are not allowed to alter the “designated” structures without first having applied for permission from the relevant Authority. The above applies equally to situations where one SUDS facility serves multiple building ownerships although in this case, some form of legal Agreement would be required to which all new owners would have to sign up.

The Legal Profession when Conveyancing properties, should be under a legal obligation to notify prospective purchasers of the existence of these Assets and their responsibilities in terms of ongoing inspection/maintenance/replacement requirements.

4 CIL Monies

There seems to be no formal control over how these monies are used. Sometimes they are not available for use in building necessary upstream flood prevention measures but are instead put to different uses by Councils. This situation needs regularising.

5 OWC's

The cost of obtaining necessary Ordinary Water Course Consents is considerable (even though the swingeing increases in these costs recently requested by the EA were not allowed) and act as a

deterrent to local Flood Action Groups who generally have only limited funding. The use of a proportion of such limited funds for administrative purposes goes against logic. Such Consents should be freely available for *bona fide* uses by Flood Action Groups.

6 Roadway gullies etc in Public Highways

The Registers of Surface Water Assets as they relate to those Assets on public highways are frequently fragmented and out of date. Although in theory these Registers exist, often the only record of the existence and location of the Assets is in the minds of long term employees of the LLFA's. Once these individuals retire or are replaced by Contract staff, this knowledge is lost to the Authorities. All such Registers should be updated and then kept up to date with the data stored securely and made available to any *bona fide* and relevant organisation such as a Flood Action Group who may require it.

The necessary regular maintenance of these structures seems to no longer take place leading to unnecessary, preventable flooding. Undersized structures also lead to flooding and surely the Highway Authorities should ensure that such items – whether existing or proposed - are so sized as to be fit for purpose?

It seems to us that the prioritisation of works by the Highways Authority in the field of surface water drainage is not always decided on a rational basis ie those required most urgently are not always those given priority. There are no doubt reasons for this situation but in our view the present method used for allocation of job priorities needs revisiting.

7 Agricultural run off

In rural areas, particularly where there are sunken lanes, the ground water from land drains etc often ends up in roadway drainage systems. Surface run off - particularly from grass lands - also ends up in roadside drains and in heavy storms, top soil also gets onto roads. Is this situation dealt with in existing legislation or is new legislation required?

8 Riparian Ownership

This whole topic seems to be a legal minefield where as laymen it seems impossible to get answers as to who owns what and whose responsibility it is to maintain watercourses on or adjacent to private properties. Clarity on this issue would be most welcome.

Geoff Neden

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

23rd November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress Report #15

November 2019

The flood event that occurred on the 26th October is reported on in full on our web page below. In summary, it appears that if the rainfall was similar to that which occurred in the 2012 floods, then there is a good chance that the leaky dams have been successful in reducing the flood level in Mill Lane Diddlebury by almost a foot (300mm). The flooding did show up some gaps in the pointing of the wall by the Mill Lane bridge and these have now been filled. We plan a survey of the leaky dams to see if they have suffered any damage from recent flood events but this will have to wait until the end of the shooting season in February 2020.

One property in Lower Corfton did flood and we had a site meeting on 12th November with the Council and the Highways dept at which they promised to investigate the problem here and come up with a solution. Unfortunately before this could take place, the more recent flooding on 14th November led to further flooding of the same property. We are pressing the Highways dept to act swiftly. Elsewhere, there was serious flooding of roads in the Parish but thankfully not of properties with the above exception.

Middlehope was unscathed by the more recent flooding but were cut off for a day by the combination of road works on the road to Diddlebury and flooding by Preens Barn on the road to Westhope. We are arranging a site meeting with Highways to see what can be done at this point as it was also flooded on November 26th.

The NFF are following up their October Meeting at Culmington with a further one in Beambridge starting at 6.30pm on Tuesday 7th January to further the establishment of the Corvedale Flood Forum. The Group are preparing their response to a nationwide Surface Water Drainage Review funded by Defra. Once finalised, this will be published on our web page.

It may be necessary to have one more working party to clear the stream at the bottom of Mill Lane and if so, I will send out a request for volunteers.

Geoff Neden

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Launch of National Flood Forum (NFF) Charter

Churchill Room, House of Commons

5th November 2019 – (a significant day to be there but they had checked the cellars)

I attended this event along with representatives of around 30 other Flood Action Groups from all round the Country and other interested parties such as the BRE.

The event was hosted and introduced by Rachael Maskell MP, who became involved in flood prevention after disastrous floods in her York Constituency.

Next was Mark Hoban, the Chair of Flood Re – the Insurance back up organisation set up by Government to run for a limited duration to ensure that all householders including those with a history of flooding can still get Insurance and at reasonable rates.

We were then addressed by Emma Howard Boyd, the Chair of the Environment Agency who confirmed the Agency's determination to address flooding problems countrywide and who also pointed out the worsening effects brought about by climate change.

Finally, we were addressed by Paul Cobbing, the Chair of the NFF who described the process leading up to the launch of the Charter today and its main points.

A summary of the Charter is attached below.

Talking to these people brought up a couple of things which we were already exercised over. One is the lack of manpower and/or other problems in Councils leading to an insufficient standard of inspection during the construction phase of new buildings – in particular ensuring that all the SUDS features required under Planning Approvals are actually built and to the required Specification.

Following on from this, there seems to be no Statutory requirement for Councils to check that such SUDS structures that are built are subsequently properly maintained. It is all very well to build an underground storage facility but if it fills with silt over the next few years, it ceases to function and the expectation of no run off in excess of the green field rate is no longer met. This is made more difficult as the properties in question are sold on. Suggestions were that the Legal profession could become involved during the Sale process to ensure that prospective new owners were made aware of the existence of such structures (they should be marked on site plans) and their responsibility to maintain them. Local Authority Searches should also flag up this information.

All in all an interesting meeting where I met new people involved in the flood management field – many of whom had far greater problems than us.

Geoff Neden

7th November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group



FLOOD RISK COMMUNITIES' CHARTER

FLOODING DEVASTATES LIVES

Communities living at risk of flooding have a right to lives not dominated by the fear of flooding

TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- 1 Our nation's ambition to tackle flood risk, in the face of climate change, needs to increase dramatically
- 2 Decisions that affect communities must be made with the communities' involvement
- 3 We must act now – there is a role for everyone

WE DEMAND THAT:

- 4 Communities are at the heart of flood risk management
- 5 Strategic coordination is needed across places and organisations
- 6 Action must address the economic, mental and physical wellbeing and life-chance impacts of flooding
- 7 Our approach to water management is comprehensive and integrated
- 8 We recognise the need to adapt to climate change – thinking should always be for the long term

EXAMPLES WHERE CHANGE IS NEEDED:

1. COMMUNITIES ARE AT THE HEART OF FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

- Communities are full participants, as equal partners working alongside other flood stakeholders.
- A focus on those who will be affected most, the disadvantaged and vulnerable in urban and rural areas.
- Property insurance should be affordable and available for all; with a positive claims management experience for those who are flooded.
- Short and long-term support for people who have flooded should be readily available and recovery planned for in advance.

2. STRATEGIC COORDINATION IS NEEDED ACROSS PLACES AND ORGANISATIONS

- Organisations will recognise the value of local knowledge and skills and work collaboratively with communities from start to finish.
- Active participation by people is dependent upon being able to trust the services that they encounter - fairness, transparency and accountability.
- There must be much better coordination between organisations managing flood risk.
- Every Government department and their agencies, businesses and wider society have an important role; it's no longer a single agency issue. Each organisation needs a plan and to report against it.
- Each locality should have a plan in place, reported on annually, on how they are meeting national flood risk standards through the work of all sectors.

- The cultures and behaviours of organisations must enable, not inhibit, people and communities to adapt to a changing climate.

3. ACTION MUST ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING AND LIFE-CHANCE IMPACTS OF FLOODING

- The impact of flooding on mental and physical health, wellbeing and local economies should be reduced.

4. A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED APPROACH TO WATER MANAGEMENT

- Water management from source to sea should be coordinated using all available means.
- Riparian management roles and responsibilities must be clear, coordinated, transparent, accountable, straight forward and enforced.
- Planning must be reformed to consistently deliver safe communities now, and in the future, without passing on flood risk problems elsewhere.
- Drainage must be systematically planned, implemented and maintained so that it consistently manages water effectively in both urban and rural areas.

5. WE RECOGNISE THE NEED TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE – THINKING SHOULD ALWAYS BE FOR THE LONG TERM

- We must plan and invest for future generations, learn to adapt and act now.
- More funding is needed to reflect the scale of the challenge ahead.

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group
Report on Flood Event of 26th October 2019
Diddlebury village

After several days of rain, the Diddle Brook (measured under the road bridge on the B4368) started to rise during the afternoon of Friday 25th. It exceeded the lower alarm level (0.3m) at 6.30 pm. The level continued to rise overnight, crossing the higher alarm level (0.8m) at 10.00 am on the 26th and peaked at about mid day on the 26th at just below 0.9m.

Water started to be forced out of the water course via a grip, between the road bridge and the foot bridge at the bottom of Mill Lane from about 10.30 onwards. The minor road outside Diddlebrook Barn was then flooded and this water eventually flowed round the end of Diddlebrook Barn and along the farm track towards the Malt House. It re entered the watercourse at the bend before the Malt House. The grounds of Delbury Hall below the Malt House were inundated.

Water started to overflow the banks of the brook in the garden of Glebe Farm at about 11.00 and this drained into the roadway causing flooding in Mill Lane at the bend by Glebe Cottage. The previous owners of Glebe Cottage (it has just changed hands) had had waterproof rendering applied to the front of the house and installed two flood gates. The flood level peaked about halfway up the rendering and did not reach the flood gates.

The two flood gates in the green way between Glebe Farm and Willowbrook worked well, allowing flood waters through and by today they had returned to their normal vertical configuration. Flood water did stand in the green way, covering the sump of the Severn Trent owned sewage pumping station but not entering the control kiosk which is on a plinth. The sump cover is not watertight so flood water must have been pumped for a time. Flood water did not pass along the greenway to discharge into Mill Lane as has happened on previous occasions.

The recently jetted storm water pipe down Mill Lane worked well and there was no appreciable surface water flooding down the roadway despite there being a large run off from the Pinstones road which crossed over the B road to enter Mill Lane.

The highest level of flood water in this area was some 300mm lower than it had been in 2012. This is quite an accurate measurement as in 2012 it rose to the bottom of the Diddlebrook Barn air bricks whereas this time it peaked 300mm below that height.

The flood water was dotted with woody debris as well as sleepers etc from ornamental bridges laid across the brook in the gardens of properties fronting Mill Lane and through whose rear gardens it flows. This makes one wonder if any damage occurred to the 50 leaky dams in the Diddle Brook upstream of the village.

Anecdotal evidence points to the event being substantially larger than that in 2018 and probably equivalent to the 2012 event. The 2007 event was probably even more severe.

It would be a useful exercise to correlate rain fall as measured in Gauges on Wenlock Edge with the flood event periods mentioned above (July 2007, July 2012, 30th May 2018 and 26th October 2019). This is very pertinent as if the 2012 rainfall was approximately equivalent to the recent event, then it seems likely that the leaky dams installed in the interim might have lowered the flood level in the village by 300mm. In fact this figure should probably be a little lower as the length of watercourse involved has been straightened since 2012 and it has been kept clear of weed growth, siltation etc. Even so, it would appear to be a significant reduction in flood level. This data correlation should also be of use to the team from Cardiff University.

The flood waters receded quickly after the peak as usually happens but by then, the damage has been caused.

Elsewhere in the Parish

The Pye Brook in Peaton came up but not quite far enough to flood adjacent properties. The road from Peaton to Diddlebury was flooded on the Peaton side of the River Corve bridge and the river was running at the underside of the bridge deck.

In Middlehope, the situation was rather anomalous. Given that in May 2018 one house there was seriously flooded whereas there was no flooding in Diddlebury one would have expected, due to the flooding taking place in Diddlebury this time, for it to be worse than 2018 as no flood alleviation work has been carried out above Middlehope in the meantime. In fact the situation in Middlehope was not bad and no flooding of property occurred. It may be that the spatial distribution of the rainfall was such that tributaries entering the Diddle Brook below Middlehope carried more water this time.

Supporting this theory is the fact that flooding in the vicinity of Preens Barns, between Middlehope and Burwood was as bad this year as it was in 2018. Other factors include preventative measures taken by the owner of the house that flooded in 2018 in the meantime and possibly the fact that farmland between Middlehope and Wetmore which was grassland in 2018 is now ploughed.

In Lower Corfton, Karray Cottage was flooded to a depth of some 75mm. The cottage lies at the low point of the (approximately north/south) lane leading down into Lower Corfton from the B4368 which then rises again towards Christmas Cross as a green lane. In addition, it sits alongside a stream running approximately west to east and which crosses the lane beside the Cottage. The riparian

owner of this stream downstream of the Cottage cleared out her length last year and it ran freely. The problem here is that water gathers at the low point from all 4 directions. The stream passes beneath the lane in a culvert which is inadequate or blocked which means that all water gathering to the west of the low point has to pond to a sufficient height to cross over the lane and find its way into the stream below the low point. In so doing, it exceeds the height of the Cottage floor level leading to flooding. The Flood Action Group has been asking Highways Dept for nearly 3 years to investigate the local drainage and sort out this problem but nothing has happened resulting in the flooding of the Cottage. Mr Chris Jackson who used to work for Highways in the Craven Arms Depot carried all the necessary knowledge of Lower Corfton drainage in his head but sadly had to retire due to ill health. If it is possible to contact him and he is willing and able to help, he could be extremely useful.



Graph from depth recorder under

bridge
Diddlebrook Barn

Flooding along minor road alongside



Farm track towards

Malthouse

Delbury Hall lawns



Flood water emerging from Glebe Farm garden

Flood water in road beside Glebe

Cottage



Flood gate by Willowbrook Glebe Farm

Flood gate by



Sewage pumping station under water in green lane by Willowbrook above road level

Air brick at Diddlebrook Barn - about 300mm



The River Corve below the bridge on the Diddlebury to Peaton
Road

Pye Brook in Peaton



Flooding at Middlehope
overtopping pipes in Middlehope

Flood water





Flooding by Karray Cottage, Lower Corfton

Flooding inside Karray Cottage

Geoff Neden
28th October 2019
Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group
Progress Report #14 October 2019

Since our last Progress Report, the FAG has held a Multi Agency Meeting (MAM). Members also attended the initial meeting held at Culmington, of the Corvedale Flood Forum – a grouping of all FAG's in the Corvedale – arranged by the National Flood Forum (NFF).

The MAM was attended by John Bellis, the newly appointed Drainage and Flood Risk Manager for Shropshire Council. This post has been empty for 3 years which has led to increasingly poor service being received by groups such as ours. John – who used to work for Telford Council and who sits on the Steering Committee - is in my opinion just the right man for the job and I look forward to a far better response from the Council in the future when he has had a chance to catch up.

I attended a Steering Group Meeting this month at which the leader of the Cardiff University Project gave a detailed update of their work on monitoring the performance of the leaky dams in the

Corvedale. An Information Sheet describing their work has been prepared and will be circulated shortly. Future funding from DEFRA for NFM (Natural Flood Management) flood prevention works depends on a successful outcome from this work.

Last month we held a Working Group which cleared the Diddle Brook in the village of excess weed growth, silt etc and this has prepared it for the winter rains. Stephen Povall kindly removed the material we excavated from the stream. Recently there have been sightings of a Kingfisher beside this stretch of the stream.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) plan further work above Middlehope and at Heath. The project by the Small Woods Association to use coppice bundles to prevent soil erosion and nitrification of watercourses has commenced on land owned by Stephen Povall.

Luke from the SWT together with Stephen Povall the land owner have walked across his land in the Corfton catchment with a view to seeing if there are possibilities for managing the land in such a way as to further minimise run off.

We continue to push for better use to be made of CIL funds and also for future monitoring of SUDS schemes after their approval by the Council.

In November I will attend a Conference in London arranged by the NFF and Flood Re and which will be addressed by the Minister for Flooding. At this event, the NFF will be launching their Flood Risk Charter.

Geoff Neden

17th October 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress Report #13 - July 2019

Since the last Progress Report, the FAG has held two Meetings – one of which was a Multi Agency Meeting.

Following these Meetings, we wrote to Mr Philip Dunne – our MP- regarding poor attendance and lack of response from some Agencies – particularly Highways. We also expressed our concern over the Shropshire Council's apparent hijacking of CIL monies. He has since responded saying that he is taking these matters up with the Council. We also wrote to Viscount Boyne regarding environmental concerns at Peaton and he too has responded.

The recent Meeting held in Diddlebury between local farmers and the NFU with the SWT in attendance threw up some interesting views which have been incorporated in plans for future NFM work in the Corvedale.

A design for improving the two floating flood fences across the Diddle Brook in the green way off Mill Lane has been made and agreed with the land owners. A tender for the work has been accepted and it should soon be completed.

The work funded by the Rotary Club of Ludlow has been completed.

The SWT has continued to erect more leaky dams in the Pye Brook catchment and is still looking at options above Middlehope.

Last month we held a Working Group which cleared the Diddle Brook in the village of excess weed growth, silt etc and this proved useful when we subsequently experienced heavy rains when the stream dealt with these high flows with no flooding.

A litter picking exercise on the Diddle Brook was carried out in early July and the amount of plastic waste found was far less than that collected last year. The growth of Himalayan Balsam was also much reduced from 2018.



Luke relaxes in a scavenged wheel chair after a hard morning's litter picking

I attended a Steering Group Meeting on July 10th at which it was confirmed that Mr John Bellis from Telford Council has been appointed as Drainage and Flood Risk Manager for Shropshire Council, starting in mid September. This is good news as in my view, John is just the right person for that job and in time, I think that we will receive an improved service from the Council.

Cardiff University continues its monitoring of the leaky dams in the Corvedale. An Information Sheet describing their work has been prepared and will be circulated shortly.

Geoff Neden

11th July

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Report on work carried out using funds kindly provided by Ludlow Rotary Cares

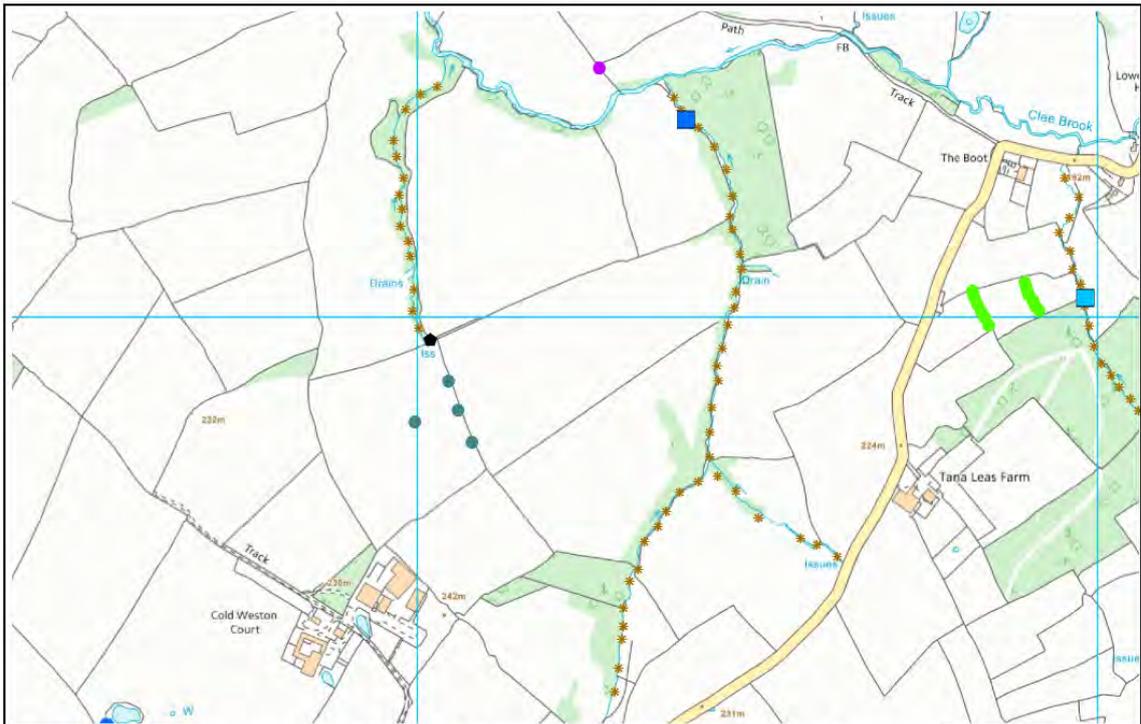
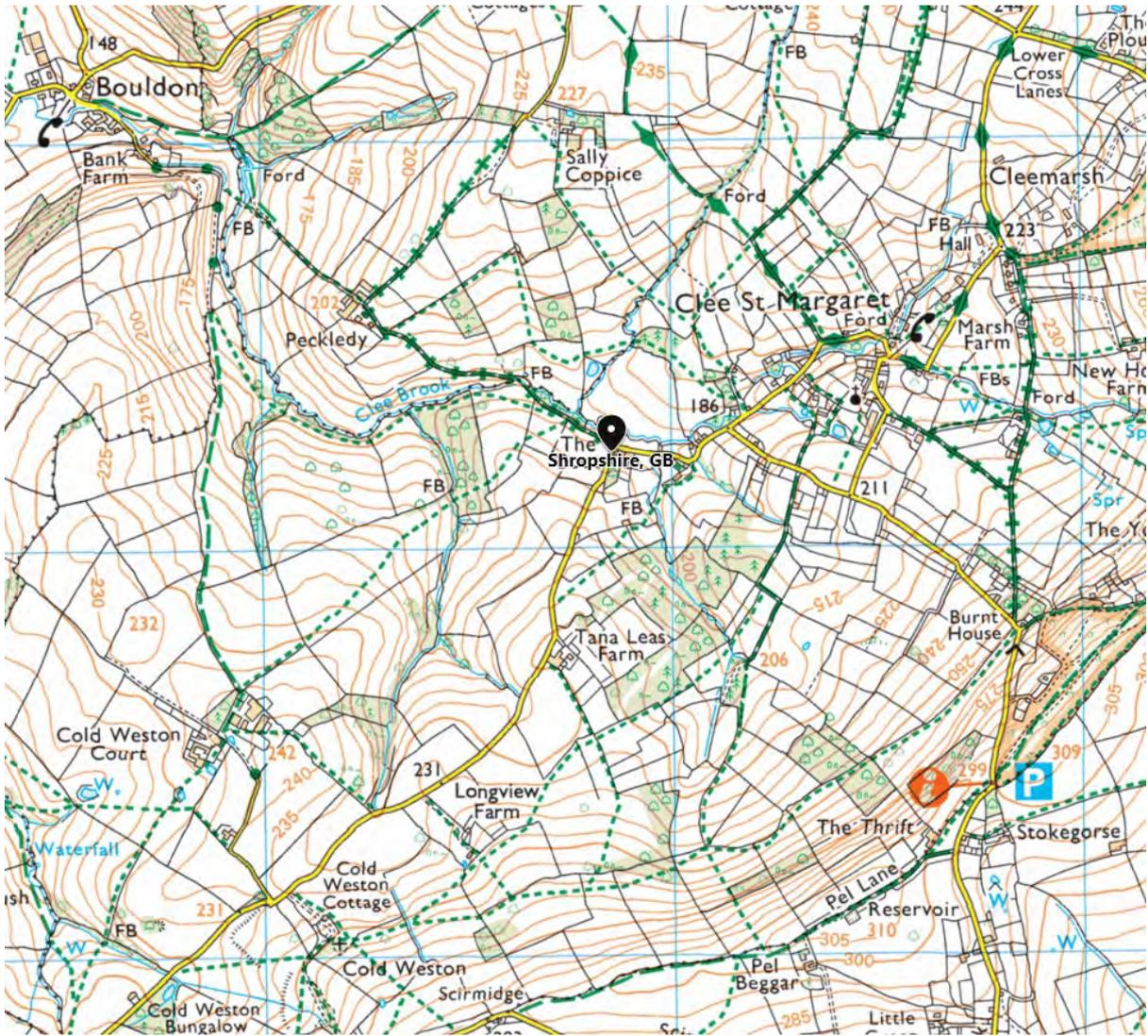
Last year, Ludlow Rotary Cares awarded the FAG the sum of £300 to be used in building leaky dams in the Corvedale.

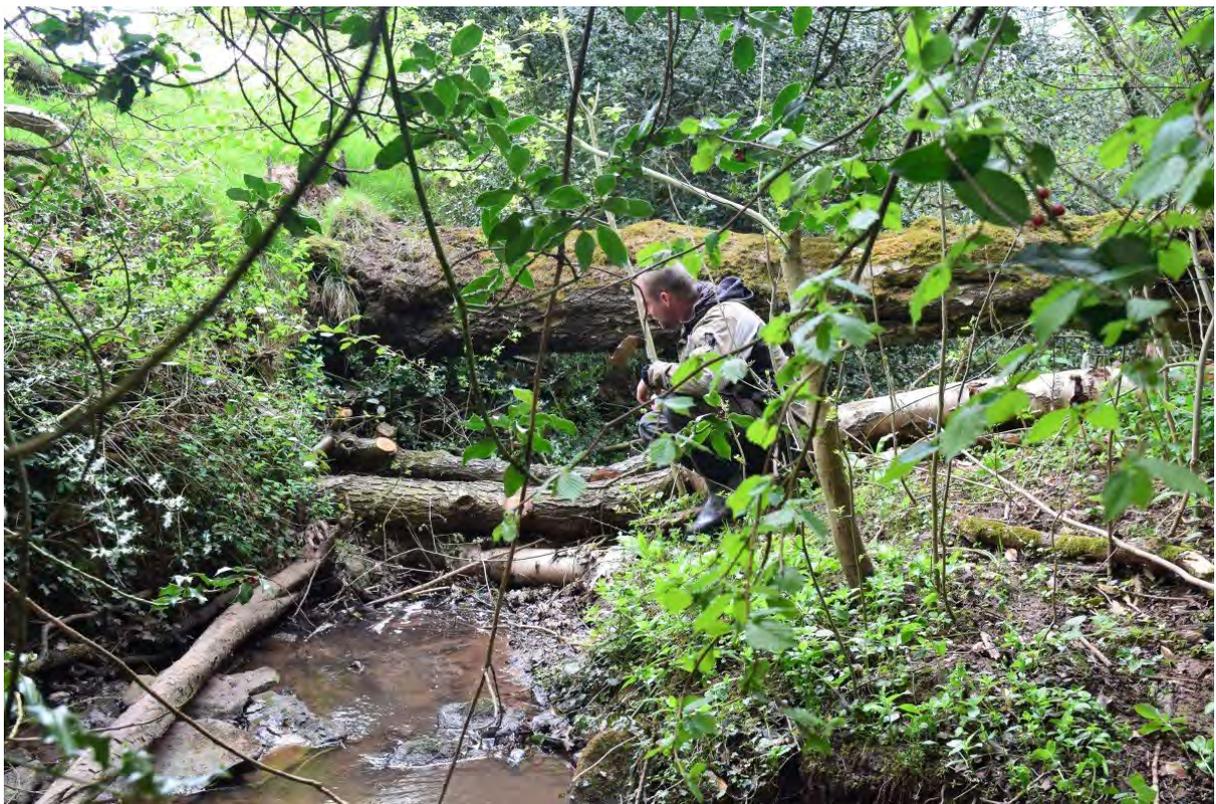
Initially we hoped to use this money in the area upstream of Middlehope but this proved to be impossible so with the approval of Rotary, we instead used it to build 3 leaky dams in tributaries of the Clee Brook (which becomes the Pye Brook) in the Cold Weston area of Clee Hill. In this work we were assisted by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust who managed the physical construction work on our behalf.

The dams have now been built and we have reported back to Ludlow Rotary Cares on the successful outcome.

Full details can be found in the attached Link : https://1drv.ms/f/s!Ail_2JCfvXY5gdAsDj17-GYUn6KzLQ

The images are also reproduced below.











Geoff Neden
3rd May 2019
Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group
Progress report # 12 – April 2019

Since the last Report in November 2018, we have extended our membership by inviting Mr Stephen Povall to join our Group and Stephen has kindly accepted the invitation. This step was taken in order to include the views of the local farming community in our Group as they are the owners and managers of the catchments on which our rain falls and their actions have a significant effect on flooding downstream. Taking this further, we have also had discussions with the local NFU Office in the person of Sarah Faulkner. Sarah represents the farming community on the Shropshire Slow The Flow Steering Group. The NFU have discussed Natural Flood Management (NFM) with the Shropshire Council and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) for some years and aim to ensure that such proposals can be delivered within the framework of the farming business.

The NFU will be holding a Meeting in the Diddlebury Village Hall in May at which these topics will be aired with members of the local farming community.

Stephen has already kindly volunteered to allow the Small Woods Association (based in Ironbridge) and working with Birmingham University and Earthwatch to undertake a research project to investigate the value of coppice bundles (river faggots) for the prevention of soil erosion and nitrification of water courses, on his land.

A proposed tree planting exercise arranged with the SWT in Lower Corfton had to be cancelled recently due to problems with obtaining the tree whips but we hope to proceed with this later in the year.

The work we had planned to do above Middlehope using the funds provided by Ludlow Rotary Club has had to be abandoned due to a lack of cooperation from the land owner. We hope to do alternative work there later in the year but in the meantime, Rotary have agreed that we can use the funds to do similar work elsewhere in the Corvedale – probably near Cold Weston.

Due to persistence on the part of one of our supporters, the Council have finally unblocked the storm drain below Delbury Farm entrance in Mill Lane, Diddlebury.

Geoff Neden
5th April 2019
Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

One of our members, Andy Kirk attended a Conference held in Birmingham last November. It was sponsored by the National Flood Forum and entitled "Let's talk about flooding".

Andy has kindly produced a resume of the Conference and it is set out below.

The National Flood Forum

The NFF is a charity established to help, support, and represent people at risk of flooding in England and Wales. Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group (FAG), as one of 300 flood action groups affiliated to the NFF, was invited to be represented at a conference in Birmingham last November, entitled: "Let's Talk About Flooding".

This was just one of a series of events held across England and Wales with the intention of bringing people, not just flood action groups, together to talk about flooding, and share successes, issues, and concerns in all areas, and to identify what progress has been made and what the priorities are for the future.

The event was supported by Flood Re, the joint Government and insurance industry initiative established to provide affordable insurance for qualifying properties at risk of flooding, or those that have already been flooded. The day was hosted by Dr Anne Wheeler, NFF Trustee, and Paul Cobbing, NFF Chief Executive. In their introduction they advised us that the outcomes of all these events were to be collated and taken forward to a national conference to be held later in 2019. It is hoped that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs will address this conference.

The event in Birmingham identified the key challenges, and briefly these comprised:

Behaviours	maintaining awareness; building relationships with communities; 'joined-up' thinking and action across all organisations involved in flood risk management.
Planning and development	improved control of planning and development; no building on flood plains; stricter building control regulations; future management of SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) installations.
Catchment and land management	requires stricter legislation and guidance on managing water; engaging with landowners in a non-confrontational way.
National Flood Forum roles	independent voice for those at flood risk; advise on property resilience and resistance; take voice to Parliament; lobby Government for funding; website to allow groups to share stories and raise questions online; act as one-stop shop representing all related agencies; create database of NFM (Natural Flood Management) projects; link flood action groups across rural/urban areas; keep flooding in the public eye; create a 'toolkit' for flood action groups.
Policies at national level	Agriculture Act, 2018 – add to list of national issues; climate change – flood risk in the future; planning for the future – dealing with Government-level contradictions; development – not enough overall planning and a lack of control. Need to tackle power of developers; improved Building Regulations and making houses resilient should become a national standard.
Riparian statutory system management	no enforcement of riparian responsibilities is a historical problem – the needs to change to enable enforcement;

standardised riparian responsibilities document should be provided to all new householders where a riparian responsibility exists (via solicitors?);
a new statutory basis for riparian management is needed – new Land Drainage Act required to cover multiple riparian ownership and new arrangements needed for urban areas.

Risk management Environment Agency, water companies, lead local flood authorities, Highways Agency -
authorities transparency of their respective responsibilities. A national standard is required;

Flood Action Groups should be involved and engaged from the outset of new flood management projects – the value of people in the community needs to be recognised;
decisions concerning projects and interventions should be made for the long term rather than to meet a short-term objective.

Funding much more funding required for infrastructure improvements nationally; 'invest to save' projects need to be encouraged.

Flood Action Groups having flood risk management authorities' representation appropriate to meetings is roles and activities important in progressing flood risk management;
grant aid required for FAGs to communicate with wider communities – attend meetings, conferences, etc;
managing change, maintaining continuity of FAGs and their members.

A session on individuals', communities', and parish councils' actual flooding experiences followed, and discussions on successes and/or failures in early resolution of problems were debated. Issues raised included communication – disjointed among stakeholders; insurance – insurers slow to respond and difficulties in accessing Flood Re; SUDS – responsibility for future inspection following initial installation; risk management authorities – difficulty of changing personnel in the various agencies who tend not to co-ordinate with each other.

Bob Haddon, Chairman of Shifnal Flood Partnership Group, established in January 2014, addressed the conference. With a large amount of new residential development, Shifnal now has much experience of all the flooding issues likely to be encountered, and he advised us accordingly. He welcomed queries from other FAGs and/or individual property owners – info@shifnalflood.org. Paul Cobbing concluded the conference stating that now is the moment to make an impact; apart from the national conference (location and date to be advised in due course) there is also to be a funding review in 2019. With the NFF gaining an increasingly higher profile, there is the opportunity to engage directly with the water companies, the Environment Agency, the Highway Agencies, and other bodies associated with flood alleviation.

The NFF is encouraging anybody with an interest in or a worry about flooding to become a Friend of the NFF. It costs nothing, but the greater the number of Friends and supporters the more clout the NFF will have at central government level. Becoming a Friend provides access to regular bi-monthly online bulletins, and also available is a live feed 24/7 national flood warning facility which covers separate classifications of flood alerts, flood warnings, and severe flood warnings at relevant locations across the country.

Become a Friend of the NFF now – sign up at nationalfloodforum.org.uk.

Andy Kirk

18th January, 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Comments on the Surface Water Drainage Review – survey for Defra

We strongly support the Review and our comments are set out below. These are not in any way comprehensive but they do draw on our own experiences in the field. In view of the importance given by Defra and the EA to Community Input to their projects – including the ongoing one in The Corvedale - we hope that our comments are given due regard.

1 Natural Flood Management (NFM) in general

The unconventional range of procedures used for NFM quite possibly do not fall within existing legislation – as that deals more with conventional engineering and building works - and it may well be that this needs revisiting to keep it relevant.

In particular, it may in some instances be necessary to use Compulsory Powers – with all necessary safeguards - if land owners are otherwise unwilling to allow the construction of NFM structures in situations where their deployment is essential to prevent flooding downstream..

Access across private land to these structures for subsequent maintenance and/or monitoring purposes can also be problematical although it is recognised that outside of emergencies, such access visits should not interfere with normal agricultural practices. Perhaps some sensitive legislation could help with this.

2 Leaky dams

Clarity is required on responsibilities for possible downstream flooding resulting from the failure of one or more leaky dams – possibly constructed on land belonging to several different owners.

Ownership of leaky dams and responsibility for their future maintenance and possible future renewal also requires clarification.

3 SUDS structures

All such structures should conform to the requirements of the Building Regulations which may themselves require amendment to encompass less conventional approaches. The Draft Code of Practice produced by British Water should be the guideline for the design of SUDS features.

LLFA's and/or their Agents should monitor the construction of all SUDS structures which are required under a Planning Approval – perhaps best carried out by the enhanced use of Building Inspectors as they check the rest of the building works at different construction stages.

The Register of Surface Water Assets should include all those Assets on private property which should be formally “designated” and it should be kept up to date with each new owner made aware of their existence, dimensions, location and purpose. A site location plan should be used for this purpose.

LLFA's and/or their Agents should ensure that all necessary ongoing maintenance of SUDS structures (including their eventual replacement) is carried out in perpetuity by the builder and all subsequent owners. To achieve this, the scope of Local Authority Searches should be expanded to include these Assets – their location, dimensions, use and maintenance requirements – using the location plans recommended above. The need to keep such Assets available for inspections should be highlighted to prospective owners who should also be made aware that they are not allowed to alter the “designated” structures without first having applied for permission from the relevant Authority. The above applies equally to situations where one SUDS facility serves multiple building ownerships although in this case, some form of legal Agreement would be required to which all new owners would have to sign up.

The Legal Profession when Conveyancing properties, should be under a legal obligation to notify prospective purchasers of the existence of these Assets and their responsibilities in terms of ongoing inspection/maintenance/replacement requirements.

4 CIL Monies

There seems to be no formal control over how these monies are used. Sometimes they are not available for use in building necessary upstream flood prevention measures but are instead put to different uses by Councils. This situation needs regularising.

5 OWC's

The cost of obtaining necessary Ordinary Water Course Consents is considerable (even though the swingeing increases in these costs recently requested by the EA were not allowed) and act as a deterrent to local Flood Action Groups who generally have only limited funding. The use of a proportion of such limited funds for administrative purposes goes against logic. Such Consents should be freely available for bona fide uses by Flood Action Groups.

6 Roadway gullies etc in Public Highways

The Registers of Surface Water Assets as they relate to those Assets on public highways are frequently fragmented and out of date. Although in theory these Registers exist, often the only record of the existence and location of the Assets is in the minds of long term employees of the LLFA's. Once these individuals retire or are replaced by Contract staff, this knowledge is lost to the Authorities. All such Registers should be updated and then kept up to date with the data stored

securely and made available to any bona fide and relevant organisation such as a Flood Action Group who may require it.

The necessary regular maintenance of these structures seems to no longer take place leading to unnecessary, preventable flooding. Undersized structures also lead to flooding and surely the Highway Authorities should ensure that such items – whether existing or proposed - are so sized as to be fit for purpose?

It seems to us that the prioritisation of works by the Highways Authority in the field of surface water drainage is not always decided on a rational basis ie those required most urgently are not always those given priority. There are no doubt reasons for this situation but in our view the present method used for allocation of job priorities needs revisiting.

7 Agricultural run off

In rural areas, particularly where there are sunken lanes, the ground water from land drains etc often ends up in roadway drainage systems. Surface run off - particularly from grass lands - also ends up in roadside drains and in heavy storms, top soil also gets onto roads. Is this situation dealt with in existing legislation or is new legislation required?

8 Riparian Ownership

This whole topic seems to be a legal minefield where as laymen it seems impossible to get answers as to who owns what and whose responsibility it is to maintain watercourses on or adjacent to private properties. Clarity on this issue would be most welcome.

Geoff Neden

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

23rd November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress Report #15

November 2019

The flood event that occurred on the 26th October is reported on in full on our web page below. In summary, it appears that if the rainfall was similar to that which occurred in the 2012 floods, then there is a good chance that the leaky dams have been successful in reducing the flood level in Mill Lane Diddlebury by almost a foot (300mm). The flooding did show up some gaps in the pointing of the wall by the Mill Lane bridge and these have now been filled. We plan a survey of the leaky dams to see if they have suffered any damage from recent flood events but this will have to wait until the end of the shooting season in February 2020.

One property in Lower Corfton did flood and we had a site meeting on 12th November with the Council and the Highways dept at which they promised to investigate the problem here and come up with a solution. Unfortunately before this could take place, the more recent flooding on 14th November led to further flooding of the same property. We are pressing the Highways dept to act swiftly. Elsewhere, there was serious flooding of roads in the Parish but thankfully not of properties with the above exception.

Middlehope was unscathed by the more recent flooding but were cut off for a day by the combination of road works on the road to Diddlebury and flooding by Preens Barn on the road to Westhope. We are arranging a site meeting with Highways to see what can be done at this point as it was also flooded on November 26th.

The NFF are following up their October Meeting at Culmington with a further one in Beambridge starting at 6.30pm on Tuesday 7th January to further the establishment of the Corvedale Flood Forum. The Group are preparing their response to a nationwide Surface Water Drainage Review funded by Defra. Once finalised, this will be published on our web page.

It may be necessary to have one more working party to clear the stream at the bottom of Mill Lane and if so, I will send out a request for volunteers.

Geoff Neden

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Launch of National Flood Forum (NFF) Charter

Churchill Room, House of Commons

5th November 2019 – (a significant day to be there but they had checked the cellars)

I attended this event along with representatives of around 30 other Flood Action Groups from all round the Country and other interested parties such as the BRE.

The event was hosted and introduced by Rachael Maskell MP, who became involved in flood prevention after disastrous floods in her York Constituency.

Next was Mark Hoban, the Chair of Flood Re – the Insurance back up organisation set up by Government to run for a limited duration to ensure that all householders including those with a history of flooding can still get Insurance and at reasonable rates.

We were then addressed by Emma Howard Boyd, the Chair of the Environment Agency who confirmed the Agency's determination to address flooding problems countrywide and who also pointed out the worsening effects brought about by climate change.

Finally, we were addressed by Paul Cobbing, the Chair of the NFF who described the process leading up to the launch of the Charter today and its main points.

A summary of the Charter is attached below.

Talking to these people brought up a couple of things which we were already exercised over. One is the lack of manpower and/or other problems in Councils leading to an insufficient standard of inspection during the construction phase of new buildings – in particular ensuring that all the SUDS features required under Planning Approvals are actually built and to the required Specification.

Following on from this, there seems to be no Statutory requirement for Councils to check that such SUDS structures that are built are subsequently properly maintained. It is all very well to build an underground storage facility but if it fills with silt over the next few years, it ceases to function and the expectation of no run off in excess of the green field rate is no longer met. This is made more difficult as the properties in question are sold on. Suggestions were that the Legal profession could become involved during the Sale process to ensure that prospective new owners were made aware of the existence of such structures (they should be marked on site plans) and their responsibility to maintain them. Local Authority Searches should also flag up this information.

All in all an interesting meeting where I met new people involved in the flood management field – many of whom had far greater problems than us.

Geoff Neden

7th November 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Report on Flood Event of 26th October 2019

Diddlebury village

After several days of rain, the Diddle Brook (measured under the road bridge on the B4368) started to rise during the afternoon of Friday 25th. It exceeded the lower alarm level (0.3m) at 6.30 pm. The level continued to rise overnight, crossing the higher alarm level (0.8m) at 10.00 am on the 26th and peaked at about mid day on the 26th at just below 0.9m.

Water started to be forced out of the water course via a grip, between the road bridge and the foot bridge at the bottom of Mill Lane from about 10.30 onwards. The minor road outside Diddlebrook Barn was then flooded and this water eventually flowed round the end of Diddlebrook Barn and along the farm track towards the Malt House. It re entered the watercourse at the bend before the Malt House. The grounds of Delbury Hall below the Malt House were inundated.

Water started to overflow the banks of the brook in the garden of Glebe Farm at about 11.00 and this drained into the roadway causing flooding in Mill Lane at the bend by Glebe Cottage. The previous owners of Glebe Cottage (it has just changed hands) had had waterproof rendering applied to the front of the house and installed two flood gates. The flood level peaked about halfway up the rendering and did not reach the flood gates.

The two flood gates in the green way between Glebe Farm and Willowbrook worked well, allowing flood waters through and by today they had returned to their normal vertical configuration. Flood water did stand in the green way, covering the sump of the Severn Trent owned sewage pumping

station but not entering the control kiosk which is on a plinth. The sump cover is not watertight so flood water must have been pumped for a time. Flood water did not pass along the greenway to discharge into Mill Lane as has happened on previous occasions.

The recently jetted storm water pipe down Mill Lane worked well and there was no appreciable surface water flooding down the roadway despite there being a large run off from the Pinstones road which crossed over the B road to enter Mill Lane.

The highest level of flood water in this area was some 300mm lower than it had been in 2012. This is quite an accurate measurement as in 2012 it rose to the bottom of the Diddlebrook Barn air bricks whereas this time it peaked 300mm below that height.

The flood water was dotted with woody debris as well as sleepers etc from ornamental bridges laid across the brook in the gardens of properties fronting Mill Lane and through whose rear gardens it flows. This makes one wonder if any damage occurred to the 50 leaky dams in the Diddle Brook upstream of the village.

Anecdotal evidence points to the event being substantially larger than that in 2018 and probably equivalent to the 2012 event. The 2007 event was probably even more severe.

It would be a useful exercise to correlate rain fall as measured in Gauges on Wenlock Edge with the flood event periods mentioned above (July 2007, July 2012, 30th May 2018 and 26th October 2019). This is very pertinent as if the 2012 rainfall was approximately equivalent to the recent event, then it seems likely that the leaky dams installed in the interim might have lowered the flood level in the village by 300mm. In fact this figure should probably be a little lower as the length of watercourse involved has been straightened since 2012 and it has been kept clear of weed growth, siltation etc. Even so, it would appear to be a significant reduction in flood level. This data correlation should also be of use to the team from Cardiff University.

The flood waters receded quickly after the peak as usually happens but by then, the damage has been caused.

Elsewhere in the Parish

The Pye Brook in Peaton came up but not quite far enough to flood adjacent properties. The road from Peaton to Diddlebury was flooded on the Peaton side of the River Corve bridge and the river was running at the underside of the bridge deck.

In Middlehope, the situation was rather anomalous. Given that in May 2018 one house there was seriously flooded whereas there was no flooding in Diddlebury one would have expected, due to the flooding taking place in Diddlebury this time, for it to be worse than 2018 as no flood alleviation work has been carried out above Middlehope in the meantime. In fact the situation in Middlehope was not bad and no flooding of property occurred. It may be that the spatial distribution of the rainfall was such that tributaries entering the Diddle Brook below Middlehope carried more water this time.

Supporting this theory is the fact that flooding in the vicinity of Preens Barns, between Middlehope and Burwood was as bad this year as it was in 2018. Other factors include preventative measures taken by the owner of the house that flooded in 2018 in the meantime and possibly the fact that farmland between Middlehope and Wetmore which was grassland in 2018 is now ploughed.

In Lower Corfton, Karray Cottage was flooded to a depth of some 75mm. The cottage lies at the low point of the (approximately north/south) lane leading down into Lower Corfton from the B4368 which then rises again towards Christmas Cross as a green lane. In addition, it sits alongside a stream running approximately west to east and which crosses the lane beside the Cottage. The riparian owner of this stream downstream of the Cottage cleared out her length last year and it ran freely.

The problem here is that water gathers at the low point from all 4 directions. The stream passes beneath the lane in a culvert which is inadequate or blocked which means that all water gathering to the west of the low point has to pond to a sufficient height to cross over the lane and find its way into the stream below the low point. In so doing, it exceeds the height of the Cottage floor level leading to flooding. The Flood Action Group has been asking Highways Dept for nearly 3 years to investigate the local drainage and sort out this problem but nothing has happened resulting in the flooding of the Cottage. Mr Chris Jackson who used to work for Highways in the Craven Arms Depot carried all the necessary knowledge of Lower Corfton drainage in his head but sadly had to retire due to ill health. If it is possible to contact him and he is willing and able to help, he could be extremely useful.

Graph from depth recorder under

bridge
Diddlebrook Barn

Flooding along minor road alongside

Farm track towards
Malthouse

Delbury Hall lawns

Flood water emerging from Glebe Farm
garden
Cottage

Flood water in road beside Glebe

Flood gate by
Willowbrook
Glebe Farm

Flood gate by

Sewage pumping station under water in green lane by
Willowbrook
above road level

Air brick at Diddlebrook Barn - about 300mm

The River Corve below the bridge on the Diddlebury to Peaton
Road

Pye Brook in Peaton

Flooding at
Middlehope
overtopping pipes in Middlehope

Flood water

Flooding by Karray Cottage, Lower
Corfton

Flooding inside Karray Cottage

Geoff Neden
28th October 2019
Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group
Progress Report #14 October 2019

Since our last Progress Report, the FAG has held a Multi Agency Meeting (MAM). Members also attended the initial meeting held at Culmington, of the Corvedale Flood Forum – a grouping of all FAG's in the Corvedale – arranged by the National Flood Forum (NFF).

The MAM was attended by John Bellis, the newly appointed Drainage and Flood Risk Manager for Shropshire Council. This post has been empty for 3 years which has led to increasingly poor service being received by groups such as ours. John – who used to work for Telford Council and who sits on the Steering Committee - is in my opinion just the right man for the job and I look forward to a far better response from the Council in the future when he has had a chance to catch up.

I attended a Steering Group Meeting this month at which the leader of the Cardiff University Project gave a detailed update of their work on monitoring the performance of the leaky dams in the Corvedale. An Information Sheet describing their work has been prepared and will be circulated shortly. Future funding from DEFRA for NFM (Natural Flood Management) flood prevention works depends on a successful outcome from this work.

Last month we held a Working Group which cleared the Diddle Brook in the village of excess weed growth, silt etc and this has prepared it for the winter rains. Stephen Povall kindly removed the material we excavated from the stream. Recently there have been sightings of a Kingfisher beside this stretch of the stream.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) plan further work above Middlehope and at Heath. The project by the Small Woods Association to use coppice bundles to prevent soil erosion and nitrification of

watercourses has commenced on land owned by Stephen Povall.

Luke from the SWT together with Stephen Povall the land owner have walked across his land in the Corffton catchment with a view to seeing if there are possibilities for managing the land in such a way as to further minimise run off.

We continue to push for better use to be made of CIL funds and also for future monitoring of SUDS schemes after their approval by the Council.

In November I will attend a Conference in London arranged by the NFF and Flood Re and which will be addressed by the Minister for Flooding. At this event, the NFF will be launching their Flood Risk Charter.

Geoff Neden

17th October 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress Report #13 - July 2019

Since the last Progress Report, the FAG has held two Meetings – one of which was a Multi Agency Meeting.

Following these Meetings, we wrote to Mr Philip Dunne – our MP- regarding poor attendance and lack of response from some Agencies – particularly Highways. We also expressed our concern over the Shropshire Council's apparent hijacking of CIL monies. He has since responded saying that he is taking these matters up with the Council. We also wrote to Viscount Boyne regarding environmental concerns at Peaton and he too has responded.

The recent Meeting held in Diddlebury between local farmers and the NFU with the SWT in attendance threw up some interesting views which have been incorporated in plans for future NFM work in the Corvedale.

A design for improving the two floating flood fences across the Diddle Brook in the green way off Mill Lane has been made and agreed with the land owners. A tender for the work has been accepted and it should soon be completed.

The work funded by the Rotary Club of Ludlow has been completed.

The SWT has continued to erect more leaky dams in the Pye Brook catchment and is still looking at options above Middlehope.

Last month we held a Working Group which cleared the Diddle Brook in the village of excess weed growth, silt etc and this proved useful when we subsequently experienced heavy rains when the stream dealt with these high flows with no flooding.

A litter picking exercise on the Diddle Brook was carried out in early July and the amount of plastic waste found was far less than that collected last year. The growth of Himalayan Balsam was also much reduced from 2018.

Luke relaxes in a scavenged wheel chair after a hard morning's litter picking

I attended a Steering Group Meeting on July 10th at which it was confirmed that Mr John Bellis from Telford Council has been appointed as Drainage and Flood Risk Manager for Shropshire Council, starting in mid September. This is good news as in my view, John is just the right person for that job and in time, I think that we will receive an improved service from the Council.

Cardiff University continues its monitoring of the leaky dams in the Corvedale. An Information Sheet describing their work has been prepared and will be circulated shortly.

Geoff Neden

11th July

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Report on work carried out using funds kindly provided by Ludlow Rotary Cares

Last year, Ludlow Rotary Cares awarded the FAG the sum of £300 to be used in building leaky dams in the Corvedale.

Initially we hoped to use this money in the area upstream of Middlehope but this proved to be impossible so with the approval of Rotary, we instead used it to build 3 leaky dams in tributaries of the Clee Brook (which becomes the Pye Brook) in the Cold Weston area of Clee Hill. In this work we

were assisted by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust who managed the physical construction work on our behalf.

The dams have now been built and we have reported back to Ludlow Rotary Cares on the successful outcome.

Full details can be found in the attached Link : https://1drv.ms/f/s!Ail_2JCfvXY5gdAsDj17-GYUn6KzLQ

The images are also reproduced below.

Geoff Neden

3rd May 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Progress report # 12 – April 2019

Since the last Report in November 2018, we have extended our membership by inviting Mr Stephen Povall to join our Group and Stephen has kindly accepted the invitation. This step was taken in order to include the views of the local farming community in our Group as they are the owners and managers of the catchments on which our rain falls and their actions have a significant effect on flooding downstream. Taking this further, we have also had discussions with the local NFU Office in the person of Sarah Faulkner. Sarah represents the farming community on the Shropshire Slow The Flow Steering Group. The NFU have discussed Natural Flood Management (NFM) with the Shropshire Council and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) for some years and aim to ensure that such proposals can be delivered within the framework of the farming business.

The NFU will be holding a Meeting in the Diddlebury Village Hall in May at which these topics will be aired with members of the local farming community.

Stephen has already kindly volunteered to allow the Small Woods Association (based in Ironbridge) and working with Birmingham University and Earthwatch to undertake a research project to investigate the value of coppice bundles (river faggots) for the prevention of soil erosion and nitrification of water courses, on his land.

A proposed tree planting exercise arranged with the SWT in Lower Corfton had to be cancelled recently due to problems with obtaining the tree whips but we hope to proceed with this later in the year.

The work we had planned to do above Middlehope using the funds provided by Ludlow Rotary Club has had to be abandoned due to a lack of cooperation from the land owner. We hope to do alternative work there later in the year but in the meantime, Rotary have agreed that we can use the funds to do similar work elsewhere in the Corvedale – probably near Cold Weston.

Due to persistence on the part of one of our supporters, the Council have finally unblocked the storm drain below Delbury Farm entrance in Mill Lane, Diddlebury.

Geoff Neden

5th April 2019

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group

One of our members, Andy Kirk attended a Conference held in Birmingham last November. It was sponsored by the National Flood Forum and entitled "Let's talk about flooding".

Andy has kindly produced a resume of the Conference and it is set out below.

The National Flood Forum

The NFF is a charity established to help, support, and represent people at risk of flooding in England and Wales. Diddlebury Parish Flood Action Group (FAG), as one of 300 flood action groups affiliated to the NFF, was invited to be represented at a conference in Birmingham last November, entitled:

“Let’s Talk About Flooding”.

This was just one of a series of events held across England and Wales with the intention of bringing people, not just flood action groups, together to talk about flooding, and share successes, issues, and concerns in all areas, and to identify what progress has been made and what the priorities are for the future.

The event was supported by Flood Re, the joint Government and insurance industry initiative established to provide affordable insurance for qualifying properties at risk of flooding, or those that have already been flooded. The day was hosted by Dr Anne Wheeler, NFF Trustee, and Paul Cobbing, NFF Chief Executive. In their introduction they advised us that the outcomes of all these events were to be collated and taken forward to a national conference to be held later in 2019. It is hoped that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs will address this conference.

The event in Birmingham identified the key challenges, and briefly these comprised:

Behaviours	maintaining awareness; building relationships with communities; 'joined-up' thinking and action across all organisations involved in flood risk management.
Planning and development	improved control of planning and development; no building on flood plains; stricter building control regulations; future management of SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) installations.
Catchment and land management	requires stricter legislation and guidance on managing water; engaging with landowners in a non-confrontational way.
National Flood Forum roles	independent voice for those at flood risk; advise on property resilience and resistance; take voice to Parliament; lobby Government for funding; website to allow groups to share stories and raise questions online; act as one-stop shop representing all related agencies; create database of NFM (Natural Flood Management) projects; link flood action groups across rural/urban areas; keep flooding in the public eye; create a 'toolkit' for flood action groups.
Policies at national level	Agriculture Act, 2018 – add to list of national issues; climate change – flood risk in the future; planning for the future – dealing with Government-level contradictions; development – not enough overall planning and a lack of control. Need to tackle power of developers; improved Building Regulations and making houses resilient should become a national standard.
Riparian statutory system management	no enforcement of riparian responsibilities is a historical problem – the needs to change to enable enforcement; standardised riparian responsibilities document should be provided to all new householders where a riparian responsibility exists (via solicitors?); a new statutory basis for riparian management is needed – new Land Drainage Act required to cover multiple riparian ownership and new arrangements needed for urban areas.
Risk management Agency - authorities	Environment Agency, water companies, lead local flood authorities, Highways Agency - transparency of their respective responsibilities. A national standard is required;

Flood Action Groups should be involved and engaged from the outset of new flood management projects – the value of people in the community needs to be recognised; decisions concerning projects and interventions should be made for the long term rather than to meet a short-term objective.

Funding much more funding required for infrastructure improvements nationally; 'invest to save' projects need to be encouraged.

Flood Action Groups having flood risk management authorities' representation appropriate to meetings is roles and activities important in progressing flood risk management; grant aid required for FAGs to communicate with wider communities – attend meetings, conferences, etc; managing change, maintaining continuity of FAGs and their members.

A session on individuals', communities', and parish councils' actual flooding experiences followed, and discussions on successes and/or failures in early resolution of problems were debated. Issues raised included communication – disjointed among stakeholders; insurance – insurers slow to respond and difficulties in accessing Flood Re; SUDS – responsibility for future inspection following initial installation; risk management authorities – difficulty of changing personnel in the various agencies who tend not to co-ordinate with each other.

Bob Haddon, Chairman of Shifnal Flood Partnership Group, established in January 2014, addressed the conference. With a large amount of new residential development, Shifnal now has much experience of all the flooding issues likely to be encountered, and he advised us accordingly. He welcomed queries from other FAGs and/or individual property owners – info@shifnalflood.org. Paul Cobbing concluded the conference stating that now is the moment to make an impact; apart from the national conference (location and date to be advised in due course) there is also to be a funding review in 2019. With the NFF gaining an increasingly higher profile, there is the opportunity to engage directly with the water companies, the Environment Agency, the Highway Agencies, and other bodies associated with flood alleviation.

The NFF is encouraging anybody with an interest in or a worry about flooding to become a Friend of the NFF. It costs nothing, but the greater the number of Friends and supporters the more clout the NFF will have at central government level. Becoming a Friend provides access to regular bi-monthly online bulletins, and also available is a live feed 24/7 national flood warning facility which covers separate classifications of flood alerts, flood warnings, and severe flood warnings at relevant locations across the country.

Become a Friend of the NFF now – sign up at nationalfloodforum.org.uk.

Andy Kirk

18th January, 2019
