

Notes from Sewage and Drainage Group (S&DG) Notes for PC

Thursday 14th Jan 2.30 zoomed meeting

Present : Alex Brockhurst (AB) (Fressingfield Parish Council) Garry Deeks (GD) (Fressingfield Parish Council) Andy Roberts (AR) (resident) John Castro (JC) (resident) Pam Castro (PaC) (resident) Di Warne (DW) (Fressingfield Parish Council).

Apologies : John Secker (JS) (resident)

DW welcomed the group

The group last met in March 2020.

The purpose of this meeting was to catch up on issues and actions in relation to the general drainage and sewage egress problems currently happening in the village.

1.Flooding and sewage egress

- The group confirmed that as of 14th Jan 2021 there had been 16 incidents of sewage egress and flooding within the last 2 years. This is above the guidance given on what is acceptable. The sewage issues were on Cratfield /Low Road . Flooding occurred on Cratfield/Low Road. Water also emerged from the Stradbroke road at Jubilee corner.
- The flooding on Cratfield/Low Road is a combination of the Beck overflowing and additional run-off from Church Street and from Chapel Close , and ultimately the upper areas of the village.
- It was noted that specific additional water maybe flowing on to Church Street from housing behind The Old Post Office
- It was noted that the sewage outflow in Cratfield /Low Road extended for longer than 10 hours on many occasions the worst being 28hours.
- Incidents of sewage egress and flooding on Cratfield/Low Road are rigorously reported to Anglian Water (AW) and the Environment Agency (EA) by SAFE. The EA in turn automatically contact AW as well. Suffolk County Council (SCC) also contacted as Jason Skelton (Suffolk Highways) has stated that any sewage egress event is now counted as a flooding event.
- It was noted that at the bridge over the Beck at Buckingham Hill the water level is held back to some extent on the south side of the Bridge by fallen branches, but is at least 2 ft higher on the northern side. This may give a clue for a mitigating factor to help slow down the flow of the Beck.
- The water egress at Jubilee Corner appears to come from water further along Stradbroke Road. It was suggested this might come from historic drainage ditches, not now evident. Other ditches in the upper parts of the village , for example at the back of Oatfields are also thought to be overflowing and gardens affected. However, exceptional rain on clay soil may mean this is only temporary.

Actions :

- AB to find out more about outflow of water onto Church Street from behind the Old Post Office.
- The PC to monitor the flooding, surface water outflow at Jubilee corner and the generally in the upper part of the village in order to get accurate data on flooding events.

2.Actions by AW and SCC Highways

- Highways had investigated New Street in March 2020 where flooding was occurring opposite the village shop. Not clear what remedial action was taken if any.
- AW have inserted flow meters throughout the system to monitor where surface water is getting into the foul sewer. This began in December 2020.
- There was discussion about how many households pay for their surface water to be taken into the system. It was agreed it would be the majority of homes. Applying to opt out is not straightforward.
- Newer developments have holding tanks but historically older properties are connected to the existing drainage.
- It was noted that Highways have no maps of their drains. The idea of tracking flow through dyes was suggested but this likely to be prohibitively expensive and required the consent of householders.
- Safe have contacted OFWAT about AW not providing a solution to the sewage issues. OFWAT have confirmed that they are now in communication with AW.
- AW argue that the sewage system is complex and founded on historical connexions and is therefore not their problem.
- AW have admitted (CEO) that at times the system is “overwhelmed” even though they say it has capacity.
- AW responded to the last letter from the PC by saying that a multi-agency approach was required.

Actions:

- PC to write to AW and copied to SCC Highways asking a single question when are AW going to take responsibility for the sewage egress problems and rectify the situation.
- Longer term the PC to ask for a face to face meeting with AW at a senior level
- PC to contact SALC for contacts with other Parishes which have had similar sewage problems

3.Mitigations

- There was discussion about the value of promoting the use of water butts. Flood Management at SCC do not consider this to be a significant surface water management tool.
- It was suggested that consideration be given to climate change and the implications longer term.

Action :

- PC to explore options for weather watching data.

Next meeting tbc