

# Report From the Flood Action Group

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

## Overview

The outlook for this Autumn is unsettled to say the least, making it increasingly difficult for the weathermen and the FAG to make accurate predictions for the coming months. Rainfall for the month of August has been slightly lower (-.29”) than the same period in 2018, with groundwater levels lower by .78m at Broadhalfpenny Down, and 2.41m at Whitedale Farm. The encouraging news is the amount of surface water has been managed easily by the Big Pipe and its gullies, with some significant periods of heavy rains over the past months. There is a “red flag” however, as overall maintenance of the system continues to be an important issue (see below).

## Issues and Risks

### **1) Resilience Measures and Maintenance**

Although the installation of the BP is largely complete, ongoing maintenance requirements will be with us for the life of the system as a whole, requiring greater emphasis. There is a substantial list of elements to address, that are beyond the capabilities of the Hambledon Parish Council and FAG, and are therefore done by “others” requiring a Planned Maintenance Schedule to be developed by WCC/HCC, and made available to ourselves as a mandatory requirement. We do have a key part to play in providing support for the Plan by ensuring implementation of our own Flood Action Plan, and monitoring the situation and keeping the regulatory agencies advised of problems or threats on a real-time basis.

Based on our experiences with Flooding in Hambledon, we are in a good position to identify areas of concern that must be included in preparation plans by HCC for the coming months from October through to March 2020.

1.1) Headwall grate – at the time of this writing, the grate is completely plugged to a level just below the midpoint of the steel structure, and for an unknown distance up the pipe. Obviously, rain or run-off that finds its way into the gullies or entrance to the BP will be continually delivering debris down to the headwall, especially chaff from harvesting operations, and the annual shedding of leaves from trees. We have been advised by HCC that a design solution for easily clearing the grate is being contemplated, but there has been no positive feedback on progress to date in spite of numerous requests.

1.2) Catchment basin – notwithstanding the situation with the grate, the catchment basin will always fill-up with silt and debris, as expected. Getting it cleared, however, does not appear to have a joined-up plan for removal, and from what we’ve seen to date the remedial action is not well organised or coordinated by distant contractors.

1.3) Clearing gullies – there are a large number of gullies in the village needing regular maintenance in the form of sucking-out the accumulation of debris from the road ways. Our concern in the regard is the perceived lack of equipment to tend to this substantial task, either by WCC or HCC, which is a significant risk to the flow of water into the BP, and we believe getting the work done is not getting the priority it needs. We are not sure at this point if we will see any form of street sweeping.

1.4) Clearing Ditches – the ditch at the entry to the BP needs clearing as a standard requirement at this time of year. Clearing the ditch below the outfall also requires

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clearing (as expected), and we will continue to monitor and report on the situation at both ends. We also note there has been no attention given to the issue with the culvert at the entrance to the trading estate feeding the upper East Street ditch.

1.5) 2150 hedges, fencing and bridges – this has been a constant concern to the FAG for nearly two years, with a wealth of reminders to HCC. What we learned from the last meeting with the Area Highways Office, and other County Council officers, as recorded in Simon Cramp's email of 26/6/2019 HCC, nothing is going to be done. Loads of waffling and denial in the face of the risk evidence we provided were totally ignored, and the increasing dangers and issues remain.

## **2) Flood Action Plans and Documentation**

2.1) The FAP has been updated in accordance with HCC requirements, and submitted for their review. There were a small number of changes, and those have been included in the latest release of the documentation. Currently under discussion is the need for an annual checklist of elements for the Pre-flooding Season, which will require coordination with HCC to manage expectations. This will no doubt be effected by their current budget problems and other resource constraints.

2.2) Risk Management Plan – There are requirements for further updates to the supporting documentation, which are now under review, including new additions to the Register. These will include:

- Danger to pedestrians using the verge as a footpath, or being forced to walk on the roadway
- WCC/HCC Budget Cuts that have a detrimental effect on flood resilience and maintenance matters
- Blockage and Back-up of flow in the BP from debris and water trapped by the headwall grate
- Continued blockage problems with the ditch downstream of the BP outflow (down to the Pumping Station), including sloughing of the ditch banks

2.3) Properties Flooding Master List – The information remains confidential, and is regularly updated to reflect changes, or increased risks to people and residences. The FAG will be writing to everyone on the list over the coming weeks to provide the latest information on groundwater, along with preparation reminders to be ready should there be any water ingress to cellars, or from well overflow. Relevant contact information will also be provided for members of the FAG, Environment Agency, and Emergency responders. It is also important that people get back to the FAG representatives with any changes or corrections to their information to properly manage the data and to maintain communication links.

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Respectfully Submitted by,  
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