

Flood Alerts

The last month has seen fluctuating groundwater levels at both Broadhalfpenny Down and Whitedale, with fairly flat measurements over the past two weeks. Whitedale remains close to the flood trigger point, but advice from Charlotte Creswell at the Environment Agency indicates “the weather will be a little more favourable over the next few weeks with a small chance of rain, but that isn’t going to do much to the groundwater in Hambledon. Looks like high pressure and cold drier conditions should start to build next week, giving some extra breathing space.” As is the usual practice from the EA, there is the caveat that the normal flood season runs through to the end of March, “and the danger is not yet over.” At the time of this writing there is no sign of any water in cellars in Lower West Street. So the question is: when do we advise people to “roll-up” their pumping equipment? For now, our recommendation is to wait for at least another week, when there is less risk due to the prolonged uncertainty as to weather conditions.

Note: Current Alert lifted 31st January by the EA.

Help with Preparations

Even though there has not been any significant need to pump-out other than the four first responders, the risk of possible groundwater flooding has provided the opportunity to test the property owner’s ability to get everything set-up. Over the past month the FAG have continued to provide help when asked for by people who have really needed it when they run into problems in getting their resiliency measures and hardware sorted, as mentioned in our last report. Unfortunately, there is a rather long and growing list of items in our “lessons learned file,” which cannot always be easily dealt with. When spares are not on hand, we provide a list of items to be procured by the owner prior to the next event. It must be noted, those people who did not take the opportunity to test their systems, are moving possible issues to a later date, when support may not be available. At some point the HPC will have to take a view on how such matters may or may not be addressed in future, and advise people on the course of action.

Headwall and Ditch

The FAG continues to monitor the situation at both the headwall and ditch on a nearly daily basis. We note the “slack” water level at the catchment basin remains at just below the middle of the 1.2 M pipe, which could be an indicator of silt and debris build-up. As to the status of the ditch, where obvious signs of further erosion are present, an average of 50 to 90 Cm of soil has dropped into the ditch along the length North of the footbridge to the Tea Shop. Slippage of the East side of the bank is being measured and photographed, which is predominately viewed from the football field. The old fencing and posts are almost completely gone; gaps in the hedge are getting wider; and a large number of hedging shrubs are listing between 15° and 30° over the ditch, with exposed roots. As the village has no responsibility or remedy for these effects, we will continue to rely on Highways to respond as the “owner” of the problem. Last year in a site meeting with the FAG and Cllr Huxstep, they indicated the area where the truck caused the damage adjacent to the bridge, would be fitted with a retaining wall at some point, such as a gabion.

Gulley Maintenance

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We have not heard anything further on sucking-out the gullies.

Sewerage

We have not seen any evidence of over-pumping at Bury Lodge since the last report, nor have there been any further complaints about odour.

Current Status of Open Items with Highways

This list included responses or notations supplied by HCC Highways following the 5th December 2019 Meeting, received 31/12/19: HCC comments in *italics*

1) Long Term Maintenance Plan for B/P and its attached inputs/outlets

- Confirmed that manual in place setting out maintenance activity and frequency for all elements of the system. Copy of manual to be provided to HPC recognising the need to “manage expectations” especially as the manual will be used as a guide rather than a ‘blueprint’. HPC highlighted concern particularly for junction of 900 and 1200mm Big Pipes at Green Man junction / intersection of East and West Street.

No information or manual supplied to date.

2) Clearing the B/P down to the tearoom and Jetting to ensure free flow

HCC - No concerns about this at this time but will monitor in accordance with manual and any concerns advised by HPC / FAG – Jan Jarvie to be first point of contact at FAG for HCC, and will liaise with HPC as appropriate.

3) Clearing of the catchment basin

(Complete at this time, but will be an on-going maintenance requirement)

4) Clearing of ditch leading down to Hook Vinney – issue with ownership of the ditch and surrounding banks

Issue with ownership of the ditch and surrounding banks – Status of ownership and riparian responsibilities confirmed and with HCC. Note summarising position to be provided to HPC by SC. HPC identified tree stump / large debris in the ditch beneath the footbridge / RoW. HCC to investigate and remove.

No clearing or cleaning done to date.

5) Design and installation of the 1.2 M pipe grate at the headwall

- Installation Completed 28/11/19

6) Clearing (sucking-out) of 200 gullies, and the possible disruption to gain access to each location, East, West and Green Lane roadways (could be significant disruption)

– Confirmation that street cleansing undertaken by WCC and gully emptying lies with HCC as Highway Authority. All noted difficulty of accessing gullies

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and kerb line in East Street due to on-street parking. HCC to provide advance notice to HPC where possible so that local email distribution / contacts / bi-monthly newsletter (Hambledonian) can be used to get message out

No further contact since process aborted by HCC contractor.

7) Confirmation of connection of four gullies along East wall along B 2150 adjacent to the Tearoom leading into the big pipe (suspected issue requiring excavation)

– PE has looked into this and can find no jobs on the system or any outstanding works associated with this location.

8) Further work requiring partial closing of B 2150 at the intersection

– There are no further works planned at this location on the B2150 requiring partial closure.

Note – at such time as the ditch retaining measures are commenced, there will most likely be closures, or single lane traffic.

9) Designation of footpath/green verge on West side of B 2150 (pedestrian safety)

– This matter is being considered elsewhere.

No schedule or references have been made for further discussion.

10) Confirmation of future primary contacts at Hampshire Highways

Paula Edwards – Highways Manager Asset Plan Delivery (planned maintenance) paula.edwards@hants.gov.uk

Richard Bastow – Highways Manger South & West (routine maintenance) Richard.bastow@hants.gov.uk

11) Gullies at bottom of Vicarage Lane – are they connected to the BP

- HPC to explore and instruct lengths man as appropriate. Noted concern re. uncontrolled wash-off and surface water run-off from private road to Vineyard. HCC to investigate if there is anything that we can do.

No response to date.

Additional Points (HCC)

The issue of an ongoing problem was raised associated with keeping the gully at the bottom of Back Lane clear. It was suggested that grips on Back Lane be investigated with a view to renewing some of the grips that had been filled in by a previous landowner – HPC to investigate the possibility of getting their Lengths man to carry out the grip cutting works

Post meeting note: *HPC have taken steps to see how and when the two diversions can be reinstated to relieve some of the flow and detritus coming off the hill behind. They have also reported the brickwork around the gully had been bashed yet again by a vehicle. The rubble was pulled off the grating, but there is*

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now a need for restoration of the wall. This is being arranged by the area team (RB)

Note: Two grips were reinstated by order of HPC 29/01/20. Highways notified.

The FAG will continue to track and progress the open items.

Summary

With the current situation with weather predictions and scatter of aquifer levels, coupled with advice from the EA, we are maintaining our communication with the properties on the flooding list to keep people apprised of possible risks. As soon as we receive the “all clear” from the EA, and in consultation with members of the FAG and other interested parties, we will close-out the Hambledon Alert email information so people can take appropriate action in putting things away. If there are any questions or concerns, or the need for further help from property owners, the FAG will respond.

During the recent threats from possible flooding events, and the preparations made, we have accumulated a lot more knowledge in spite of no major problems. We are compiling a list of Lessons learnt and Action Items to address in anticipation of the need to react to flooding risks, surface or groundwater. Special considerations continue to focus on vulnerable residents, and new property owners coming into the village.

The FAG will continue to report on progress with the list of Open Items with Highways, and to maintain liaison on matters concerning the Big Pipe, and its attachments (gullies, inlets/outlets, headwall area), and the ditch leading down to Hook Vinney. A watch will need to be maintained to ensure we are kept informed. Reports and updates will be sent to the HPC as required.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Jan Jarvie
Chairman, Flood Action Group