

# **FAG Report to the Hambledon Parish Council 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

## **Flood Alerts**

The Christmas season was fairly tense for us in terms of possible cellar flooding and well over-flows. Both of the trigger points were exceeded at Broadhalfpenny Down and Whitedale Farm, and there were a number of Possible Flood Alerts issued by the Environment Agency for Hambledon over the period. All four of the FAG “First Responders” reported water in their cellars over the last two-week period, with a high of 36” (82 Cm). At the time of this writing, the aquifers remain high, but are stable. Traditionally there is a dip in the levels following a peak, and the EA warns the springs could come-up rapidly if there is any significant rain with the current readings, and a new telephone and email Alert was issued this morning by the EA for possible flooding in Hambledon, so the danger is not yet over.

## **Help with Preparations**

We have been available to assist in areas where we knew there could be problems in getting equipment set-up after the five year hiatus, and removal of the lids off the pump points, which has been a stressful challenge. There has been a need for support at vulnerable properties as well, where age and loss of partners required some help, along with those folks who have just moved-in requiring information on past experiences. Many, but not all of the properties that prepared for pumping, rolled-out their hoses and dug away at the lids on the PP’s to enable the systems to be tested. There were a large number of issues exposed during the various set-up efforts, including many people having the wrong size hoses and fittings; faulty pumps; missing grommets in the PPs, and a lack of tools required for assembly. If not already done so, other owners will be encouraged to take the time to ensure they have all the kit, and know how to press it into service.

Even if there isn’t a requirement this season (mid-October to early April), it was a very worthwhile drill. Most of the hoses and hook-ups will remain in place until there is a more definitive “all clear” issued by the EA.

## **Headwall and Ditch**

A good deal of water flowed in the ditch below the headwall at a very high rate of flow. There is continuing undercutting of the ditch banks, which was reported to the Highways Department more than once. As a result of the pressure placed on them through emails with a wide-distribution, some action was taken to remove a few of the bigger bits of vegetation and debris near the footpath bridge. The big issue remains the slippage of the banks showing serious erosion, which finally has been responded to by placing 12 reflector bollards along the West side of the B 2150 in the worst affected areas. With the number of heavy vehicles passing along this stretch, there has to be a strong probability of a cave-in.

The current volume of water can be seen at the 1.2 m outlet, where the level is only a few inches below the centre point of the pipe. Over the past three days we have been visiting the inlets at the top of East Street, and Green lane. There isn’t a drop of water entering the BP at either location, and there is none in any of the gutters. Where’s it all coming from? The flow is almost clear, with no signs of flotsam or debris, suggesting it must be groundwater getting into the system from ways or locations unknown.

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## **Gulley Maintenance**

We were given notice on 30<sup>th</sup> December “that a job has been raised to cleanse all gullies along B 2150 Hambledon Road from Lotts Store to Stewarts Green as well as all gullies along West Street and East Street to the national speed limit signs north east of the village. Works are programmed for the 2nd January. Sorry I have been unable to give you more notice.” We complained about the lack of adequate notice, and also asked if they would notify residents, but there was no response.

The contractor (Conway) did arrive in Hambledon as scheduled. They began work on Green Lane and started up West Street, but stopped just after lunch, as described by one of the residents of East Street. When she offered to move her car, she was told by the contractors not to worry about moving her car because they were not going to do any work on East Street as there were too many cars parked. Another resident questioned them as to why they couldn't carry-on where there were no obstructions, but they just packed-up and left. I immediately sent an email to the Highways representative, Paula Edwards, and requested an explanation and a way forward. She reverted with, “Thank you for the feedback Jan, I will make the necessary enquiries and go back to you. At this time I am unclear as to why the contractors would not clean the gullies that were clear of parked cars.” We will await their proposals.

It should be noted, the design for the big pipe included 200 gullies, and WCC/HCC should have had some sort of plan in mind for getting them cleared on a busy highway with narrow roads.

## **Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 Meeting with HCC**

We received the document from Highways, and agreed their notes on the matters raised. Open items will continue to be tracked as required, along with follow-up from problems with ditch erosion and clearance of vegetation.

## **Sewerage**

Over-pumping at the Bury Lodge station has commenced with continual use of large tankers. Groundwater getting into the mains pipes is usually the source, and frequently in the area of the football pitch below the Tea Room. We are currently trying to re-establish the contact points for the local Southern Water representatives to get better information on the status.

## **Summary**

There will still be a requirement to help with resiliency measures for the next two months, and given the most recent notices from the EA, fluctuations in the weather patterns will keep us standing by.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jan Jarvie,  
Chairman Flood Action Group