

Report from Flood Action Group, 4th January 2021

Current Situation

The Groundwater (GW) levels continue to rise as expected for this time of year, however by comparison, the rate is lower than 2019:

27/12/20	BHD 55.180 AOD	Whitedale	46.892 AOD
27/12/19	BHD 64.460 AOD	Whitedale	55.913 AOD

This is what the FAG wants to see, but must be viewed with the knowledge there are many factors, including climate change, widely varying weather forecasts, and the unfortunate ability to rely on data from previous years with the churn. We are still in the early stages of the flood season, and continue to monitor the indicators and reports from a number of sources, and do our best to keep those people at risk continually informed. An email to “all flooders” has been sent out during the last week of December.

Environment Agency (EA)

We remain in contact with Charlotte Creswell of the EA, who sent her advice on the 27th of December: “It [BHD] hasn’t yet responded to the rain we have just had overnight, so I want to see how far it rises with that before making a proper assessment as to whether we might just see impacts in a few cellars in lower west street in + 8 days. I think we might just scrape beneath, but it is going to be very close. Also, we now have more rain forecast tomorrow, though it’s a bit uncertain as to whether this will fall as more wintry showers as opposed to heavier rain. After tomorrow, the forecast is then dry and cold for a good few days. Even if we scrape by now, I suspect that the next return to unsettled weather could be enough to cause onset of GW flood impacts. Like I said, I am going to see how BHP responds to the overnight rain and see how much falls tomorrow, then on Tuesday will see if that helps with the assessment.” Further updates will be forwarded to the HPC as they become available.

Ditches and the Headwall

On Monday (14/12) a complaint was received from the resident at Hook Vinney with regard to an impaction of the field culvert adjacent to their property. There was a very large amount of debris wedged in the culvert, extending out of both ends photographed by the owners, which was sent to Hampshire Highways (inter alia). There was some difficulty in reporting the incident and getting the message to the right person in charge during the busy holiday week, but with a few “urgent” emails there was a response in a fairly reasonable amount of time.

On the 16th of December, I had a good (chance) meeting with a rep from HCC Highways during the afternoon, whilst I was surveying the drainage issues. He had walked the entire length of the ditch on the field side from the headwall, down to Hook Vinney, and beyond the Pumping Station. He was very pleasant, and had an extensive knowledge and past experience with drainage in Hambledon, and the maintenance efforts that have been undertaken for the last few years. He had an iPad and said he took photographs “every few meters”, which should provide a good deal of “real-time” data on the present condition of the ditch, including the remaining debris and hedging, along with looking at some of the concerns we have with the banks. I described the situation with the large pile of vegetation that had been left in

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the bottom of the ditch during the last clear-out by the contractors, mid-point between the bridge and Hook Vinney. He made a note of it, and asked how long it had been left there in that condition, and I told him it had been several weeks. We agreed the other culverts serving the outflow downstream of Hook were free and clear, following our inspections. He indicated he was putting together an instruction to pass along to subcontractors, which he said would be tomorrow (17/12), but heavy rain precluded work, but much to our satisfaction, the effort was completed on the Saturday in a short period of time using a JCB. Just a few hours later, a very heavy deluge of rain went through unobstructed, though more rubbish was being washed down.

Paula Edwards confirmed the remainder of the work on the clearing of the headwall and outflow ditch will have to trail until the new year, when subcontractors are available upon return from holidays.

On 20/12/20 the Upper East Street ditch was inspected in response to a complaint from one of the villagers regarding the amount of water that is not getting into the ditch from the upper section, extending from the entrance to the commercial site, up to its the head at Deepdale. A significant amount of water from Dog Kennel Lane flows along the pavement on East Street down to the Deepdale entrance where it should be directed into the ditch. It is noted there are three grips along this section, all of which require attention from a build-up debris partially blocking the path into the ditch, and the ditch itself is higher in places than the highway, making the whole stretch largely ineffective, also compromised by the partially clogged culvert. This causes a big volume of water to bypass the drainage system until it has is past the commercial site entrance and discharges into lower section. As this is located on a blind curve, cars have to brake quickly or change lanes, which is a dangerous situation. It was later observed on 22/12/20 that the grips had been partially dug-out, however, our recommendation is to deepen the ditch and ensure the grips have a sufficient angle to guide the flow swiftly off the highway. This raises the question as to ownership of that portion of the ditch, and assumes responsibility for carrying out the required actions.

FAG Members

We have been encouraging people to volunteer for the FAG, and a few people have indicated interest. At the last HPC Meeting, it was asked that the current membership be identified:

Jan Jarvie (Chairman)
Neil Mason (Deputy)
Paul Quinn
William Stanton
James King
Simon Dettmer
Gary Plaisted
Chris Hand
Ian Hall

Possible New Members: Joel Tanzer, Guy Ladenburg, and James Silcock. Guy Ladenburg, who recently moved into Geoff Hartridge's house, has been in contact with the FAG expressing his interest in becoming a member, and acting as a first

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responder for cellar flooding in Lower West Street. He has also volunteered to learn more about providing measurements from the borehole adjacent to his property, which is a valuable data point for ourselves and the EA.

The month ahead in 2021 will be focused on following-up on the maintenance matters with the drainage systems, monitoring the weather and GW situations, and providing information to properties where there could be an increased risk of flooding and preparations may be necessary. .

Respectfully Submitted by,
Jan Jarvie
Chairman, Flood Action Group