

IGHTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING BETWEEN THE PARISH COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS HELD ON TUESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2016 AT THE GEORGE & DRAGON 7.30PM TO DISCUSS RECENT FLOODING

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

Present: Andy Edwards, Max Tant, Cllr Rodney Chartres, Borough Cllr Robin Betts, Matt Boughton, (Secretary to Tom Tugendhat MP), Cllr Mitchem, Cllr Cracknell, The Parish Clerk and c. 40 members of the Public

Chairman Introduction – Mr Rodney Chartres, Chairman of Ightham Parish Council

Cllr Chartres welcomed everyone and gave thanks to Kent Fire and Rescue who attended the scene on the night of the flooding. Points of note:

- It these situations it is the Fire and Rescue Team who co-ordinate everything, it is not a Police Operation.
- The problem is that we live on a Flood Plain.
- The flooding wasn't as bad as in 1968 when there was a greater volume of water.
- In recent years, the A227 culvert was built under Durlings Orchard, originally it was an open stream. The culvert runs underneath Ezel Villas, the grille at the top of the culvert can become blocked. 2/3 TMBC wheelie bins were found in the field downstream.
- We live in a flashy catchment with Gault clay and have run off from the St Clere Estate coming through the village.
- On the night of the flood the ground was already saturated from earlier rainfall.
- Debris from the Norway Spruce at Chapel Farm comes into the Stream.
- Flood Re has been in operation since March which means that houses in a flood area can get house insurance.
- We need to investigate Residential Resilience, the culvert and future preventative measures.

Overview of Events, Investigation and identifying emergency management measures – Andy Edwards, Head of Technical Services, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

The information is not definitive, it is what was gathered on the night:

- 25th June was a “significant rainfall event”, the ground was already saturated and there was fast “run off”.
- Once the Borough became aware of the flooding, a Senior Director was deployed at the George & Dragon. He stayed to do all he could to assist. This is normally where the responsibility ends but Andy came to assess the site the following day, take photos and speak to residents to gather information.
- The Borough Council has responsibility for welfare, ie to arrange temporary accommodation for those who need it.
- Kent Fire & Rescue deal with “threat to life”, they stayed on to pump out water.
- The Met office put alerts out for high rainfall events however this event was unexpected. You can register to received the alerts but may find that you get inundated with them.

Investigation and identification of risk management measures and the role and responsibilities of the Riparian Owner - Max Tant, Flood & Water Manager, Kent County Council

- KCC is the “Lead Local Flood Authority” and as such has duty to investigate the flood.
- The investigation has already started by looking at the rainfall data and visiting the site.
- The nearest rain gauge to Ightham is Sevenoaks, approximately 6 km to the west. At 17.30 on 25 June this recorded approximately 17 mm of rain in half an hour and approximately 33 mm in 2 hrs, which is estimated to be a 1 in19 year storm.
- In addition to this significant rainfall, the stream was already full from rainfall earlier in the day. During the flood event we know that water went through the culvert under the George and Dragon and the footbridge by Ightham Place. The footbridge is approximately the same size as the long culvert under the properties along Borough Green Road. Therefore there is a possibility that something occurred to block or reduce the capacity of the culvert. It is unlikely that something further downstream would have caused the flooding as low lying land would have taken the flood water. (Photographs received since the meeting rule out the culvert underneath Durlings Orchard being the cause, the next section down remains unknown). An assessment of the various

sections of the culvert and its condition will be carried out using CCTV. This will require access via manhole covers in residents' properties. Residents gave permission on the night.

- There are 2 things to consider: If debris is a problem a trash screen could be put up, this will need to go up against a structure and it will need to be accessible so it can be checked and cleared, which may cause issues for the Busty Stream. If capacity of the culvert is an issue it will be almost impossible to remedy.
- The catchment may also be looked at but it is very steep.
- The best option may be in managing individual property level protection/resilience, ie waterproofing houses.
- The report of the investigation will not mention specific properties although they may be obvious. As we are in a flood risk area, these properties are already recorded on the EA map.
- It is hoped that the initial draft report will be completed by the end of the year and will be published in 2017.
- The Investigation will merely state what happened, it will then be used as a tool to come up with suggestions for further actions, it will not provide a detailed analysis of mitigation options.
- Fen Pond Road properties were also flooded so this area will be looked at too as well as those who were flooded as a result of run off from the back of Borough Green Road.
- Residents were asked to provide Max with as much detail as possible so that all issues can be covered in the report.
- Max suggested that people look at other Flood Reports online to get an idea of what to expect.

Flood reduction measures

If you can't find a suitable option to reduce the risk of flooding another option is to protect the fabric of a property, ie waterproof doors with flood seals, air bricks, waterproof walls. This depends on the type of property. The Government has a grant available of £5,500 per household with £500 going towards a survey and the rest towards materials and installation.

The government will not provide property level resilience grants and grants for flood defence measures for the same properties. A community may only benefit from one (funded by the government). Any catchment scheme will have to bid for funds based on the benefits it achieves (the £5,500 fixed value grant only applies to property level resilience).

The Risk Management Authority must make the application for the grants.

Riparian Ownership - Under Common Law if you own land adjoining or with a watercourse running through it, you have certain rights and responsibilities. In legal terms you are a 'riparian owner'. If you rent the land, you should agree with the owner who will manage these rights and responsibilities.

For more detailed information please refer to www.gov.uk/environment-agency to download "Living on the Edge – A Guide to your rights and responsibilities of riverside ownership."

- Neither the County, Borough or Parish Council have responsibility for maintaining the stream.
- From the Square to Burgess House, Ightham Place is responsible for the entire riverbed, thereafter properties with boundaries on the Busty Stream are responsible for their section.
- Houses running over the culvert have responsibility for that section of the culvert.
- Garden waste has been found in the Stream, this is unacceptable.
- Although The Parish Council have no responsibility for the stream they have paid Contractors to cut back vegetation and clear out the riverbed in recent years.
- The Footpath is unregistered ie no-one owns it therefore responsibility falls with the properties that have a boundary with it. KCC does have enforcement powers over ordinary watercourses. However, enforcement is time consuming and does not always lead to the desired outcome, it is better if neighbouring properties and communities are pro-active if a problem becomes apparent.
- It was suggested that the best way of keeping the stream clear and free of debris was to set up a working party and the Parish Council could co-ordinate efforts.
- Cllr Cracknell offered to support a co-operative group, the stream bed needs to be maintained on a regular basis.
- The Parish Clerk will put together a mailing list to circulate to residents

Flood Re – Refer to: www.floodre.co.uk – For information about Insurance for properties that live in a flood risk area. In summary:

- It is a new scheme launched in 2016, not all Insurance Companies/Brokers are aware but you can find Insurers via the website
- Flood risk properties take out home insurance as normal directly or via a broker, they will pay an additional premium for flood cover that is set according to the council tax band of the property. Flood-Re does not cover Band H properties.
- Everyone who pays home insurance pays a tax element which goes into a centrally managed fund
- The Insurer passes on the flood risk part of the policy to Flood Re who also have responsibility for paying any valid claim from the fund

Matt Boughton, on behalf of Tom Tugendhat said that flooding is an issues that is taken very seriously. It is a “team” exercise as well as an individual exercise. Residents should ensure that every bit of the stream is looked after and kept free of rubbish/garden waste. He will be reporting back to Tom.

In summary

- KCC to produce a report of events
- The report will be used to suggest measures that may help to reduce the risk in future, cost is a factor in what can be achieved.
- Residents to take responsibility for their section of the steam /culvert
- Parish Council to co-ordinate with a working party
- Cllr Chartres to investigate simple /inexpensive measures with landowners using their land a flood plain.