

UPC Flood Report Jan 2013

Heavy rains at various times, especially overnight 22nd/23rd December 2012 causing various flooding incidents, especially in Venlake, KG V field and Cooks Mead. Both sand bags and sand supplies have proved very useful, and needed replenishing.

Flood prevention

DCC Flood Prevention, in December, issued a report on the July floods, where Chapter 13 specifically refers to Uplyme. Cllr Whiting rang them on 21st December to discuss their recommendations that surveys should be carried out in order that designs can be produced. When asked who should be responsible for producing the survey, the officer (Richard Rainbow) said “the riparian owners involved”. He was told that this could be 10 -12 different parties, and there was a need to have an agreed survey, not 10 – 12 surveys, or surveys where different owners might argue of the accuracy of a particular survey. RR said he would investigate whether he could find any resources or ways of producing this survey, but no response to date. Note that for design standards, the Pitt Report 2007 recommended the use of 1 in 200 year figures for design purposes.

If this is the official idea, that all parties should individually survey and design works to protect themselves, this will be brought before our MP Neil Parish, as this has obviously not been the approach elsewhere, where the local authorities have taken responsibility for all aspects, including design, financing, and construction, These sorts of comments were the reason for UPC to set up its WP to liaise with all parties.

Guinness Trust property in Venlake

Email sent to Guinness re discussions with their Estates Surveyors and promise of copy of site plan for Venlake. They verbally accept responsibility for culvert at the car park entrance, but have still not been able to determine responsibility for the stream along Venlake. They have suggested an emergency store for sandbags etc., as one of their properties was flooded, but this has been rejected by the residents as it would have meant the loss of a car parking space.

Venlake, FP 10 stream.

The new fence affected the cleaning of the stream at the entrance to the culvert. (pointed out by UPC to DCC PROW officer Emma Hellier in July). Mrs Kidson (a householder badly affected in the July floods) is waiting to hear from her insurers what protection measures they will pay for. She would be willing to widen the stream on her side, but thinks DCC should also move back their bank protection works and narrow footpath 10, as she considers that the stream at present is too narrow. The bank protection works on the FP 10 side were undermined by the December floods, but repaired by DCC Highways at the start of January.

FP 10 stream flooded over Venlake on 23rd December and Venlake was blocked to traffic, due to culvert being blocked with debris (this had only been cleared by DCC two days previously). James Booth was brought in by UPC to clear it. DCC have been asked to remove arisings and again clear the stream downstream. Guinness housing had some flooding. Road closed signs needed at Cllr Pratt's for emergency road closures. Venlake End road drainage blocked and coming out of manhole.

Venlake West culvert had overtopped in the night, also making Venlake impassable at this point. Very large boulder removed before it blocked the culvert. The stream upstream of the culvert has considerable erosion and changes in its course.

Cannington Lane flooded at Holcombe junction.

Cuckoo Lane culvert again proved inadequate.

Cooks Mead/Carswell stream

Cooks Mead culverts were again seriously overtopped on 22nd/23rd December and Cooks Mead bungalows and Cllr Ostler's house nearly flooded, The stream from Carswell was running across the Cooks Mead road for one month and a day due to blockages in these totally inadequate culverts, fortunately without freezing over in December due to the mild weather, as this is the access to the Primary School. DCC have done some works including trying special jetting equipment, which got stuck. The bungalows have had to have sandbags across their drives for all December. This would have been far worse but for Mr Mansfield allowing a large debris pit to be excavated by Cllr Ostler, and subsequently re-excavated at least twice by him, when it filled up with debris.

B3165

Cllr Ostler also cleaning debris pit B3165 culvert north regularly, including on 23rd December (cleaned by DCC Highways two days previously).

Erosion at exit to VH car park culvert continues to get worse, with considerable erosion on 23rd December, and, in spite of emails to DCC Highways, nothing has been done. This may shortly cause the closure of the B3165.

Both of the very old B3165 culverts (noted as having been 'overwhelmed' in July 2012 in the DCC Flood Prevention report of December 2012) were again overtopped in night of 22nd/23rd December, the tennis courts and playground covered with silt, cricket field had ponding at times and debris left afterwards.

No further news from KG V on the legal question of the riparian rights following the registration of the land along the B 3165 by Fields in Trust, or the levels survey promised some months ago and needed to check the designs.

Future minor works

Works available for a working party includes tree removal on the approach to the River Lim, clearing leat by the Village Hall and silt clearance from both the children's playground and the tennis courts. This silt was pronounced by EDDC Environmental Health Officer as not dangerous to health, after fears expressed in November. And then there is always debris removal from the streams in the Village centre and Venlake.

Correspondence

The letter read out in the December UPC meeting has been sent to our MP, Neil Parish, with copies of relevant correspondence and reports (18!), and a follow up letter must now be sent, referring to the further floods in December, and the DCC Flood Prevention report of December on the July Floods, as noted above.

This report notes that Uplyme had the third highest number of properties flooded in Devon, and that we cannot get a flood warning from the Environment Agency, only an alert, due to the steepness and flashy nature of the local streams. Both of these matters point to the urgent nature of having proper permanent flood protection works designed and installed in Uplyme. The costs of such a scheme, compared to say those required in Axminster, are relatively small and could easily be undertaken at a very early date, if the financial resources can be found either by the Government or DCC.

Peter Whiting
Chairman, Flood Working Party.