

## **UPC Flood Working Party – latest update as at 13 January 2013**

At the recent UPC meeting, the latest flooding report, including the December incidents, was read to the meeting as well as extracts from the DCC Flood Prevention Unit Report, Chapter 13, on the July 2012 floods in Uplyme. Further flooding was experienced on Sat 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

## **Uplyme Parish Council – Report on Flooding on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013, heavy rainstorms caused further extensive flooding in Uplyme in the Cooks Mead/B3165 Lyme Road, Church Street, Venlake and Cuckoo Lane areas of the village.

Seven properties had flooding, including the Post Office/Petrol Station, and part of the Village Hall, although nobody had to be evacuated.

All the culverts in the area were surcharged or blocked.

Venlake and Cuckoo Lane were closed overnight and there was considerable erosion to the upper reaches of streams and debris therefrom deposited further downstream.

Fire Brigade and DCC Highways were in attendance.

No alerts or warnings are known of from Environment Agency.

**Cooks Mead/B3165 Lyme Road area.** Post Office/Petrol Station had some flooding as did adjacent property (Brooklands). Minor flooding occurred to the Village Hall. Both of the ancient B3165 stone culverts were brim full, with some flooding across B3165 road. Erosion at exit to Village Hall culvert at car park continues. Blocked gullies in Cooks Mead were cleared by DCC Highways. The culverts from Carswell were surcharged or overtopped with some further flooding, silt and debris across the roads, and the new debris pit is again full. Silt across KG V tennis courts and UPC children's playground with minor flooding on the cricket field. River Lim by Talbot Arms – water level up to bottom of footbridge. Silt across B3165 caused at least 1 road accident at the village gateway.

**Church Street** – one house was flooded.

**Cuckoo Lane.** Culvert overwhelmed, two houses flooded. DCC told James Booth (a mini-excavator driver, acting on behalf of UPC) not to clear the road or he would be responsible for any damage. Considerable upstream erosion by the stream feeding the culvert.

**Venlake.** Some water into two of the Guinness Hermitage properties. Other flooding including to Ashbourne House (a new incident) was only prevented by the use of sandbags. The DCC Highway culvert was overwhelmed again and blocked, with debris also blocking the road. Dorset Fire Brigade and DCC Highways attended, but the latter decided not to clear the road until the following day. DCC Highways put up 'Road Closed' signs overnight, and arranged for jetting equipment, JCB and lorry on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>. The Guinness culvert under its car park entrance now again needs clearing. There has been considerable upstream erosion of the stream feeding the culvert.

Cllr Peter Whiting, UPC  
13th Jan.

## **Correspondence.**

- 1. Letter to Village Hall Committee re protection measures.** We note that following heavy rain on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013, some flood water apparently entered part of the Village Hall, although the main hall itself was not affected, UPC Working Party had previously suggested various flood protection measures which they consider should be installed at the Village Hall, but the UOC cannot, of course, do the actual design of such flood protection measures, as this would be taking responsibility for it, and we do not know the details of construction such as drainage, air bricks and other possible entries for floodwater. We have previously told the Village Hall Committee of the availability of various leaflets from the Environmental Agency, giving details of protective measures such as doorstops with rubber seals. The Village Hall is a vital part of the community and experience from recent flooding shows that if it were to be inundated it might have to be closed for a period of up to 6 months for repairs and to dry out. There will always be a danger of flooding to the Village Hall until any permanent scheme is put in place; the danger to the Village Hall is made greater by the BT ducts and its associated concrete surround across existing channel, but which it is hoped might be removed as part of any overall government funded scheme. We draw your attention to the recent talk on BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Five Live and the BBC TV News Channel from the flooding expert David Balmforth, Vice President of the Institute of Civil Engineers, who said that “temporary flood protection measures such as flood doors, gates and vent seals, despite being readily available and affordable are not widely adopted, and called for a shift away from the use of building materials that are often easily damaged by water, meaning that flooded buildings take a long time to try and are difficult and expensive to restore”. These are the same sentiments already expressed to you by the UPC Flood Working Party
- 2. Letter to Neil Parish, MP.** We refer to our recent letter of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012, regarding the flooding in Uplyme. This has now been followed up by yet further flooding in both December and January, again as a result of the totally inadequate drainage system, with seven properties again affected by flooding on 12<sup>th</sup> January, including the Village Hall and Post Office/Petrol Station, at the heart of the village and its community life. We enclose (i) a copy of Chapter 13 (Uplyme) of the recent DCC Flood Prevention Unit Report, (ii) the UPC Flood Report for December 2012, as given at the UPC meeting on Wednesday 9th January 2013, and (iii) the latest Report on the flooding experienced on 12<sup>th</sup> January. We must highlight the comments of DCC Flood Protection Unit regarding the floods of July 2012 as follows, and include comments regarding the subsequent flooding incidents; (a) the agreed need to replace the existing culvert system at Cooks Mead, which was blocked for the whole of December and now again in January, with water running across the road and past parishioners houses which therefore continued to need their sandbag protection, as noted in the UPC Flood Reports; (b) the Flood Protection Unit state that that the two ancient stone culverts across the B3165, which had been

overwhelmed during the flooding, in July, December and now in January 2013 should be replaced; (c) the need for a survey and design of the whole scheme for the Cooks Mean/B3165 area of the Village. Here, we have requested the assistance of DCC Flood Prevention Unit in obtaining a survey acceptable to all the riparian owners and other parties, and await their reply; (d) the DCC Flood Prevention Unit Report for July stated that Uplyme had the third highest number of dwellings in Devonshire flooded during the July floods (e) it also shows that due to the steepness and nature of the valleys in Uplyme, the Environmental Agency is only able to give an Alert and not a proper Flood Warning for this area (f) Chapter 13 of the DCC Report also notes that the culvert at Venlake (where you started your inspection of the village, and you may well remember these particular properties that had been flooded) and the similar culvert at Cuckoo Lane, are also inadequate and need replacing. These were both overwhelmed again on 12<sup>th</sup> January, and the roads closed; (g) We are fully aware of the problems in funding, but our own estimate for the permanent flood relief works for the village centre was approximately £250,000, which is relatively small compared with works needed elsewhere in the county, but which would give considerable relief to the Village and the village centre, and would be relatively easy to design and construct.

An alternative to a second culvert across the B3165 has been proposed to the landowners, King George the Fifth Playing Fields (Fields in Trust) by diverting the main drainage channel across their land and directly into the River Li, as being potentially a slightly cheaper and much more effective route, and we await their formal reply, although first indications from them are that this might be unfavourable. The Venlake and Cuckoo Lane culverts are relatively short and inexpensive, compared with the value they would provide in flood relief in these areas.

The UPC Flood Working Party has done much to try to sort out the differences between the various riparian owners, and have obtained agreement from some of them of measures that have been or can be taken on their land, but the UPC itself has neither the legal powers, or the money, to progress the permanent scheme now agreed to be necessary, which is where we need your liaison and help with all the various parties and especially the funding needs. We have however, committed UPC funds on emergency measures, where necessary.

3. **Letter (email) to DCC Flood Prevention**, (Richard Rainbow) enclosing a copy of the latest two UPC Flood Reports for the December and January floods and asking if he has had any success regarding getting the surveys necessary for the design of the works, as requested by Cllr Whiting in their recent telephone discussions.
4. **Letter to KG V** asking if there has been any progress in the legal matters regarding riparian rights and also the possibility of a permanent flood diversion channel through KG V land, past the tennis courts and children's playground, and directly into the River Lim, thus removing the 90° bend in the channel under the B3165 that must have been one of the contributory factors in the recent flooding. We also still await the survey works offered by KG V Chairman following the July floods, but are trying to make alternative arrangements

5. **Guinness Heritage.** Email to Ben Cave. You are probably aware that two of your properties either had flooding or were on the brink of being flooded following the rainstorms on 12 January 2012. We thank you for your recent e-mail regarding the survey information, but which is still awaited. However, we must also point out that the channel along the frontage of your Venlake properties along Venlake Lane required clearance and on-going maintenance by yourselves and/or DCC Highways, following the December and January floods, and currently remains an actual and potential risk to further flooding to your properties. Your culvert under your car park entrance now has further debris deposited in it, following the 12<sup>th</sup> Jan flood and needs cleaning. We note that flood prevention measures and a place for emergency equipment have been discussed between yourselves and your tenants but apparently, in view of the potential loss of a car parking space, these suggestions appear to have been shelved. Maybe you now wish to review this, as well as the provision of flood doors, etc., after the January incident. Meanwhile we still hope to have sandbags and sand available in the case of further emergencies
  
6. **Letter to Village School.** Uplyme Parish Council is delighted at the obtaining of the Preliminary Planning approval for the new school. However we would remind you that our letter of support of your application to EDDC Planning, (copy enclosed) was conditional upon the permanent works causing no greater danger of flooding than exists at present, and if possible, should alleviate risks by measures to improve the stream past the new site. We would be pleased to discuss such measures with you at your convenience and suggest a site meeting at some time, including representatives from the Environmental Agency and DCC Flood Prevention Unit. UPC also said that various safety measures, that were included in the Uplyme Village Plan, might need to be taken as part of the overall new schools scheme, such as providing foot paths for pupils walking to school through the village.