

Minutes - Working meeting to discuss flooding issues in Uplyme

Friday 27th February at the Uplyme Village Hall, 9.30am.

Present:

Neil Parish MP

Ian Thomas, EDDC Ward Councillor

Jim Knight, DCC District Councillor

Uplyme PC Councillors John Garland, David Ostler, Colin Pratt, Andrew Turner, and the Clerk Lois Wakeman

John Galt and Martin Hutchings, DCC Flood Risk Management

Paul Downes and Brian Hoare, DCC Highways

Nick P Reed, Environment Agency

Keith Steel, EDDC – *sent apologies*

1. Introductions and welcome by UPC Chairman, John Garland.
2. **Brief summary of current situation.** January 2013 meeting at Scout Hut was the kick-off of the project, and over 2 years later, parishioners have been impatient with progress and don't understand why little has apparently happened on the ground. More positively, two surveys are now available and some remediation works have already been carried out by EDDC in Carswell.
3. John Galt summarised the **Cooks Mead** situation. EDDC took the lead initially; JG was then appointed as project engineer and took over lead. Evaluation of watercourses and structures was needed. Residential property risk is crucial, despite importance of village hall and shop to residents. Survey and hydraulic modelling was followed by cost-benefit analysis to determine possible improvements.

Highway culverts, the BT 'dam' and levels over the road in "Westley" were all identified as problems. Some options have been priced: replacement of the culvert in Pound Lane, and the two under the Lyme Road - £150K. There was considerable discussion of the silting caused by the box culvert and stream levels in "Westley", but this was not identified as a flooding issue by the hydraulic survey, although it may increase maintenance costs of the infrastructure. Evidence for enforcement against riparian owners is not sufficient to take legal action at Westley/Dashwood.

Weirs were funded by DCC and constructed by EDDC; they have worked well as long as kept clean. Run-off down Lime Kiln Lane is still a problem as road drains cannot cope with volume, leading to flooding, and icy patches in cold weather.

A footbridge will replace the pipe under Hackers Mead footpath, which is considered as a restriction, probably in the next few weeks.

Cllr Thomas wondered if the proposed upgrading of PCP8 would be an opportunity to remove the concrete dam at lesser cost – he will follow this up and report back.

The overflow channel by the tennis court had done its job in the heavy rain over the past weekend, and councillors wondered if it a permanent channel would be more cost-effective. However, Martin Hutchings explained that funding was allocated on strict guidelines according to the number of homes benefiting, and although this proposal might cut down on future maintenance costs, it was unlikely to be considered.

John Galt will ask for the overflow channel to be added to the hydraulic model to see if it makes any difference to conclusions.

If the larger scheme does not go ahead, DCC has a smaller project in mind to put formal flood protection measures in on the south side of Cooks Mead and west of Pound Lane.

Funding for a major scheme will likely have to come from several local sources including DCC Highways and EDDC; perhaps the new school may be a useful prompt to getting infrastructure improvements funded. There is some money in DEFRA's 2017 programme for Uplyme. Neil Parish requested a full costing for the proper scheme, which John Galt and Paul Downes hoped to be able to provide in the next couple of months.

There was concern from UPC that self-help, reducing highway maintenance and flood risk is losing funding possibilities for Uplyme. On the positive side, it seems that mis-communication was responsible for underestimating the number of houses flooded, which will improve the case for works at Uplyme.

4. Situation at **Cuckoo Lane**: catchment area is huge – agricultural run-off is the main cause, which brings down large volumes of silt and rubble choking culverts and ditches, as well as running down the road from the Furzehill side. Improved drainage for the road is being designed and is in the Highways budget for 2015-16. There is potential for a silt trap above the lane subject to landowner agreement and access to clear out. Can be done in 2015/16 if funding.

5. Situation at **Venlake**:

Hook Farm: enforcement could only be made if watercourse is actually blocked.

It might be able to store water behind railway embankment, but this is not currently planned.

Section of watercourse at north end is owned by the now-defunct quarry, so enforcement would be impossible. A Venlake resident would like whole of north end to be banked in concrete, but this is not likely to be economical.

Riparian owners should be asked to improve the condition of the watercourse – Nick Reed to send the Clerk a template letter which can be adapted.

The Venlake End culvert could be improved, but will still need to go straight across the road because of BT ducting. Brian Hoare is investigating a twin culvert for funding in 2015-16. A silt trap has not been submitted for funding but there might be space just south of the road.

Some of the kerbs opposite the stone cottages will be taken out to allow water off the road.

At this point, Neil Parish had to leave, but asked all parties to write to Guinness Hermitage about the silting of its box culvert. (UPC and DCC had tried numerous times to get this dug out in the past 2 years, without success; Brian Hoare will investigate the possibility of enforcement.) He (NP) also reminded all present of the necessity to get costings, and to keep everyone informed.

The consultant has also proposed a major scheme to take water between 1 Venlake Meadow and Garden Scent House straight to the stream in the football field – not a funded priority.

6. Situation at **Church Street**: Brian Hoare announced a scheme for new highway drainage here.
7. Martin Hutchings noted that putting the whole catchment area together means more houses affected – would be a bigger scheme but could solicit bigger financial contributions.
8. List of houses and commercial properties flooded over the past 3 years:
 - Cooks Mead – nos. 13, 14, 15, and 17.
 - Lyme Rd: Brooklands, Filling Station/Village Shop, Village Hall, Stanbury, Dashwood.
 - Church St: – Ash Cottage, Brook Cottage, Glebe Cottage, Tor Cottage.
 - Venlake – Spinney Cottage, Valley Cottage, Venlake Cottage, Knoll View (?) – adjacent to Langlands (*Cuckoo's Nest is in Cuckoo Lane, not Venlake*), Langlands, 1 and 2 Venlake Meadow, and Garden Scent House.
 - Cuckoo Lane – The Nest, Spring Cottage, Tan y Bryn.
 - (Note from Clerk: Other water damage was caused to a garage in Pound Lane, Winters Farm at Whitty Hill, Highover on Woodhouse Hill, Upper Cottage at Rocombe, and property at the east end of St Mary's Lane – but this was field or highway run-off, not connected with a specific watercourse).
9. Cllr Garland thanked everyone for attending. Meeting closed at 11.25.