

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 29 June 2018

Drainage Working Group Update

1. Following Trevor Ancelet's resignation from the Group, I am now the Chairman. We are only 4 now but a very committed 4.
2. Keith delivered 400 more questionnaires to the streets north of Harvey Street and we have received another 30 responses with helpful comments on them. Still a few more to deliver eg to Lovell Gardens. We plan to write a final report with all the data collected.
3. We have started to walk the surface drainage ditches to see the state they are in and have taken photos. We plan to write a report about these but it is quite a big job and may take us some time. There will come a point when we will want to contact landowners and would like such addresses to be added to those for the sites we select for green space etc.
4. On 6 June, we met with Greg Murphy, Team Leader, Asset Performance, East Anglia Area and his colleague Stephen Green from the Environment Agency at the Watton Brook to check that it is flowing as well as it should.

After our meeting, Greg emailed me what they plan to do namely "Limited weed control is included within our annual maintenance programme and Stephen is going to chat with Alan about best method of dealing with weeds. This might be a combination of spray and other hand methods and very much focussing on the river downstream of the Brandon Road Bridge (downstream of the golf course). Over the late Autumn and Winter we also plan to undertake some "facing up" of trees/boughs that may impede high flows. At this time we would obviously remove any other material that may be in channel and forming an obstruction."

They also had useful contacts in relation to dealing with the Himalayan Balsam. Nick has been following that up and a Group called the Mid Norfolk Conservation Group are coming on 6 July meeting up at the Wells Cole Centre at 11am and taking it from there to see what they can do.

5. We learned from Greg Murphy about a new group meeting in King's Lynn to consider flooding problems in the west of the county. Breckland is included as part of the west of the county. They had their first meeting several weeks ago and have a second meeting on 31 July. Chris Wray from Anglian Water with whom we have a good relationship and Mark Ogden from the County Council also attend along with Greg from the Environment Agency. They are concentrating on doing joined up thinking and work which is excellent news.
6. We are due to meet Mark Ogden at County Hall on 26 July and will update him on the results of the questionnaires and on the work in progress on the drainage ditches. We hope to get some information from him about who is responsible for culverts under roads and elsewhere.

7. Chris Wray from Anglian Water is meeting with us in Watton on 9 July to update us on what they have been doing since we met in April. So the three key officers should have recent experiences of meeting with us and keep us in mind at their joint meeting.
8. Chris has also arranged for a colleague called Kiki Tyrell to organise something for the Keep It Clean campaign in Watton. He is meeting with her and other colleagues on 5 July about how to really target the problems in Watton. So he will hopefully be able to tell us about that on the 9th.
9. I have been keeping my eyes on the planning application for 121a Brandon Road for 10 dwellings and I think we can take some credit for making Anglian Water and the Flood Risk Officer at the County do some joined up thinking. On 9 May, I had alerted Allan Simpson at AW who works with the team who deal with planning applications about the latest plan at this site to put the water from the attenuation tanks into the foul sewer that runs down the Bridle Way. I checked on the website yesterday and there are reports from both bodies. AW state quite categorically that this is unacceptable and add: *Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed means of surface water connection to the foul sewer is the most suitable solution, or that it will not have a detrimental impact to the network.* The Flood Risk Officer writes: *We object to this planning application on the grounds that it may place people and property at flood risk contrary to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). We do not consider this proposed development meets the requirement of NPPF as it does not appear to have a sustainable solution to drain surface water from the site.* And she adds *Section 3.2.3 (1) of the SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753 – 2015) states “Discharge to a foul sewer should not be considered as an option”.* These reports are now with the Breckland Planners so we wait to see what happens.

Liz Whitcher

28 June 2018