



Watton Town Council

WATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DRAINAGE WORKING GROUP

Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6AG

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3 February 2019

Dear Resident(s)

Thank you for completing the questionnaire on flooding which the Drainage Group delivered to your home last year. Many residents gave valuable written information as well as ticking the boxes which provided clear evidence of the problems. We found that a total of 59 residential properties had been internally flooded along with 14 businesses. A total of 112 residential properties were externally flooded ie in their garden and/or garage.

We did not manage to deliver to all the flooded streets eg Jubilee Road, part of Lovell Gardens, Saham Road and Meadow Grove but we had enough information to use when we met officers from the various authorities.

We met with the Flood Investigation Team at the County Council in July 2018 and officers from Anglian Water in April 2018 and presented to them the results of the questionnaire. Anglian Water took action in the second half of last year, flushing out the sewer from Thetford Road to the Recycling Plant at Threxton as well as the one on Brandon Road. Please contact us (see end of letter) if you live in either of these roads or roads off them and if/when you are still having problems with the toilet backing up.

Anglian Water explained that the reason the foul sewers flood on to the road is because people put unflushables down the toilet and fat down the sink and these block the pipes and the mechanisms in the pumping stations. This is a national problem. So they have been working with us on a Keep It Clear Campaign to educate us that nothing should go down the toilet apart from pee, poo and paper!! The children who visited their stand at the Carnival particularly liked the three p's! This year they plan to visit the schools to continue to get the message across and you will have received a leaflet along with your Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire in December.

We have also discovered that properties which have soakaways to deal with their surface water drainage rather than being connected to an Anglian Water Surface Water sewer are entitled to pay less to Anglian Water. Ofwat have required this and if you have been paying

more it can be backdated about 5 years. A phone call to Anglian Water (to the number on your bill) explaining the situation and which street you live in should be enough.

We understand that properties in the Langmere Road, Ringmere Road etc estate are all on soakaways as are those in Sharman Avenue, Nelson Court etc.

We have been working with a County Council Highways Engineer in the last few weeks visiting the streets with the most severe flooding so that he can suggest what actions might help to alleviate the flooding. In order to pay for the works, the County Council has to apply for funds from the Government (the Environment Agency) with the proposed works fully costed. That is going to take time. We would also like to hear from any property that is flooded externally or internally at any time in the future.

The Drainage Group is now affiliated to the National Flood Forum, a national charity supporting communities that have been flooded across the country. One critical piece of information they gave us is that the Government has a "flood" fund of about £180m per annum which they get from taxing the insurance companies. If a home is internally flooded, the residents' insurer can claim the flood risk element back from the Government. So no resident should be paying exorbitant sums to their home insurer.

The name of the scheme is FLOODRe and has a website at www.floodre.co.uk which sets out if you are eligible for the scheme. If you are, talk to your insurer and be prepared to shop around for the best rate for your house insurance.

Should you need help, the National Flood Forum has a helpline – 01299 403 055.

The Drainage Working Group make representations on relevant planning applications including the Gladman one on Thetford Road which the Flood Risk Officer mentioned in his report so we have had an impact. I will be speaking about the flooding concerns on behalf of the Town Council when it goes to the Planning Committee and Keith Gilbert will speak about other concerns in his capacity as Ward Councillor.

I am happy to be contacted by email (liz.whitcher@yahoo.co.uk) but wish to keep my landline private and I don't have a mobile. If you want contact by phone, please ring Councillor Keith Gilbert (07730 375986).

Kind regards

Liz Whitcher
Chairman and resident of Watton since 2010

Working with:
Nick Creek, Saham Toney Parish Councillor
Keith Gilbert, Watton Town Councillor and Breckland DC Councillor
Alan Nichols, Life-long resident of both Saham and Watton