

Report from Drainage Working Group for July 2019

Below are the issues the Group is currently working on.

- 1. Nelson Court problems:** We have arranged a meeting on 25 July at Nelson Court with the Area Manager for Anglian Water, the Area Manager for County Highways and an officer from the LLFA (County Council) who knows about ditches. This is to address problems going back more than 20 years with the foul sewer surcharging after moderate to heavy rain. A solution was proposed several years ago and has not materialised due to budget cuts. We will revisit this with the 3 authorities responsible to try and get some action.
- 2. Update on Feasibility Study by Highways Engineer:** Following the County Council's Flood Investigation Report following the 2016 floods and our meeting with that team last year, County Highways were asked to do a feasibility study of their system to see what actions might mitigate the flooding problems. The engineer visited all the sites in Watton and Saham Toney identified by the Drainage Group and worked with us on the issues at each site.

The various sites have now been prioritised for action. Four have received High priority so are likely to be surveyed and flushed out. They are the dip before the bridge over the Brook on Swaffham Road, Watton Green and the Hills Road/Pages Lane junction and the Su-bridge corner in Saham Toney. Those receiving Medium priority are Langmere Road (outfall only), Brandon Road, Priory Road, Goffe Close (outfall only), Frost Close (outfall only) and Cley Lane in Saham Toney.

We will be having another site meeting in Langmere Road on 25 July to try and trace whether the surface water in the Highways system actually does go into an Anglian Water foul sewer and thence to the pumping station at the Brook. It would be better if it did not as it leads to problems with the foul sewer in even moderate rain.

Those receiving low priority are the pipe run between Watton Green & Norwich Road, Thetford Road, Norwich Road and Pages Lane in Saham Toney.

The engineer will be in touch to let us know when the works will be carried out and how many can be done. We will keep you posted.

- 3. Anglian Water:** The Area Manager has now found out that about 2 tonnes of unflushables are taken out of the Watton system every week. She is also going to let me have some photos for the Norfolk Day event (see below). The problems with foul sewers surcharging are due to these unflushables in the system and to too much surface water getting into the foul sewers in moderate to heavy rain.

For Norfolk Day on Saturday 27 July, the local WI are having an event in the Christian Community Centre. They will have displays and talks throughout the

day. I will be there with material about the Drainage Group work and the Anglian Water Keep It Clear Campaign. I will be available to give information at 12.30pm and 1.30pm for about 20 minutes each time. So if you want to know more come along and have some free refreshments as well.

4. Speaking at Planning Committee about flood risk on proposed

developments: For all planning applications where the Drainage Group have concerns about flood risk, they write in objection under the umbrella of the Town Council. I will speak on behalf of the Town Council on the one on Thetford Road when it goes to the Planning Committee at Breckland District Council on 22 July. I will also represent the Council on the one at 121A Brandon Road at the same meeting. The one on Nile Field is officially in Saham Toney parish but as potential residents there will look to Watton for services and as it will lead to increased flood risk in Langmere Road and that area, then I would speak on that one also. It is also good news that Councillor Keith Gilbert is on the Planning Committee as well as Councillor Claire Bowes.

5. Landowners and ditches: The County Council has now written to the landowners at the Barn Ruche Corner where there is a blocked culvert that contributes to the flooding on the road at the Corner and for the ditch beside Priory Road. We are unlikely to see any action until after the harvest in August.

6. The Environment Agency (EA) is producing a new strategy about reducing flood risk nationally and they consulted with the National Flood Forum, a national charity acting on behalf of flooded communities. The Drainage Group are affiliated to the Forum and were asked by their Chief Executive to comment on their response to the consultation as were all affiliated groups. We made 3 additional points to his excellent response – that drier summers mentioned by the EA also lead to slow moving thunderstorms that deposit large amounts of rain in a short time leading to surface water flooding; that when a planning application is considered in this district, the flood risk usually comes second to the pressure on the council to build homes, that pressure coming from the government; that our local LLFA team at the County Council are too small a number to do the job they are tasked with in relation to flooding over the whole county of Norfolk.

Liz Whitcher
Chairman
Drainage Working Group

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