

Moreton in Marsh Flood Meeting

Moreton Area Centre

18th October 2013

Attendees:-

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown – MP (GC-B)
Cllr Nigel Moor, Gloucestershire County Council (NM)
Cllr David Fowles, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Cotswold District Council (DF)
Cllr Rod Hooper, Cotswold District Council (RH)
Cllr Robert Dutton, Cotswold District Council (RD)
Laurence King, Flood Defence Engineer, Cotswold District Council (LK)
Claire Locke – Head of Environmental Services, Cotswold District Council (CL)
Kevin Field – Senior Planner, Cotswold District Council (KF)
David Graham – Flood risk Management Team, Gloucestershire County Council (DG)
Barry Russell – Environment Agency (BR)
Peter Collins –Environment Agency (PC)
Mark Mathews – Town Planning Manager, , Thames Water (MM)
Spencer Whiteley – Regional Performance Manager, Thames Water (SW)
Nigel Emes – Network Operations Manager, Thames Water (NE)
Bob Skillern – Gloucestershire Highways (RS)
Robin Basu – Network Rail (RB)

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. To receive apologies
3. Reports from representatives from the Environment Agency
4. Reports from the County Council/Cotswold District Council/Town Council
5. Reports from Thames Water
6. Questions invited from Members of the Public
7. Close

1. Welcome

GC-B – Welcome to everyone. I will ask everyone to introduce themselves and then will open the meeting up to questions from the public.

SW - Thames Water – thank you for inviting us here this afternoon. Two main areas – we promised to look at storm land and the pumping station in Primrose Court. Also issue with Croft Home. I have the Operational team with me to answer any questions.

DG - Gloucestershire County Council – not sure if you are aware that GCC has taken on a lead role? We have an over-arching role on a county level to look at flood reports and to coordinate relevant risk management teams. Need to make sure that the right people are involved. We have been putting our Strategy for local flood risk out to consultation. Has been on on the website but if you

have not been aware of this I have brought a number of copies with me today. There is a short questionnaire which I would be most grateful if you could complete. We rely on your thoughts to help us with the consultation. There was a 'hole' in the Cotswolds from the responses we have had. Local matters – I am pleased to say we are part of a multiagency group looking at the Cotswolds – aim to focus in on what the problems are.

CL - Three areas of responsibility – 1) responding to emergencies and building community resilience. 2) Planning authority – I am joined this afternoon by my colleague Kevin Field.

We are looking at what we can do to tackle the flooding issues in Moreton – some work has been started on Bourton on the Hill road, which will have a definite impact. Also the scheme to the west of Swan Close – putting in bunds – is due to start in the next few weeks. Thirdly, there is a much bigger scheme to the south of the town to protect properties. There are a lot of complex issues which we appreciate, however we are very committed to the work

We had come up with a scheme to take some ditches over Lower Rye farm – however there have been some planning problems with the landowner. Now have a new option, which is the best technically, however there is a funding shortfall, but the CDC, GCC and the town council are confident of finding a way forward.

Other issue is around land ownership. For us to make successful schemes we need to work closely with landowners, trying to secure their cooperation. If a landowner refuses to cooperate we do have powers to force action if we need to deliver to protect the town. I'm going to hand over to Laurence who will be able to give you more technical detail. You will have seen the plans at the back of the room. To ensure we have close monitoring and management we have put together a project board with representatives from CDC, Town council, local ward members, and GCC. Members can challenge the decisions.

LK – Cotswold District Council

Schemes have changed many times. Two main sections of the work – guiding area is behind and to the west of Swan Close. Not to the east of Stow Road. Why are there changes? We need to evaluate every option, hydraulically and financially. If questioned we need to be able to state that we have done the best job with the maximum benefit for the maximum number of houses. Over time, landowners have changed their minds, made conditions, and the financial situation has changed. In summary, we are very confident we can deliver this scheme. I have agreements in principal but will be discussing, Timeframe for the two pieces of work – SOUTHERN section first – next to the Evenlode and the West of Swan Lane. Also just completed some work on the A44 - highway drainage work, ditch maintenance, new pipes across driveways, etc. Also camera investigation.

GC-B - welcome to Robin Basu from Network Rail. Thank you for coming. Would you like to update us on what Network Rail have been doing?

RB – Network Rail

We have begun some investigative work around the main culvert we are responsible for. I'm afraid I can't give you full details as I don't have a drainage engineer with me today but I have promised

GC-B-a full report. Since the last meeting we have carried out some de-silting to the rear of Fosse way. Investigative work at the station.

RS – Gloucestershire Highways

On-going maintenance – local projects, re-surfaced Bourton Road. Took the opportunity to improve the camber. Other projects were Parkers Lane where we did some upgrading and improvement works. Annual gully emptying will be starting shortly. Next projects will be in East Street.

Cllr Robert Dutton

I have been rather frustrated about the lack of progress but we now have the project board in place, chaired by Ralph Young. I think we have heard today that there is momentum to carry out the southern culvert work - gut feel is that it will be done next year. The southern relief system is the key to solving the main drainage problem. Need to make sure we talk about safeguarding The Green. Also need to hear from Thames Water about the work they are doing or not doing at Croft Home.

Councillor Nigel Moor – Gloucestershire County Council

Would like to endorse what Bob Skillern has said – need to look at the highway programme to ensure we take the opportunity to improve flood protection and drainage. We talked about the work we have done so far, almost up to the arboretum. Bob has also mentioned the work that we are programming in East Street. I'm going to be sitting on the Project Board and we must work with our district colleagues to ensure we get the maximum benefit from the investment.

GC-B – Nigel can I congratulate you on your election. We must be very nice to you as I think we will need some money from you.

Rick Howie

It's just a year since Croft Home flooded. I would like to thank Nigel for helping on a personal level. We are now a year on and we don't seem to have anything resolved. Some work on the drains but that isn't the problem. The cause is the pumping station and it hasn't been changed. We are in the same position as we were 10 years ago. A lot of work has been done on the land at the back of Croft Home. They have now managed to put a very large bund by the river by Primrose Court and there is only one way the water can go – towards Primrose Court. Nigel has put me in touch with the engineer – still waiting for a reply. Nothing has been heard from the Environment Agency despite giving us an undertaking that they would keep us informed. Calls are not returned.

SW - Thames Water – Firstly, thank you for acknowledging the work we have done. There has been an ongoing investigation in the pumping station. Pump Station Manager is off sick today so I could not get hold of him. Not going to try to make excuses – I will get an answer by Monday. Will send it to GC-B

Concerning the bunds – We have a consent of discharge in that part of the river and there was a lot of concern from the residents of Croft Home that we were using the consent of discharge. Put bunding in to prevent so much going into the river. Bunding is now in place. Not aware of the other issues you have raised but I promise to get back to you by Monday.

Rick Howie – the Environment Agency have not been anywhere near. You are not returning phone calls. All you had to do is lower the land slightly and it would act as a reservoir and would take flood water from the west side of Moreton.

PC– Environment Agency. My colleagues have been in regular contact with Thames Water throughout the year. The relationship that we have is that Thames Water must maintain their assets so that they don't break down. We have requested information to understand if they are operating within their discharged consent. There is a discharge consent for effluent to be discharge onto the field. Don't know the details of the bund issue but that is one I will take back to find out more for you. Thames Water need to give us some flow measures. I understand Thames Water are planning to re-grade the land to assist with that proposal.

GC-B – I got very cross about the discharge into the river Evenlode. Have you looked into that and what have you done ?

PC – With regard to the storm water and the discharge - in order for us to be sure they are working to their consent we need to know the flow measurements coming into the pumping station. That will go along with the biological and chemical analysis. My environmental colleagues are having regular conversations with Thames Water – but still waiting on flow meter data. We have requested data from Thames Water

GC-B – it is six months since the last meeting – what have you done in the past six months.

PC – We have requested that information from Thames Water and if we don't receive then we can only chase it. They need to prove they are working within the regulatory framework. Thames Water work within consents given by us. There is a hotline number people can call if they are working outside those frameworks. We have chased that information. I will take it up with my environment colleagues.

GC-B – I have chased in various correspondence since the last meeting. If it was me that was discharging effluent into the Evenlode you would be down on me like a ton of bricks. I am very dissatisfied that we don't have action from these meetings. They should not be exceeding their permitted consents. I expect a report from you within a month, whether you have the information or not. It is 6 months since the last meeting.

RD

Can we know what precisely the consents that Thames Water have for the discharges to the Evenlode? How many times they have exceed them?

GC-B – can we treat that as a Freedom of information request?

RD - The sewage discharge – did run for weeks on end but it has improved since we haven't had heavy rain. I understand that pipes are being laid. At what point does the water arrive at the Evenlode – need to get it away from the houses. Going back to Croft Holm – nothing has happened to save Mr Howie from flooding again. Mr Emes here has done lots of work but nothing has been done to stop his house being flooded again.

NE – Thames Water checking how the pipework was configured. Check that they are independent except for Mr Howie’s property. The issue is with the pumping sub-station. Cotsmoor close sub-station.

Mr Bradley, Croft Holm - Your representative said that it does not bear any resemblance to what is underground.

Brian Lancaster – Croft Holm - I heard the lady from CDC about trying to build up local resilience. At the recent Town Council there was talk of abandoning local resilience.

Rod Hooper – Resilience committee was formed following the 2007 floods. It covers everything – all accidents. Chairman of Resilience resigned from the Ctte, however we now have 4 councillors who will be carrying on.

Cllr Ruth Winder – I found out I was going to chair the Resilience Committee on Monday – personally affected by flooding in 2007. Close to my heart. There are no plans to scrap the Resilience Committee. Also on the project board working with CDC, GCC, Town Council.

GC-B – thank you very much.

Brian Lancaster – have given you a photo taken by my wife showing the area behind Croft Holm and the enormous amount of work that has been done. Two bunds, ditches, large amount of black piping. I’ve heard suggestions today that these bunds may be creating an area for effluent to flow. I have heard nothing to convince me that pump stations have been touched. The pumping stations will pump untreated effluent into the Evenlode or perhaps the much wider area. I don’t understand the officers and engineers, the area is the size of 2 football pitches, not sure what that has to do with ammonia going into the Evenlode. A lady from Thames Water said that it was unacceptable. I looked at the plans and could have easily diverted the piping into the Evenlode half a mile south. Nobody, apart from the workmen, want to talk to us about it. I wish someone would come out of their warm offices and look at Croft Holm.

GC-B – great deal of sympathy. Frankly astonished – known about this meeting 6 months, to ask your engineer for an update yesterday – very rude to all the public who have come here to listen to you. Could we have some action. You owe Mr Lancaster a visit – residents meeting.

NE – Thames Water – develop that storm land and make it more efficient. One of the issues about the discharge – you won’t have the discharge as it will be going to the Evenlode – will go through the storm land and beyond Croft Holm.

GC-B – would it not have been better to have gone there before the work had started. I am not convinced that we have the solution in place.

Rong Su, The Green – Question for Network Rail. Glad the work has been done but it has taken 6 months. I hope it doesn’t take another 6 months to repair the drainage. Could we not put in place some regular maintenance?

RB – Network Rail

Cannot confirm that the work is complete, however can give you my card afterwards and update you. Part of the work we are doing around the wider investigation of the culvert –we believe may help.

GC-B – can you go back to ask First Great Western that we need this work to be done before the winter. The flooding season is upon us and it needs to be done.

Frank Saundry – I think you understand about the options – this is the most encouraging meeting so far. Mentioned a shortfall of funding – if there is – can we get approval for it to be done section by section. I have spoken to Robert Dutton, GC-B and David Fowles – we need to be kept informed on what is happening. I have suggested that it would be a good idea that there was a quarterly report issued by CDC – even if there is lack of progress.

GC-B – Very good idea. Can we deal with the two issues separately? How much is the lack of funding?

David Fowles – we are doing the work in sections. Shortfall is not something I can talk about here, largely because Laurence is in the process of finalising the costs. We are having a project board meeting in December to review the figures. Sensitive issue – land ownership. You heard from Laurence that whilst looking at one of the proposed routes he came up against issues with the landowner. We don't want to come up against that again. When we say shortfall we mean that we are still in negotiation with landowners. With regard to regular updates – I have just spoken to Claire – we will make sure that the minutes of the project board meeting are available to the wider public, maybe through the Moreton Times or through minutes posted on websites. They are not private meetings – the information is to benefit the wider community. I will make the minutes available for the last meeting. We do recognise the concerns around Croft Holm. I hope that you take the opportunity to look at the plan.

GC-B – As Cabinet portfolio holder – when we hold our next meeting in March where will we have got to?

DF – a fully costed scheme and hopefully a solution to the landowner issue. If it runs smoothly then we will be in a position to start some of the work. Looking at 2 elements – Laurence can I pass over to you?

LK- Want to do the work in sections. Need to achieve a degree of protection to make the cost worthwhile. We can start some of the work but there is no point doing it until we know that the rest is going ahead. We have put a bid in for a number of houses in Moreton who will not be protected by the other work. Hopefully we will have an indication soon for those houses outside the main scheme.

Christopher Horne – I was first flooded out in Bourton Road in 1953, after 1968 – identified as bad cambering second cause was lack of overflow behind Swan Close and the Hospital. I have never doubted that that report was correct. This is 45 years ago. The work done has improved but the rest needs to be done.

Stephen Holmes – are you able to give us the best possible and the worst possible scenario for the time it to be done.

LK – worst scenario – landowners want huge amounts of compensation – we can't afford it – it doesn't get done! That decision I would expect by Christmas this year. Best solution – elements of that work will start before Christmas. The sensible solution would be to start the work when the weather's fine. The Swan Close work could be done immediately.

GC-B – Bearing in mind people want more information. Can we get the minutes – 13th December – disseminated asap.

DF – 2 options – 2 potential routes. They have all sorts of issues. I had the opportunity of walking the routes earlier in the week and I have seen the technical problems.

GC-B – this town has been waiting a long time. Can you undertake to give them some good news before Christmas?

DF – yes.

Gordon Harris - Addlestep – as soon as this capital scheme is completed then hopefully work can be done on other areas. Regarding the Evenlode - whatever is done up here the water has to go somewhere. The Evenlode has not had much maintenance. I realise this is a landowner issue. What powers to GCC or the Environment Agency have to keep the Evenlode clear.

BR – Environment Agency – thank you for the question. I welcome your comments that as a riparian owner you know what your responsibilities are. Evenlode comes under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency. We have a maintenance programme and we will look at the water course, maintenance is heavier in urban area. That's not to say that we don't work with rural communities. We work closely with the NFU - how best to do maintenance, offer advice. We have to work with farming community groups, riparian owners, so that they undertake to keep the river clear. If there are obstructions in the water course – preventing flow, that we deem need to be withdrawn, I can send in my gangs to remove them or we work with the owner to remove it. If that is not done then we can enforce it, although I don't want to go in with a heavy hand. There is nothing more valuable than a photo being emailed into my team so I can have my teams assess the problem.

Helen Zoff – moved from Bourton on the Hill to Moreton. One question - who is responsible for trash screen removal and when are they done. Fosse Way.

LK – the one you mention is a bit difficult because it is on its own. CDC are responsible for the maintenance of the channel. When there is a known event we will come out and clear the channels. Can't remove it because of the safety issue. Has been slightly modified now – improved. The ea will come out if there is known event.

BR – when we have a heavy rain warning our gangs will come out and any trash screens and water courses will be cleared.

Ann Morgan - Fosse Way Avenue . Regarding South end of town. Why planning permission was given for an unknown supermarket – not sensible.

KF - When dealing with application we were well aware of the issues. We had 600 responses to the various applications. Not a decision that was made without consultation. The feedback was that there was no sustainable reason to refuse the application. There was a debate in the Council. We cannot use the money from a developer to put right an existing problem. The problems will not be any worse than they are at the moment.

LK – can I follow on from that – an outline application has been approved. We will look at the surface water drainage issues – will be scrutinised. We will control the amount of water that comes off that site. We have a team in place to ensure that happens.

Charles Young - I have raised this issue with the Town Council – Queen Victoria Gardens. The trash screen was inundated with debris from the local park. What can be done to ensure that the debris does not come down to the Park? I have not received an answer. Not just the leaves – the area under the trees hasn't been touched for the last 3 or 4 years.

RH – I have made enquiries to the grass cutter asking for the work to be done when the leaves are all down. Have been quoted £568 plus VAT – this figure is being taken to the committee to ask if the work can be done.

GC-B– Everyone has heard your statements. Can you take it up with Rod privately please.

Rupert Brice – Weston Subedge flood action group. Flood resilience starts with “getting your feet wet” and finishes with alterations to the Environment Agency flood map. Great supporter of Laurence King – has done tremendous work. Can we consider “cloning” him? One thing that we still need is a report to make sure that the Environment Agency alter the flood map and influence the insurance companies. . Need to encourage voluntary groups to clear trash screens, get the young people involved.

DF – would like to thank Weston Subedge Parish Council who gave us a great deal of assistance. Thank you on behalf of your support in getting to the solution.

CL – We are aware that the report is at the end of the process. Will be put on the website within the next few weeks.

Cllr Bill Carruthers, Chairman of Weston Subedge Parish Council - Not clear what the process is for the changing the Environment Agency flood map.

BR – Process is - once we have the information, we need to corroborate it, a team will then put it forward to change the flood map. ABI will then use it when they are looking at postcodes for premiums. Not a guaranteed process. Individual property protection – can be more difficult to remove it to the flood map. Happy to talk outside the meeting. Once we have the report we can progress.

John Ellis – Chairman, Chipping Camden Town Council – Emergency Resilience Committee - reiterate thanks to Rod and Joel Hockenhall, his predecessor. Biggest problem is the number of agencies dealing with the flooding issues. We are the only water course that flows towards the river Stour. We need to deal with different agencies because of this. Want to learn something from GCC about what we are going to see in the future. What are the timescales for the strategy?

DG – Gloucestershire County Council – everything in the consultation will be looked at. Happy to talk about this outside the meeting. Strategy will be put before the cabinet in February next year.

Tony Shipley – Moreton High Street - I asked at the last meeting about the Environment Agency flood map - hasn't changed since before 2007. What does the map mean anyway? The areas are designated with a probability of flooding. For this area it seems to be rather optimistic. What results do the insurance company take?

BR – flood maps are produced using historical information. Derived from computational models. Happy to have a look after the meeting at your personal situation?

David Glazier, Moreton in Marsh – looking at the weather, I think we are going to see the High street under water. The last two times during the flooding I was lifting up the man hole covers and closing the road . Am I allowed to do this? Nobody took any responsibility.

RS – the police have powers to close the road. They will ask for our assistance with signage, etc. We will organise a diversion route. We have stand by gangs, emergency cover. We can discuss this after the meeting.

RH – the flood plan was put in before swan close was built and other developments had not been developed. Thank you for calling this meeting - it has been very helpful.

GC-B – thank you to all the agencies involved. Next 6-monthly meeting will be in March. I don't have a date at the moment but it will be in the Minutes.

Subsequent to the Meeting, it has now been decided that the Date of the Next Meeting will be on Friday 4 April 2014 from 1615-1745 pm.

