

# CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

## FLOODING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Capel Parish Council Flooding Committee held at **6.30 p.m. on Thursday 24th September 2020** virtually using Zoom.

**In Attendance:** Cllrs Charles Mackonochie, Parker, Patterson, Sawyer, Rich, Fenton, Barwick and Forster.

**Committee:** Cllr C.O. Mackonochie (Chair), Cllr H. Patterson, Cllr T. Sawyer, Mrs L. Assirati, Mr P. Darbyshire, Mr C. Leake, Mr T. Sanderson & Mr. D. Hulme.

**Flood Wardens:** Cllr C.O. Mackonochie, Cllr W. Forster, Ms M. Foster, Mr. R. Hollamby, Cllr T. Sawyer & Mr A. Smith

**External Attendees:**

Mr A. Gregory (Environment Agency)  
 Mr. D. Morrison (South East Rivers Trust)  
 Mr M. Tant (Kent County Council)  
 Mr E. Bourner (Kent County Council - Highways)  
 Ms K. Sanhueza-Pino (National Flood Forum)  
 Ms J. Osbourne (South East Water)  
 Cllr C.A. Mackonochie (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)  
 Ms D Haylett (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)

Emma Ivory, Clerk

Members of the public.

### Minutes

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144	<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> – Cllr Saunders, Ms. S Feasey (Southern Water)	
145	<b>2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> – Minutes of the meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 to be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record. Signed with no amendments. <b>Approved</b> with no amendments, Chair to sign.	
146	<b>3. APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES TO COMMITTEE AND WARDENS</b> – resignation of Robin Hollamby as former flood committee councillor. <b>No new appointments</b> were made to the Committee. Alaric Smith and Robin Hollamby have joined as flood wardens.	
147	<b>4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT COVERED IN CURRENT AGENDA</b> – None.	
148	<b>5. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA) REPORT/UPDATE</b> – Tony Gregory, National Flood Risk Management Officer	

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	<p>Tony Gregory gave a report on flooding in February 2020 of Five Oak Green and Capel during storm Ciara of the Alders stream and catchment area. On the 9<sup>th</sup> February a significant amount of rain fell over a period of 24 hours, at 6pm the local rain gauges read 28mm of rain had fallen in less than an hour. This was recorded on the CCTV which covers the culvert in centre of Five Oak Green, we saw the water levels rise rapidly and within an hour or so these had subsided, along with the impact in the centre of Five Oak Green and Alders Road.</p> <p>The Environment Agency concludes the flooding of the centre of Five Oak Green and Alders Road was due to the large and intense band of rain, as well as fluvial, along with a big influence from the sub-catchment and overland run off which found its way into the centre of Five Oak Green. The ditch networks overflow also affected Alders Road. It is thought a large amount of overflow from the catchment made its way into the centre of Five Oak Green impacting Norton's Way and surrounding area. It was difficult to determine how many properties were impacted at the time because of the speed of the events. By the time the EA were able to attend much of the water had subsided. It was initially thought up to 10 properties were affected in the village of Five Oak Green and an additional 9 properties on Alders Road, however it now appears this figure is in the region of 30-40 in total.</p> <p>Storm Denis arrived a week after storm Ciara, however the rain fall was over a much longer period of time approx. 6-8 hours, the same amount of rain fell in the period of one hour during storm Ciara.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Were there any other parishes or villages flooded during storm Ciara?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> The intense rainband over such a short period of time was not recorded in any other area of Kent. No other parishes or villages were flooded to the extent the parish of Capel did.</p> <p><b>Comment</b> = Sherenden Road was cut off, although properties did not flood. Water from the fields were running off at a high rate.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> How can flooding be prevented in the future?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> The scale of the event and the heavy rainfall over a short period of time would be exceedingly difficult to prevent. There were multiple sources of flooding which contributed to the overfall conditions.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The winter of 2019/20 was very wet and the ground continuously waterlogged, Tony's thought was the parish is lucky to have only experienced one flooding event as the ground was saturated and flooding could have happened at any time. It shows some of the measures already taken have worked within the village.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Available information quotes 50 leaky dams have been installed across the catchment but it has been reported this can lead to synchronisation issues, and greater flooding than when if there were no intervention. Where are the leaky dams and the master design? Can the EA and South East Rivers Trust comment on this please. Hadlow Estates have published that there were 50 completed dams by the end of January 2020.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> The South East Rivers Trust commented that the aim is to install</p>	

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	<p>50 leaky dams, currently there are very few dams installed, all of which are robust and carefully designed. At the time of the flooding there were a small number of dams at the top of the catchment area by Pembury Woods near the RSPB Tudeley reserve to hold the water and slow the flow. The trust is working on the issue of national synchronisation and a risk assessment will be carried out before any further action is taken. The master plan will be published as soon as possible, further details can be found on their website <a href="http://www.southeastriverstrust.org">www.southeastriverstrust.org</a></p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Hadlow Estates have published there were 50 completed dams.</p>	
149	<p><b>6. KENT COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT/UPDATE – Max Tant, Flood Risk Manager.</b></p> <p>Max supports Tony Gregory’s summary of events, confirming the various sources of flooding such as overland flow, surface water, the river and small ditches were contributing factors. The primary factor was the intense rainfall. KCC’s remit is to look at surface water and they often investigate flash floods, which ordinarily are in the summer months and associated with thunderstorms. It is unusual to experience this level of intense rain fall in the winter and that it came amongst some other very wet weather which exacerbated the extent of the flooding. He feels if the rainfall were to be experienced in the drier months, rather than when the ground is already saturated, the outcome may have been different.</p> <p>KCC have the title as ‘Lead Local Flood Authority’, one of the roles is to undertake an investigation of the flood and produce a report, this is currently being done and the report will be available as soon as possible. There have been some delays with the data collection, but he is hopeful the report will be available in the next few months, the draft report will be shared with the parish council before it is published.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> The flooding experienced in Norton’s way was exacerbated by sewage overflow, typically it is the sewage overflow which causes the biggest problem.</p> <p>The Chair, Cllr Charles Mackonochie, confirmed this issue will be addressed under item 151.8 Southern Water Report/Update.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Who has the questionnaire you referred to been distributed to in the parish?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Max Tant believes this has been distributed to those who we have a record of having been affected by the flood. It is often the case these records are incomplete, if any members of the public have been affected and want to received a questionnaire please contact him directly by email on <a href="mailto:Max.Tant@kent.gov.uk">Max.Tant@kent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The South East Rivers Trust commented that they are producing a blog on the floods and these are available on their website.</p>	
150	<p><b>7. KENT HIGHWAYS REPORT/UPDATE – Earl Bourner, Asset Manager for drainage.</b></p> <p>Earl Bourner commented that last year was an extremely wet winter and Highways spent in excess of £5,000,000 on drainage cleansing. A number of flash flood situations KCC were involved in West Kingsdown and Vigo were especially affected, issues from the flooding are still being dealt with. An engineer sent over details of his investigations on Five Oak Green</p>	

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	<p>Road, there were five jobs raised to clear the gullies and to cleanse the system which has now happened. The engineer has raised another job to jet and flood test the lines between Church Road and Badsell Road in Five Oak Green. Once the results have been received they will be able to check for any further defects. The existing systems are not designed to be able to cope with the high levels of surface water which was experienced.</p> <p>Highways support any emergency operations, such as issuing sandbags but their main focus is after the water has subsided in order to investigate what actions can be taken. Two CCTV jobs were raised for Alders Road, these have both been completed under road closures. A survey of the complete system, checking for defects in Alders Road, was carried out, they are awaiting the full report but the engineers verbally reported that they felt the system was free flowing with no big issues. Money has been spent on the system in Alders Road to enhance and repair areas of the drainage system.</p> <p>Two jobs were raised for Nortons Way to deliver flood sacks and to clean by way of jetting the drainage acids, both of which have been completed.</p> <p>Sychem Place has some outstanding issues – <i>Earl Bourner shared a map of Sychem Place drainage network</i> – the investigation so far has identified an issue on a section of displaced pipe on a residential drive, they are unable to find the infall or outfall pipe and investigations continue. There is a major blockage under No 47 at which the water comes to a complete stop, they are unable to identify where the pipe turns. Foam concrete has been identified in a section of pipe. Framework contractors will be on site in Sychem Place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September to replace this specific section of pipe. Further investigations will be carried out week beginning 28<sup>th</sup> September to ensure the system has a complete free flow. Once all works on Sychem Place have been completed Highways will again use CCTV to ensure everything is working the way it should be. We believe these issues contributed to the recent flooding of Sychem Place.</p> <p>Highways will continue to investigate and resolve as many issues as possible following the flood. Timescales have been affected by events in Swale and Dover when a number of properties were flooded. Flooding is happening on a more regular basis and there are limited resources and staff.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> I have reported to Highways there were several drains blocked on Five Oak Green Road, these drains have been blocked for several years. When the Highways team attempted to clear the drains but may have cleared them in the wrong flow direction, as soon as they were cleared and they moved to the next one the previous drain, within minutes, had refilled with solids, such as muck and leaves.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Earl Bourner confirmed these drains have been cleared on a regular basis. An engineer from Highways will be onsite when the drains from Church Road to Badsell Road are cleaned to ensure the works are carried out and are successful.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Would the issues with the drains in Sychem Place explain the problems experienced at the junction Sychem Place/Sychem Lane? The water along Five Oak Green Road to the left of the junction with Sychem Lane was above his knees.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Until the investigation has been completed and the concrete removed we can not comment further.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Are sandbags supplied by Highways? The Fire Brigade (FB)</p>	

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	<p>attended the scene very quickly but were unable to switch the pumps on, if they had been able to this may have prevented the houses from flooding. The Fire Brigade confirmed they had been given advance notice of the dangerous weather conditions which were forecast and had asked KCC for a provision of sandbags for the area. The FB told residents they had made a request for sandbags but none had been provided. The FB also commented that they were not given permission to turn on the pumps early enough due to not having permission to pump the water onto private land. They had been calling the emergency numbers for the external agencies to gain permission, but these calls weren't answered. Why were the FB's calls unanswered, and they were not given the provision of sandbags?</p> <p>Historically I understand there was a pumping station in the area of Sychem Place but this has been removed. What is the reason this was removed and could it be reinstalled?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Sandbags can be supplied by the Borough Council, KCC or Highways Agency. Earl Bourner received no telephone calls from the emergency services for sandbags, had he received those calls he would have given them the sandbags. There are dedicated out of hours emergency services call centre, had those calls been received sandbags would have been delivered, although there are limited resources which can be supplied. Had a call been received earlier in the evening at 7pm identifying properties were going to the flooded sandbags would have been issued. He is unable to make a comment about pumps, perhaps this is something the Environment Agency could address.</p> <p>Earl Bourner is not aware of a pumping station.</p> <p>Densie Haylett, TWBC, said sandbags were supplied throughout the period of the weekend to the parish council, along with surrounding parishes which may have been impacted by the flooding. No calls were received by the Fire Brigade for supplies of sandbags.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> A statement from the Fire Brigade should be sought and reported back at the next flooding meeting.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Would it be possible to have preauthorised areas to which the Fire Brigade could pump water in the event of future flooding? The water pumped from Norton's Way went onto the field in the direction of the Primary School.</p> <p>The Chair commented that he knows the area well but is unsure, without the aid of long pipes, where the water could be successfully pumped to.</p>	
151	<p><b>8. SOUTHERN WATER REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>Southern Water were unable to attend the meeting, the following response was submitted by Scott Pring, Operations Area Manager, Wastewater Collections, East – Kent.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Friday 20th December 2019 when I spoke to the Tanker Driver about surcharge in Nortons Way. This then resulted in two tankers 24/7 pumping from Larkfield Pumping Station until 7th January 2020. I believe these tankers needed due a split in the sewer pipe from Larkfield to treatment plant near Paddock Wood; the pumps at Larkfield had to be switched off. This happened the previous year also in December and lasted until the New Year.</p>	

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	<p><b>Answer:</b> Yes this was due to the Pumping Station sewage pipework splitting resulting in the pumping station being turned off to enable safe repairs to the pipework, this was a repeat issue from the year before but due to ground movement, ground condition, asset life and the nature of passing sewage flow through the pipework using pumps we cannot guarantee splits in our pipework won't happen.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> The operation of the Larkfield Pumps on Sunday evening 9th February when there was a power cut. Whether the pumps restarted or had to be started in the morning by an engineer.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> The pumps were restarted by an engineer when called to do so outside of normal working hours.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Whether reset systems have now been fitted to pumps at Larkfield thus avoiding the need to send out engineers after power cuts or when the pumps trip for whatever reason. This has been requested several times by myself and also Greg Clark MP in February 2020.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> ARS (Automatic reset system) was installed April 2020 due to the recent issues.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Taking into account the number of times over the years that tankers have been called to Five Oak Green and also the delays in their arrival – why can't we have a special hotline to the local depot that knows about our problems instead of going through your central call centre.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Unfortunately we only have 1 emergency number, using the number logs and tracks the issues being experienced.</p>	
152	<p><b>9. SOUTH EAST WATER REPORT/UPDATE – Jo Osbourne, Head of Communications</b></p> <p>Jo Osbourne gave a report for South East Water – we supply water for the area. After storm Chiara there were local concerns that the reservoir at Pembury may have contributed to the flooding which has been investigated. The main source of the water in the reservoir comes from natural springs in the area and they are treated onsite at the Pembury Treatment Works. The clean water is then pumped out to a treated storage tank which services the Tunbridge Wells area. When the reservoir is at full capacity the water journeys back into the Alders Stream through a letter box style opening, this operates as the overflow would on your sink or bath, there are no valves or operators it just simply if the water is full it is able to accommodate the overflow. The amount of flood water overflow is very small in comparison to that from the natural catchment. The overflow during the flooding was very high.</p> <p>The Alders stream flows directly underneath the reservoir and not sure about the ref but the stream reappears below the reservoir on the north side</p> <p>Following storm Ciara when concerns were raised we arranged for some members of the public and the parish council on a tour of the reservoir. A report following the meeting will be produced and circulated.</p> <p>A new role, Environment Communications Officer, has been created and they will liaise closely with the Environment Team and we have been engaging with South East Rivers Trust to see if there is anything which can be done with SE Water land which will help with the catchment.</p>	

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153	<p><b>10. TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>Densie Haylett reported back from TWBC – Denise praised the parish in having flood wardens and would encourage other parishes to have these in place. As an authority the government had concerns regarding the impact on properties caused by the floods. TWBC set up an online form to engage with parishioners and business which were affected by the floods and who would qualify for the Flood Recovery package payment. I can confirm a number of requests were received, not all of them matched the criteria. 37 properties did qualify, and payments have been made. TWBC have been working with DEFRA to ensure they are providing support via the Flood Resilience Recovery scheme. Parishioners will receive answers to any outstanding questions on the scheme next week.</p> <p>TWBC have been asked by Environment Agency to provide them with the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number) for each of the properties which were flooded along with their postcode. The purpose of supplying this information was to improve future flood modelling and delivery of potential future flood prevention schemes. TWBC are the only Borough Council in Kent to be offering the Flood Resilience Recovery Scheme.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> The flood prevention scheme is a good idea but it seems as it stands at the moment if you expressed an interest in the scheme you would eventually have an open ended financial commitment.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> The grant is up to £5,000 of which £500 would be reimbursed for the survey. TWBC have consulted DEFRA on this question and is hopeful they will be in a position to answer this query shortly.</p>	
154	<p><b>11. FLOOD WARDENS REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Chair: The flood wardens during the winter, up until March, attended to the culvert approximately 12-15 times – debris was removed. They helped to fill and distribute sandbags.</p> <p><b>Comment</b> – expressed their appreciation of the flood wardens in keeping the culvert clear.</p>	
155	<p><b>12. PARISH FLOOD SOURCES/RISK AREAS:</b></p> <p>a) Postern  <b>Question:</b> There was a build up of surface water which is unable to run into the river Medway and then backed up to the properties causing damage. Ditches are not being maintained between the ditches and the river Medway maybe partly to blame. Who is responsible to clearing the ditches?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> When the quarries were in operation in the area the water levels were kept lower by the operated pumping, therefore the quarries acted as sumps and surface water was not as much of an issue. I suggest if the quarries were regularly pumped then the build up of surface water would be less of an issue.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Who controls the water levels for the section of the river Medway?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory, EA commented on the questions raised – The river Medway is maintained by the EA. There is no control of the higher levels of the river as rainfall is a significant factor and can fall at any time over the Medway catchment. Clearing of ditches is not in the EA's remit.</p>	

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	<p>Max Tant commented that the responsibility for maintaining any water course is the landowner. Some watercourses are administered by another body, for instance the EA administer main rivers such as the Medway. The upper Medway internal drainage board do look after some of the ditches down stream of Five Oak Green, the area is within the internal drainage board and they carry out activities to maintain the watercourses, although not all of them – usually the main ones and this is on behalf of the local land owners. The ditches are on the other side of the railway line and there are two culverts between Five Oak Green and those ditches, the same as with the quarry, he doesn't think in an event such as this the water levels would have had an huge impact in Five Oak Green. This is also the case for the river Medway. If there had been a much longer event of heavy rain fall, with the water building up, this could have been a contributing factor.</p> <p>Earl Bourner, Highways, commented that they are increasing the servicing of notices to landowners to clear/clean ditches.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Rivers of water came down from much higher up, from towards Pembury which split wherever there was a valley throughout the whole area. The water did not come from the surface water, it clearly came from uphill. Where did the water come from in such large volumes?</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Most farmers would clean/clear ditches as part of their post-harvest operation but with last years weather the rain set in immediately after harvest which meant machinery would have been travelling overground when it is water logged because it takes so long to repair. They would have been waiting for a gap in the weather to clear ditches, but this didn't come until much later in the spring.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Our property is approximately 300-400 yards from the river Medway, the ditches are not maintained on an annual basis and we feel the issues are due largely to a lack of maintenance year on year which leads to a build up of debris. When there is a flash flood such as this the ditches become rivers.</p> <p><b>b) Culvert - Goldsmid Hall – Tudeley</b></p> <p><b>Comment:</b> When it floods the properties are usually cut off as appose to flooding.</p> <p><b>c) Alders area including culvert - Orchard Cottage</b></p> <p>No comments raised.</p> <p><b>d) Alders Stream Trash Screen B2017</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> Would like to express his thanks to those who clear the trash screens which seems to be the main source of flooding for Norton's Way.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Can anything be done to reduce the flow of water which comes from the Pembury Reservoir in future events? It was explained earlier in the meeting that the water was so intense that this was almost unavoidable. Tony Gregory commented that the EA are working with SE River Trust on flood management, the natural flood management measures should reduce the amount of runoff water.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> SE River Trust commented that farm ditches weren't created to prevent flooding, these were done to clear water from the farm. It may not always be an advantage to clear ditches as it can direct water. They are currently in talks with a farm in the Alders Road cottages area</p>	

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	<p>to create ditches which will direct the water away from the cottages and into the stream via a different route.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> We are concerned the drainage system in Five Oak Green is unable to cope when there is heavy rain, can they be improved?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Earl Bourner commented the existing system was designed to cope with a 1 in 5-year flood, there has been residential and road development since the system was installed and a significant amount of money is required to enhance the system. With utility services underground too, there may not be space available for an increased system. New developments are made with a higher catchment area which the existing systems aren't. KCC Highways are working through the backlog of works and anticipate circa of £165 million to bring the current system back in line with where they need to be. On flash floods the systems won't cope but KCC Highways can ensure they are clean and defect free.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Can the flows through the culvert be improved, or should we have a water meadow above the culvert?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory, EA, major culvert works took place approx. five years ago. The only other way to increase capacity would be to dig up the culvert, this would be difficult as it runs under private gardens. The revision of additional flood storage upstream is an option and they are investigating this, but so far there are not any storage options which would appear to be viable.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Shortly after the floods we were visited by Carol Mackonochie, Borough Councillor and Greg Clarke, MP who advised that an environmental officer would visit to produce advice on flood prevention. Is this being followed up?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> BC Carol Mackonochie, this wasn't an Environmental Officer but the EA. Unfortunately we entered the restriction of COVID-19 which has delayed the visit and further investigation. The flood resilience scheme is of particular importance.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Are the water surges we are experiencing a result of climate change and can any local measures be taken to alleviate this?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory, EA has observed increased frequency of storms over the years. Dean Morris, The SE River Trust, commented that when he worked for the EA several years ago modelling produced previously showed it was likely there would be wetter winters, drier summers and more erratic rainfall and that is what we are seeing.</p> <p>Max Tant commented that it was an unusual event for the time of year it occurred. It points towards different climatic effects.</p> <p>At this point Dean Morrison presented several slides on natural flood management in and around the area of the Alders steam. The trust has been investigating the possibility of storing and slowing down water in the Pembury Woods area. Leaky woody structures and storage ponds are also an option, similar to those at Bedbury National Pinetum.</p> <p>Photographs of the effect of the storm at Church Wood were displayed, waters rose a metre within minutes stripping and flattening away bankside vegetation to the depth of a metre. This level of water contributed to the peak flow event. Leaky woody structures temporarily hold back water during these kinds of events. The trust is investigating ditch networks near the Alders Cottages, along with other options.</p>	

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	<p>The Flood Action Plan is bringing the agencies together, along with SE River Trust to try and see if they are able to work together.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> A resident of Alders Cottages requested a meeting with SE River Trust to show them photos of the flood and share their thoughts on the flow of the water. They have been residents for over 50 years. The SE River Trust would welcome a meeting with residents.</p> <p><b>e) Queens Head/Pendore area</b></p> <p>No advanced questions received. No further comments.</p> <p><b>f) Centre of Five Oak Green</b></p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Would like it noted the area below the village green around The Forge have seen overflowing drains on four occasions on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019, 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The road gullies and sewage were overflowing. The Chairman commented that Kent Highways begun clearing the drain but was not completed.</p> <p><b>g) Attenuation Tank, Forge Close</b></p> <p>The Chair commented that the attenuation tank was due to be emptied in May by Southern Water but he does not think this happened. The Chair will request an update. A resident contacted Southern Water to attend, which they did but their response was there was not an attenuation tank.</p> <p>Another resident has been in contact with Southern Water in which they confirmed the attenuation tank is due to been investigated and cleaned if necessary.</p> <p><b>h) Kings Head Cottages</b></p> <p>A previous comment to The Chair regarding this area is that they are large concerns that the properties had flooded because the pumps had stopped on the night of the 9<sup>th</sup>. The Chair will report back to the resident that the pumps should reset themselves immediately.</p> <p><b>i) B2017 by Capel Grange</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Which agency or person holds ultimate responsibility to solving the problem of flooding in the village?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Max Tant commented that no one agency has a duty or responsibility to stop flooding. Agencies have powers, which means they can do things but have no duty to carry these out, there are some exceptions such as warning and informing or evacuating. To stop people flooding there is no duty, no single body has any duty to do anything to stop the flooding. There is funding available, if monies are spent they are required to demonstrate value for money ie benefits are greater than cost.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> The resident then asked if the agencies consider the overall cost of expenses, including hotel bills etc, and the cost of all agencies involved in the post clear up programme. The number of occasions the village has flooded historically must surely out way the cost of not taking action to prevent future flooding.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Max Tant replied that these costs are factored in. The EA have investigated flood defences for Five Oak Green but these aren't sufficiently cost beneficial. There are many factors which contributed to the flooding.</p> <p>The SE River Trust have been given some pilot funding from DEFRA, though the EA and Europe to test solutions across the entire Medway river catchment. However, the trust has identified Five Oak Green and</p>	

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	<p>Headcorn as places to focus on.</p> <p><b>j) Stone Castle –</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> We have a farm pond and the levels rise and fall with the water table. The effects on Capel as a whole have been understated, the River Medway flow was incredible. The quarry has been underwater by 4ft. Was the Leigh barrier opened on the 20<sup>th</sup> December?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory commented that he would need to check if this were the case, if the flow met the criteria for water to be stored and then released at capacity.</p> <p>The Chairman's noted on the morning of 21st December at approximately 6am the Medway river burst its banks very rapidly, by 8am it had covered several fields.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Can the figures used for the storage scheme be recalculated on the basis of the flooding from last winter?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> It is astonishing that key details, such as the Leigh barrier, are not available. If there was a large release it would have impacted the flow rate.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory commented that should the barrier have reached capacity, at which point the gates would have been opened slightly, the barrier would not have been fully opened to release a huge surge down the Medway River. It is opened in a controlled manner to minimise the overall risk for those downstream.</p> <p>Max Tant commented the Leigh flood storage area is never fully closed, there are three gates and at least one of these is always open.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Are the planned expansions of the Leigh barrier on schedule?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Tony Gregory isn't directly involved in this specific project but believes it is on schedule.</p>	
156	<p><b>13. GENERAL – ROAD GULLIES</b></p> <p>A resident commented that on the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> February one of the large manhole covers outside Alders Cottages was blown away into a field by the force of water (approx. 2/3ft in diameter). He was concerned for the residents who were walking around in the flood water as they did not know where the manhole was. The Chair agreed that it is dangerous to walk around in flood water.</p> <p>Earl Bourner, Highways, commented that the health and safety training states no one is to enter flood water, they will not allow their staff to work in flood water. His strong advice is for no one to be entering flood water. Max Tant agreed with the advice that flood water should not be entered under any circumstances</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Who do residents contact in the event of a flood? The EA call centre's representative's response when I called them was to say they were unable to help because as far as she could see was not officially river water. She was also not able to record the call or pass these details onto other agencies.</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Max Tant suggested the community should have a flood emergency plan, which includes lines of communication.</p> <p>The Borough Councillor, Carol Macknochie, commented that she also tried to</p>	

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	contact the agencies during the flood. She has distributed to parishioners' details of which agencies to contact in specific events.	
157	<p><b>14. NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM</b></p> <p>Katia Sanhueza-Pino, Community Flood Resilience Project Officer, the National Flood is a charity to help, support and represent people at risk of flooding. Regarding home insurance advice specifically if you have any questions on renewal, excesses, increases in the cost of cover please contact us. Katia will share her contact details with The Chair should residents wish to have these.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Our home flooded by way of water coming up through the floor, how do we prevent this?</p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Yes, if the ground is saturated water may come through the floor, it is not unusual. There are ways to make your home resilient to flooding by installing hard floors, raising electric points etc.</p>	
158	<p><b>15. OTHER ITEMS</b></p> <p>a) Arising from the Parish Council and Local Residents not covered above.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Parishioners received a letter from Hadlow Estates regarding their proposal to make the parish more flood resistant, does anyone know of any progress with this?</p> <p>The Chair commented that it would be useful to have an update on this from Hadlow Estates.</p>	
159	<b>16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TBC</b>	

With no further business meeting closed at 21.15

Signed ..... Dated .....