

# CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Flooding Committee Meeting held in Capel Village Hall at 18:30hrs on Monday 15 November 2021

### Present:

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

**Flood Wardens:** Mrs C.O. Mackonochie (Lead Co-ord), Ms M. Foster, Mr R. Harris, Mr R. Hollamby, Mr C. Norrington, Mr N. Pickett, Mr A. Sutcliffe, Mr O. Tizzard

### External Attendees:

Mr M. Gauntlett (Environment Agency)

### In Attendance:

Louise Goldsmith (Clerk), Cllr. H. Patterson and 2 members of the public

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	<b>ADMINISTRATION:</b> Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones, Sanitisation measures, intention to record the meeting – Noted.	
193	<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:</b> Earl Bourner (KCC), Matt Tant (KCC), Denise Haylett (TWBC), Sue Cobb (Southern Water), Katia Sanhueza-Pino (National Flood Forum), Tom Harrison (South East River Trust), Alaric Smith (Flood Warden)	
194	<b>2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:</b> It was <b>resolved</b> that the minutes of the meeting held on the 31 March 2021 be signed as a true and accurate record.	
195	<b>3. APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES TO COMMITTEE AND WARDENS.</b> Cllr. E. Mackenzie has been appointed as a member of the Committee. Respects were paid to Terry Edwards who has sadly passed away and William Forster who has moved out of the area, both will be remembered for their dedication and hard work.	
196	<b>4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT COVERED IN CURRENT AGENDA:</b> None to note.	
197	<b>5. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORT/UPDATE</b> a) <u>Flood Alleviation Scheme Update</u> - Matt Gauntlett, Project Manager at the Environment Agency, explained that the EA is working in partnership with TWBC to deliver the Five Oak Green Flood Resilience Scheme. The number of properties that qualify for the scheme has increased from 37 to 49 which includes 5 businesses. Funding will cover the purchase of items such as flood barriers, automatic air bricks and sump pumps. All 49 properties have now been surveyed and to date the EA has received 20 signed home agreement forms. Subject to the availability of materials, installations will commence in the New Year and hopefully be completed by the end of March 2022. Matt Gauntlett agreed to get an update for Mrs Assirati who was surveyed in September but has not yet received a home agreement form.	<b>MG</b>

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	<p>b) <u>Collapsed bank at Alders Stream</u> – Matt Gauntlett explained that following the localised flooding on the 1 August 2021 logs and debris were removed from the stream to help maintain the flow as soon as the EA found out about the collapsed bank. The bank is still in a state of disrepair but the Asset Management Team is due to attend this Friday to assess and discuss a long term solution. In the short term the EA will remove the wooden stakes that have collapsed and are at an angle across the channel and pin back the textile membrane across the river bank. The EA will need to discuss any long term solution with the landowner.</p> <p>c) <u>Trash screen, Five Oak Green Road</u> – A project to upgrade the trash screen is underway which should help improve the conveyance of water through the woods. The Design Team will be carrying out further investigations in the New Year to help inform their plans. Installation works are anticipated to take place Summer 2022. Before any works can take place the issue with access will need to be addressed. The Project Team will be in touch with the Parish Council to discuss the details of the scheme and will be looking to engage with local residents. The Trash Sreen project should also help reduce the flood risk for the whole village. In response to a question about warning systems Matt Gauntlett advised that the EA do have automatic flood warning systems in place which residents of properties that are in flood zones can sign up for. Matt Gauntlett offered to investigate whether a siren system could be implemented in the village.</p> <p>d) <u>Question about flap valves</u> – It was reported that the flap valves in Nortons Way are disabled and creating a drainage issue. Matt Gauntlett advised that the EA are in discussions with KCC about this drainage issue and agreed to obtain further information on this.</p> <p>e) <u>Question about Sud pumps for Nortons Way</u> – Matt Gauntlett explained that the EA is discussing the benefits of sud pumps with the residents of 80-86 Nortons Way who are most affected by flooding. The EA is looking to provide long flexible hoses which can be attached to the sud pumps to discharge water over the bunds into the fields rather than into the road. Concern was expressed that proposals for a housing development in the adjacent fields could prevent this proposed discharge of water in the long term. Matt Gauntlett explained that the EA would be a consultee on any planning proposal and would object strongly if the flood risk was going to be impacted. It was highlighted that often the electricity supply is one of the first things to be affected when flooding occurs which would make the sud pumps ineffective. Matt Gauntlett explained that unfortunately the funding for the scheme does not provide an allowance for petrol generators. However, it was noted that recent improvements to the local substation means that it now restarts automatically which should help, in the past an engineer needed to visit.</p> <p>f) <u>Question about railway culverts</u> – Matt Gauntlett advised that he had inspected the railway culverts on a recent walkabout with Cllr. Mackonochie and although outside the remit of the current scheme of trying to protect properties the EA is keen to reinstate these culverts.</p> <p>g) <u>Question about the routine clearance of vegetation</u> – Matt Gauntlett agreed to ask the Asset Performance Team if they could share the schedule of vegetation clearance works with residents recognising that it would offer them some reassurance. Matt Gauntlett also agreed to advise the team to not dump the vegetation removed in Ellis Close.</p>	<p>MG</p> <p>MG</p> <p>MG</p>
198	<p><b>6. KENT COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT/UPDATE</b>  Cllr. Mackonochie advised that Matt Tant Flood Risk Manager at KCC, is still discussing options for the natural flood management scheme with South East River Trust. Cllr. Mackonochie advised that Matt Tant recently</p>	

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	gave a very good presentation on surface water flooding through the Flood Resilience Forum and that he would be happy to give this presentation at the next Flooding Committee meeting.	<b>CM</b>
199	<p><b>7. KENT HIGHWAYS REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>Earl Bourner gave apologies. Concern was expressed that a drain in Sychem Lane that has been reported remains blocked. It was agreed that any issues with gullies, drains etc. should still be reported on the KCC portal.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
200	<p><b>8. SOUTHERN WATER REPORT</b></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie read out the answers to the following questions which were sent to Sue Cobb at Southern Water before the meeting as a representative was not able to attend.</p> <p>a) Question: Are the investigations of the options to replace part of the rising main (pressurised wastewater main) complete? If so has any delivery date been identified as per your February email of this year?  <i>Response: As far as the replacement is concerned as I understand it we have repaired the section of main that burst, but we have no plans currently to replace the main in its entirety. It is particularly difficult to determine the condition and remaining life expectancy of rising mains as the flow through the pipe needs to be managed whilst the pipe is out of action and being surveyed. We have identified a new technique for surveying these type of assets whilst the main is operational and are awaiting a quotation for a proposal to undertake the survey work. If this does take place we will be in a much better place as far as understanding the risk of future bursts and the priority for replacement.</i></p> <p>b) Question: We sent an email to customer services, copied to you on the 8 October 2021 about tankers and a large pump being on site at Larkfield. We asked about what the problem was and how long the tankers would be there – but received no reply. Was this routine maintenance or emergency work. May we request that Southern Water inform the Council when events happen like this and the estimated duration of the works.  <i>Response: This was emergency work. We had a leak on the rising main on October 5 and this was repaired/resolved October 8. The equipment was being chased for collection up to October 11. I am sorry that you didn't receive a response to your email asking about the problem and have requested that you are kept informed.</i></p> <p>c) Questions have been raised about the effects of sewage pollution when bursts happen to the rising main. As you know we have a very high water table in the area and there are concerns about polluting ground water.  <i>Response: I have not received a response yet to this question. Apologies.</i></p> <p>d) Question: Progress with replacing the rising main. Avoiding repeated disruption caused by failures of the existing system which has repeatedly led to traffic lights and queuing lorries by the pumping station.  <i>Response: See answer to first question.</i></p> <p>e) Question: As more and more new houses at the Paddock Wood developments are being brought on line and connected to the existing sewerage system how will this affect Capel?  <i>Response: The domestic sewage flow arising from properties in the village of Capel are drained by gravity to the pumping station at Larkfield which then pumps the flow into the system draining to Paddock Wood WTW. I can't see that new houses built in Paddock Wood would adversely affect the network draining Capel.</i></p>	

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	<p>f) Question: Have any investigations been carried out on the drainage run outside Forge Cottages?  <i>Response: I haven't received a specific answer re investigations that have been carried out on the drainage run outside Forge Cottages but understand there is a Sewer Level Monitor in the manhole outside The Forge cottages that alerts the Regional Control Centre when there are issues.</i></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie to advise that the monitor does not appear to be working as there continues to be an issue with sewerage on the footpath.</p> <p>g) Question: Attenuation Tank, Forge Close – when was that last pumped out and should it not be pumped out before the winter?  <i>Response: The Attenuation Tank in Forge Close is always empty in the dry weather as it discharges slowly into the main surface water system so therefore will not need to be pumped out.</i></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie offered to challenge this statement as previously been advised by Southern Water that it will be inspected and cleared on an 18 month cycle.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>CM</p>
201	<p><b>9. SOUTH EAST RIVER TRUST REPORT</b></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie read out a report from Tom Harrisson, Natural Flood Management Coordinator. The works on the South East Rivers Trust Medways Natural Flood Management (NFM) has concluded and the funding has ended and they are hoping to publicise a report summarising the project in January 2022. The Trust hopes to conduct more NFM projects in the area in future. The Trust has carried out some initial scoping which includes measures which could be both viable and effective and are examining funding options before pursuing these options any further. Matt Gauntlett added that it is worth going to see the dams created to try and stall the release of water. SERT will be monitoring their effectiveness at holding water back over the winter. Natural Flood Management is a relatively new technique but seems to be effective in holding water back from the culverts in Alder Lane.</p>	
202	<p><b>10. TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie suggested that TWBC should be commended for delivering the Five Oak Green Flood Resilience Scheme so quickly and efficiently.</p>	
203	<p><b>11. FLOOD WARDENS REPORT/UPDATE</b></p> <p>Cllr. Mackonochie discussed the flooding that occurred on the 1 August 2021. 44mm of rainfall fell in 12 hours which created minor flooding for some properties but major surface water flooding on roads and in particular from the Kings Head to Ellis Close. The culvert at Ellis Close was unable to contain the water. As a result, water followed a typical path and went down Ellis Close into Oak Road and into Nortons Way. The Fire Brigade attended and pumped water into the culvert. Cllr. Mackonochie advised that the only positive thing about flooding occurring in August was that the presence of long grass meant that the stream of water could be followed and it has been possible to learn a lot about the flow of the water in this area. Cllr. Mackonochie has produced a report on his findings on the flow of the water which has been submitted to KCC and the EA and other agencies. It was noted that silt levels in this water were very high. On the 25 September 2021 there was lots of reports of water levels in Alders Stream being very high which turned out to be due to a burst water main in Pembury Woods. It was suggested that raising the footpath and installing a swale in front of Forge Cottages could help with flooding. Cllr,</p>	

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	Mackonochie thanked all the flood wardens for all their hard work this year.	
204	<p><b>12. PARISH FLOOD SOURCES/RISK AREAS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Postern</b> – Remain concerned about the level of the lakes and water not been pumped into the Medway. A report on the new Leigh barrier system is due soon which is looking to increase the storage area at Leigh.</li> <li><b>b. Culvert - Goldsmid Hall – Tudeley</b> – the Flood Warden continues to report the issues.</li> <li><b>c. Alders area including culvert - Orchard Cottage</b> Concern was expressed about the levels of silt in the water following the recent flooding.</li> <li><b>d. Alders Stream Trash Screen B2017</b> See item 5(c). Cllr. Saunders suggested that installing a height gauge would be beneficial. It was agreed that a gauge would be useful to help monitor the levels and rate of change of the water and would also help reassure residents. Matt Gauntlett agreed to look into obtaining a height gauge.</li> <li><b>e. Queens Head/Pendore area</b> Nothing to note.</li> <li><b>f. Centre of Five Oak Green</b> Nothing to note.</li> <li><b>g. Attenuation Tank, Forge Close</b> See item 8(g).</li> <li><b>h. Kings Head Cottages</b> Nothing to note.</li> <li><b>i. B2017 by Capel Grange Lodge</b> Nothing to note.</li> <li><b>j. Stonecastle</b> Nothing to note.</li> </ul>	MG
205	<b>c) GENERAL – ROAD GULLIES</b> – Nothing additional to report.	
206	<b>d) NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM</b> – No report given.	
207	<p><b>e) OTHER ITEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Drainage Clearance</b> - It was suggested that it would be helpful to obtain a schedule of routine cleansing from KCC.</li> </ul>	CM
208	<b>f) DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> – 21 March 2022 at 18:30hrs	

*The meeting closed at 19:31hrs*