

FLOODING MEETING HELD WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
PARISHES WITHIN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE

25th September 2001

PRESENT:-

South Derbyshire District Council Representatives

Councillors Hood, Bladen, Walton, Brooks, Evens, Harrison and Mrs. Wheeler.

I. Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr. C. Payne (Technical Services) and P. Spencer (Members' Services).

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

W. Cheshire and I. Shuttleworth (Emergency Planning Unit) and L. Unwin (Area Surveyor).

Member of Parliament

Mark Todd M.P.

Environment Agency Representatives

M. Swain (Lower Trent Area) and Miss. N. Smith (Upper Trent Area).

Parish Council Representatives

Mrs. C. Barker (Barrow-upon- Trent), F. Mitchell and P. Waters (Elvaston Parish Council), T. Beresford and B. Jones (Foston and Scropton Parish Council), R. Buxton (Hatton Parish Council), J. Thompson (Ingleby Parish Council), A. Mitchell (Shardlow and Great Wilne Parish Council), D. Houghton (Swarkestone Parish Council) and A. Gifford (Willington Parish Council).

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Whyman and Mr. J. Hansed (South Derbyshire District Council Representatives).

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

In the absence of Councillor Whyman, Mr. Ian Reid Chaired the Meeting. He welcomed those present and each person introduced themselves.

3. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th February 2001 were noted.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Bladen asked about the problem of surface water flooding in the centre of Repton. It was explained that Derbyshire County Council had cleared the gullies at this location but the problem appeared to be the main drain, which was the responsibility of Severn Trent Water. Officers of the

District and County Councils were aware of this problem and the County Council agreed that they would pursue it with Severn Trent Water as appropriate.

Mr. Houghton explained that similar problems occurred in Woodshop Lane, Swarkestone and one particular property suffered repeated flooding. Again the gullies had been cleared but this had not resolved the problem. It was agreed that Officers of the County Council investigate this matter.

5. **REPORTS FROM AGENCIES**

(a) Environment Agency

Mr. Swain explained that the Environment Agency had appointed an enforcement team to respond to public complaints. Where appropriate, landowners would be pursued to rectify problems and in some instances the Agency would undertake work itself. Mr. Mitchell of Elvaston spoke about the recent improvements to flood defences along the River Derwent in the City of Derby. He questioned where floodwater would be transferred to. Mr. Swain explained that a strategic review was ongoing to address such issues and to identify potential “weak spots” in flood defences. The Member of Parliament, Mr. Mark Todd M.P. sought further information about the Strategic Review and asked if a summary document could be provided to those present.

Mr. Swain reiterated an earlier offer to provide any available information to parish councils, on request. A request that had been submitted previously related to flow rates along the River Trent near St. Mary’s Bridge, Wilne. He explained the statistics that were available and agreed to provide information to Elvaston Parish Council relating to the Ambaston Flood Bank, and details of design criteria.

Mrs. Barker questioned the possibility of dredging the River Trent in the vicinity of Barrow. Conflicting advice had been received from the Environment Agency and clarification was sought. Generally dredging was not considered to be a longterm solution as the river’s natural profile would return over time and there were environmental issues associated with damage to habitats.

Representatives of Hatton Parish Council spoke of flooding problems which were felt to be caused by surface water run-off from the A50 trunk road. Miss. Smith of the Environment Agency explained that a geotechnical report had been produced but this had not considered specifically the problem of surface water from the A50. It was explained that ditches had been excavated to the north of Hatton which resolved problems in that area and carried the surface water to other areas where the drainage system had not been improved. Mr. Swain agreed to pursue the problems reported but felt the design of the A50 was not at fault. There was a consensus amongst parish council representatives that the A50 was a contributing factor to the recent flooding problems. It was agreed that a meeting be arranged between Connect Roads, the Highways Agency and appropriate parish councils to consider this issue further.

Mr. Gifford spoke about the flooding problems in Willington and felt that the culvert in the centre of the village was insufficient to cope with water from the balancing reservoir at Toyota. Mr. Payne explained that a C.C.T.V. survey of the culvert was undertaken in 1994 which found it to be in good condition and monitoring of the culvert was undertaken periodically.

Mr. Swain gave an outline of other improvement works proposed by the Environment Agency to address reported problems at Hatton and Scropton. He explained that a new Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 25 had been implemented to guide development control and give more weight to representations from the Agency. Mr. Swain also explained proposals to improve flood warning mechanisms. Additional river level and rain gauge recorders had been installed and two new monitoring areas created. Meetings had been held with Shardlow and Barrow-on-Trent Parish Councils following requests received and a “loud hailer” route was being considered for the Shardlow area. Meetings had also been held with the District and County Councils to improve co-ordination of emergency actions and a publicity campaign was being undertaken to raise awareness of the problems associated with flooding.

Information was sought about the roles and duties of riparian landowners with particular reference made to the Sands Brook in Willington. Property owners were confused about their responsibilities and it was agreed that copies of the Environment Agency’s publication “Living by the Edge” be circulated with the Minutes of this Meeting to provide clarification. It was understood that Derby City Council had sent guidance to all known riparian landowners within its area and the Environment Agency was asked to provide sufficient copies for parish councils to distribute as appropriate. The representatives of Elvaston Parish Council requested a meeting with officers of the Environment Agency and agreed to approach Mr. Swain after the Meeting.

(b) Derbyshire County Council

Mr. Unwin reported on the works undertaken since the last Meeting in Hatton, Scropton and Willington. He commented on the problems reported at Repton Square and Woodshop Lane, Swarkestone, which would be pursued. Further concerns related to the stability of the wall along the Swarkestone Causeway, the traffic levels in this area and the lack of a recent traffic census. It was alleged that the weight limit along the causeway was not observed. With regard to flooding of the A444 at Stanton it was accepted that the culvert underneath the road might have contributed to the problems reported previously. Screens were proposed to prevent blockage of the culvert and the District Council had undertaken a feasibility study, which had been passed to Derbyshire County Council who were responsible for the culvert.

Mr. Gifford reiterated the problems reported in Willington with flooding of the Sands Brook and in the Ferry Green area of the Village. It was felt that the flow from the Toyota balancing reservoir should be further restricted, although officers were not convinced that this would address the problems reported.

With regard to emergency planning, it was proposed to reinstate flood wardens for the Shardlow area. Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council had prepared its own community response plan and details were provided of the availability of sand bags for parish councils. Mrs. Barker felt that the initial allocation of 500 sand bags was barely adequate. Requests were submitted for additional sand bags from Barrow-on-Trent and Hatton parish councils.

A report was provided on the recent Flood Fair at Bakewell which had been attended by approximately 1,000 people. Some novel products had been displayed and information packs were available for parish councils. The availability of flood defence products was being publicised via the County Council's web site and 'Insight' magazine. There was a discussion about some of the products displayed and whilst these could not be endorsed by the County Council or the Environment Agency, the latter had compiled a list of such products. Councillor Hood praised the Fair and hoped that it would become an annual event. He also thought the involvement of emergency services at a future event would prove useful. It was understood that a trade association was to be launched for providers of such equipment and the County Council was interested as to how it would be regulated.

Details were provided of the ongoing discussions at officer level between the Environment Agency and the County Council and it was hoped to include Severn Trent Water in these discussions.

Mr. Gifford suggested the production of a fact sheet with key telephone numbers for parish councils for use in times of emergency. The Environment Agency already produced a flood directory which was available on request. Parish council representatives requested that all available literature be circulated with the Minutes of the Meeting.

(c) South Derbyshire District Council

Mr. Reid explained that the Council was currently reviewing its Local Plan. This document influenced development control and took a responsible attitude to balance restrictions on development in the flood plain whilst not blighting existing properties. Reference was made to sustainable urban drainage schemes as a means of introducing balancing areas within new developments. Chris Payne, an engineering technician at the Council, explained the current identified problems and the ongoing actions being undertaken.

An annual assessment was undertaken of critical watercourses. The Environment Agency was responsible for main river watercourses and the District Council for regulation on other non-main watercourses. It was proposed to attach a list of the current known critical watercourses to the Minutes of the Meeting in order that parish councils could comment on its accuracy and/or include other known problem watercourses. Other areas being pursued included culverts on land owned by Railtrack at Scropton, a highway culvert at Bakeacre Lane, Findern and flooding problems at Doles Lane, Findern and the Coach Way, Willington.

(d) Reports from Parish Councils

Mrs. Barker of Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council explained the arrangements made locally for the provision of sand bags and to keep ditches clear. An emergency plan had been prepared for the Village but some objections had been received from individuals. Residents were concerned that their properties had been identified as at risk of flooding, that they could be blighted or find it difficult to get insurance. Officers of the County Council stressed that the details contained in emergency plans were not in the public domain and one request for such information from an insurance company had been refused.

Shardlow Parish Council had held a meeting with various agencies but it had some further concerns. There was perceived a lack of maintenance and inspection of flood gates in Shardlow and the Environment Agency was asked to pursue issues raised about Shardlow Lock and road levels at Shardlow Marina. There was confusion over conflicting advice provided by the County Council and the Highways Agency relating to the boundary wall of a property on the A6 in Shardlow. Some works had been undertaken by the District Council to clear drains but problems were still being experienced and a possible cause was identified which the County Council was asked to explore. Severn Trent Water were criticised for their failure to respond to written requests and there was an ongoing problem with a smell nuisance, possibly due to sewerage from the A50 service stations being pumped through Shardlow. Other issues raised by the Parish Council concerned problems with the flood bank pipe from the gravel pit to Wilne Lane and guidance was sought on responsibility for this problem.

The Member of Parliament, Mr. Mark Todd M.P., asked those parish councils having difficulties with Severn Trent Water to liaise with him for assistance. County Councillor Harrison concurred that the Company had not attended a number of the organised liaison meetings. It was requested that any correspondence to the Member of Parliament be circulated to the District and County Councils so that they could also pursue the Water Company.

There was a general discussion on planning policy guidance notes and the guidance relating to mineral extraction. Officers of the Environment Agency were asked about the maintenance arrangements for flood banks and details were provided. Praise was voiced for those parish councils which had prepared emergency plans and it was questioned whether an exchange of information would be worthwhile to assist others in preparing their respective plans. There was some concern about publication of this information and the possible data protection implications. However, the County Council's Emergency Planning Officers could provide a link between the various parish councils.

7. **SUMMARY OF POSITION AND MATTERS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

The Chair summed up the main conclusions of the meeting as follows:-

1. A50 Trunk Road – seek a meeting between the Highways Agency, Connect Roads and appropriate parish councils concerning the surface water discharge problem.

2. The strategic review of the Trent Flood Plain by the Environment Agency.
3. The provision of leaflets/information from all agencies to Parish Councils.
4. Emergency Response Plans provide a major step forward in emergency planning, but there are some issues including the deployment of sand bags which should be reviewed.
5. There are a number issues specific to each locality which need to be pursued by the various agencies in conjunction with the relevant parish council.
6. That the Member of Parliament pursues complaints from parish councils with Severn Trent Water Ltd.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that a further Meeting be arranged for April 2002 and that the Agendas be issued approximately two months in advance of that Meeting to enable Parish Councils to identify their key issues and the respective authorities to research these issues.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Following the questions raised earlier in the Meeting clarification was provided on responsibilities for dealing with critical main and non-main watercourses. Details were sought of those areas identified as being at risk of flooding and Mr. Swain of the Environment Agency advised that its web site identified flood areas. More detailed plans were to be prepared as part of the Agency's current annual review.

The Meeting closed at 12.15 p.m.