



Wyre Making Space for Water Meeting Meeting with FLAGs

Minutes of meeting held Thursday 20 August 2020
via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

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| Carl Green (CG) | Wyre Council (WC) – Chair |
| Paul Long (PL) | Wyre Council |
| Paul Bond (PB) | Environment Agency (EA) |
| Graeme Kelly (GK) | Environment Agency |
| Christine Hamilton (CH) | Environment Agency |
| Alistair Graham (AG) | Lancashire County Council (Flood Risk Management) |
| Mark O'Donnell (MD) | Lancashire County Council (Highways) |
| Tom Myerscough (TM) | Wyre Rivers Trust (WRT) |
| Phil Wylie (PW) | United Utilities (UU) |
| Katie Duffy (KD) | United Utilities |
| John-Gareth Philips (JP) | United Utilities |
| Roger Brooks (RB) | Garstang FLAG |
| Roger Weatherell (RW) | Churchtown FLAG |
| Pamela Nickols (PN) | St Michaels FLAG |
| John Nickols (JN) | St Michaels FLAG |
| David Astall (DA) | Great Eccleston FLAG |
| Derek Benson (DB) | Pilling FLAG |
| Linda Rowland (LR) | Preesall FLAG |
| Rita Carr (RC) | Preesall FLAG |
| Phil Jenkins (PJ) | Thornton FLAG |
| John Quine (JQ) | Thornton FLAG |

APOLOGIES:

Nicola Beale (NB) Environment Agency

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

PL welcomed everyone to the meeting. JP introduced himself to the group.

PL explained that the meeting had been called as, due to Covid restrictions there has been no Flood Forum since 9 January and the MSfW Group was keen to keep up contact with the FLAGs and to answer any questions they may have.

2. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were noted as above.

3. FLOODING UPDATES:

FLOODING 10/11 AUGUST AND 12/13 AUGUST 2020

PL noted that there have been two recent flooding events (11 August and 13 August) in the Borough. It was noted that the flooding had been spread throughout the Borough but largely confined to the urban area. While much of the flooding had been confined to highways, there have been reports flooding to a number of residential properties. Issues arising from the flooding were discussed at the Making Space for Water meeting earlier in the day

St. Michaels FLAG.

PN spoke on behalf of the FLAG; she brought up the long-standing problem with the sewer on Rawcliffe Road; this year there have been eight eruptions of sewage onto the public footpath and the highway. She reported that Rawcliffe Road was completely flooded and vehicles were driving through untreated sewage and pedestrians from the nearby caravan park often had to wade through it. She noted that last year there had been at least fifteen spills and this was not acceptable.

The issue has been raised a number of times with UU, the last contact was on 17 July confirming that UU would be serving a 7- day notice on a local landowner to excavate the pipe and undertake repair works. PN confirmed that the FLAG had spoken with landowners and none were aware of the proposed works. She noted that there had been an unsuccessful attempt in April to locate the buried sewer. She confirmed that all landowners were keen to have UU undertake works and would be happy to allow excavations on their land.

PN explained that the purpose of the works would be to sample the pipe to determine whether sewage could be pumped through it at a greater rate thus reducing the likelihood of further spillages. She noted that the pipe had been broken on at least eleven other occasions and was thus unlikely to be in good condition. The FLAG is concerned that UU are being deliberately inactive on this matter. She noted that further that the FLAG was in correspondence with Panorama and several national newspapers to raise awareness of gain some national awareness. She add whether UU has any plans on this.

PW confirmed that notice has been served on a local landowner for excavation works to begin. He confirmed that locating the pipe has been a problem and the location had been chosen as there were a number of known issues at this location. He further confirmed that the location was close to the pumping station at St.Michaels. Works were originally planned for the past Monday but had not yet begun due to the flooding issues. In response a query from PN he confirmed that results from testing of the pipe would take approximately a month.

KD reported that the reason for the proposed works was to pass more flow to Garstang Waste Water Treatment Works to prevent backing up of the combined sewer system. PN said that one of the main problems with the sewer was the gravity section close to the St Michaels pumping station which had been described by UU as “hydraulically compromised”; she was concerned about how flow rates could be increased through this section.

KD noted that repairs to the rising main would not be an easy or quick fix. She noted that UU were looking at making upgrades to the local drainage network to deal with the proposed residential development in Great Ecclestone. As part of the solution to the Great Ecclestone scheme, UU are proposing to include other issues with the network, including the issue on Rawcliffe Road. UU will undertake the investigation of the pipe in the next couple of weeks, subject to rainfall, and expect feedback from the Engineering Team within the month. PN agreed to withhold media activity for a week and KD agreed to liaise with the FLAG on this matter in the following week.

Action - UU

PN thanked the EA for the recent works to repair the Garstang Flood Basin. She also asked whether the EA had any further progress on the Upper and Mid Wyre Review. PB replied for the EA that the works on the basin are now complete, save for the removal of a few sandbags from the site. PB will provide an update on the Review by 10 September and circulate these around Flood Forum members. GW added that the floodgates operated on 5 August and all appears to be working fine.

Garstang FLAG.

RB expressed his pleasure that the gates on Garstang Basin have been repaired and had been operated during the recent storms. He noted that many areas were being defended which otherwise would drain naturally; he expressed concern that more and more local building is being undertaken and queried how long we could continue to build and defend against inundation.

PB replied that this linked in with the Upper and Mid Wyre Review and the EA policy “EA2025 – creating a better place.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-ea2025-creating-a-better-place/environment-agency-ea2025-creating-a-better-place>

PB added there would be a meeting via Microsoft Teams on 24 September giving an update on Wyre Natural Flood Management Investment Readiness – all members would receive an invite to this later today.

RB asked if the EA were a consultee on the Government’s Planning Policy Changes <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

PB replied that the EA had a place at the table on all such schemes; he asked RB to send details of any specific issues that he was concerned about.

Preesall FLAG.

LR reported that Sunnyside Terrace, Preesall has been flooded twice in the past week; she expressed concern that the Fire Brigade had refused to attend the site to help pump out the initial flooding. CG said that he would raise this issue with the Fire Brigade to take emergency action until Wyre Council could arrive with pumps to take over.

LR noted that additional flood signage would help residents having to argue with drivers causing vehicle wakes into the properties. CG noted that actions by local landowners has changed how the catchment operates and needs to be addressed. Wyre will leave the pumps on site for now to react to any future flooding issues.

Churchtown FLAG.

RW reported that the FLAG had had a recent meeting with LCC (Highways) to resolve the Ainspool hot spots and asked if there were any updates as to when works might be undertaken.

MD reported that he had the money to undertake the works but was concerned that the works to resolve issues in Churchtown would move the problem further down the line. He will raise the issue with other flood risk management authorities. He added that he had received around £250,000 following Storm Ciara to carry out flood related works in Wyre by the end of the financial year.

RW said that the FLAG was considering the installation of a pumping station opposite the Memorial Hall at the junction of The Avenue and the A6 to pump water. This would require a connection under the highway. It was agreed that MD would meet with LCC to discuss how issues in Churchtown can be achieved.

Action - LCC (MD / AG), Churchtown FLAG

RW asked where the Garstang river telemetry was located – PB referred him to the .GOV website for full details.

https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels?_ga=2.12994871.1462109816.1599204429-573075827.1599204429

RW queried why the Catterall telemetry levels were considerably different – PN said that the telemetry behaves erratically. GK confirmed that the telemetry requires recalibrating and is being looked into.

RW asked if local residents could be advised when the flood basins were operated as local residents felt safer when they were operated. PB confirmed that EA have updated their operational procedures to notify Wyre Council when the basins are operated and Wyre would notify FLAGS. CG agreed that the procedure was an improvement but that it sometimes failed when the EA decided to operate the basin at short notice or didn't operate it after informing everyone that it would be operated. PB accepted this but noted that the decision to operate the basin is based on weather forecasts and river levels and could be subject to change if conditions did not meet the forecast. CG added that it would be helpful to have CCTV cameras positioned on the gates to reassure residents.

PN asked if the river level reports could be more frequent, particularly when levels are very high and close to the threshold. PB replied that he is looking to rollout 15 minutes polling on all station regardless of the threshold.

PB said that should it not be possible to provide submersible pumps exclusively for Churchtown then it may be possible to provide pumps that could be distributed to flooded areas throughout during a flooding event.

Great Eccleston FLAG.

DA reported that Great Eccleston had suffered flooding on Hall Lane and Raikes Road during the storm in the following week. He confirmed that he had forwarded reports of the flooding to Wyre Council – PL confirmed that these had been received.

A lot of flooding is thought to be caused by vegetation at the site of the road and in highway gullies – he expressed concern that LCC (Highways) were not clearing them.

He noted that vehicles turning into Raikes Road from the A586 often ended up driving straight into water. He asked if flood signs could be made available to warn motorists and stop vehicle wakes flooding residential properties. CG confirmed that Wyre could provide some signs that could be put out during flooding.

CG suggested that a blockage in or damage to the outfall from Raikes Road to the River Wyre was the likely cause of the flooding at Raikes Road and would need to be investigated.

DA also expressed concern that the gully at the end of Raikes Road may be draining uphill; MD said that he would investigate the highway at this point; he also confirmed that LCC (Highways) had cleared highway drains following the recent flooding.

DA noted that the new development (400 houses) planned for Great Eccleston was likely to cause issues, particularly with respect of foul drainage.

DA asked where the surface water from the fifteen houses on Back Lane discharged. PL confirmed that Wyre had objected to discharging the surface water to the foul system and that this was now discharging to the watercourse by the side of the Show Grounds.

Thornton FLAG.

PJ confirmed that there had lots of flooding issues during the recent storms. He started by asking UU if they had an update on the drainage situation around Marsh Road, the Scout Hall has been flooded again with sewage. PW confirmed that UU had undertaken some inspection but thought the issue was related to the free outfall to the pond at Royles Brook School. PJ noted that UU operatives working in the area had confirmed that there was an issue with a blockage problem and were uncertain on how the local surface water network drained. PW promised to get further information on this and would report back.

Action - UU

PJ reported that properties on School Road had been affected by flooding – residents have reported that the road is higher than the property and water from the sewer had flooded onto the road and thus into their property. It was understood that UU had fitted a non-return valve in the pavement to prevent this, but this had not worked. UU operatives have told householder that they need to return to undertake further works; is there an update as to when this work would be done? PW had no information on this but promised to get further information and report back.

Action - UU

During the storm there had been flooding of the highway on Lawsons Road and Briar Road; this is a regular occurrence, but this time properties on Briar Road were affected. The FLAG understood that a culvert underneath the Regenda properties on Torrentum Court was blocked and needed to be cleaned. PW replied that this was not work undertaken by UU and would be the responsibility of the landowner. (Addendum – WC to inspect)

Further flooding was suffered by properties on Calder Ave; PJ asked if anyone was aware what was the cause of the flooding. PL confirmed that the flooding was from the foul network and that early reports were that the sewer had been blocked with decorating materials; he was not aware whether the sewer had been cleared. PJ said that he would approach the residents to see if this had been resolved.

PJ asked if there was an update on enforcement of the management company responsible for the watercourse on Stanah Road. AG confirmed that the enforcement notice had not yet been served but was imminent. It was expected to be issued by the end of August.

Action - LCC (FRM)

PJ noted a resident had reported an issue with the pumps New Lane. CG confirmed that he was aware of the complaint and that money has been set aside to provide new soft start motors to make them more reliable.

A report has been received about flooding from Hawthorne Park to properties on Ascot Road. CG confirmed that the system was inspected on the previous day to check for blockages; he was not aware at this time whether any blockage had been found.

MD reported that LCC (Highways) have been undertaking works on Skipool Lane and that money has been made available to clear the full length of the watercourse on Underbank Road.

PJ asked that pressure is put on NPL to undertake their works around Bourne Road and Springfield Drive.

Pilling FLAG

DB raised concern about flooding on St Johns Ave., MD said that operatives would be going out next week to St Johns Ave. and Smallwood Hey Road.

Concerns were also raised about the volume of water being held in the system. PL confirmed that several issues had been raised during the recent walkthrough with the FLAG and local councillors; these being a potential blockage in the system close to the church and the requirement of a replacement flap valve on the watercourse opposite the school. DB confirmed that the pipe had been resolved but the flap had not yet been changed. GK said that the Pilling lengthsman was due to install the flap valve but there was an issue as the existing structure sticks out. The EA will chase this.

Concern was raised that water levels in the tidal outfall were very high. GK replied that the EA have been flushing out the outfall to drop siltation levels during the summer and water levels have been dropping. He added that this went up again during the recent storms but has since dropped again.

PL asked whether the culvert under the highway on School Road was clear. DB replied that works undertaken by the Diocese seemed to have cleared this.

DB raised a flooding issue on Moss House Lane adjacent to the next housing development. PL responded that he had inspected the site and the watercourse and confirmed that Wyre planners had discussed the problems with the Developer and asked them to provide updated drainage plans for the site. Details are awaited.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

PJ asked whether a river level device could be set up on Sandyforth Arms to monitor levels in Royles Brook. PB said that he would look into this.

5. NEXT MEETING:

A further brief meeting will be set up to inform FLAGs on actions arising from the meeting – Details to follow.