

Open Meeting Flooding and Sewage Notes

Monday 25th March 2024 at 6 pm in Thornham Village Hall

Panel Present:

Cllr Andrew Jamieson – Deputy Leader of Norfolk County Council: Chair

Jason Morse – Highways Area Manager Norfolk County Council

Mark Ogden – Flood and Water Manger at Norfolk County Council

Tom Hunter – Internal Drainage Board Area Manager

Rory Sanderson – Norfolk Manger Environment Agency

Jade Kite – Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk – Flood and Water Manager

Victoria Crerand – Anglian Water Regional Manager for Norfolk and Suffolk

Shane Rose – Anglian Water Network Manager for King’s Lynn Region.

Stephanie Mocatta – Chair, Thornham Parish Council

The Chair of Thornham Parish Council, Stephanie Mocatta welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Andrew Jamison for organising the meeting.

Andrew Jamieson thanked all for coming. A similar event was held at Burnham Market for the surrounding parishes around the River Burn, and it was thought to be very helpful. It was explained this meeting was to explain what has been put in place since 2021, what is to be put in place in the medium term and to enable residents to speak directly to officers about specific problems.

Mr Jamieson explained that following the severe flooding in 2021, Norfolk County Council (NCC) set up the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA). Although NCC are the lead local flood authority, they do not have authority to compel any of the bodies involved with flood management in the County to do anything, nor do they have the ability to compel riparian owners to keep ditches and land drains clear. There are 36 bodies responsible for flooding in Norfolk. The original chairman of NSFA was Lord Dannatt. He has been followed by Henry Cator. The main stakeholders involved in the NSFA are with us tonight. Mr Jamieson felt that after some false starts, operationally the group were operating well under the NSFA umbrella. Strategically, we have a lot of work to do.

Victoria Crerand, Regional Manager Anglian Water (AW)

AW explained that the floods in previous winters it had a massive effect on the network. As a result following heavy rainfall the network becomes full of surface water. The network is only designed to take foul waste. As a result of the last flooding the Asset Performance Team was set up in Anglian Water. The small team go out and prioritises catchments in Norfolk to investigate works. This is time consuming and slow. It includes CCTV of the sewage pipes and includes all AW pipes. Pipes transferring sewage to AW, which lead off into properties are not included and cannot currently be made to be watertight by AW. Properties are being consulted regarding roof water going direct to the sewage. AW have plans and actions regarding the infiltration of their system and actions from that. Various methods to deal with ground water to stop infiltrating the sewage system were explained. CCTV survey will be

undertaken to our system; however a small window for this to be done. This needs the water table to be low enough to see the infiltration. It could be in the manhole chambers or pipes. When the infiltration is found then this will then be actioned by either lining or repairing the pipe. Infiltration documents are a live document.

This winter 2023 has had unprecedented rainfall. Restructure in AW means that Rob Kelly who is head of Recycling Teams is now seconded to NSFA, paid for by AW but working with Norfolk County Council and Henry Cator to have a rapid and joined up response to these events. AW have co-ordinated the multi agency groups which meet weekly and discuss what is happening in the parishes. Review ground water levels and customers affected. Network is still full and is struggling to get levels down. The pumping stations are going 24/7. Tankering is in place. AW are aware there are breaches from manholes. Tankering is only maintaining the levels and not lowering.

Plan is working with NCC and once the levels drop will investigate the infiltration of the pipes where breaching. Where manholes are breaching into water courses ammonia testing taking place every day.

There is an absolute need to remove the surface water from the network.

Andrew Jamieson explained the sleeving of the assets are a priority for Anglian Water. When flooding in 2021 the pumping station was over pumped into the River Burn to elevate the problems.

Rory Sanderson – Environment Agency (EA) explained the Regulatory Position Statement regarding over- pumping into a water course. This is not the chosen action by AW. The environment quality is important to make this type of decision. However, a permit could be issued. The EA has looked into permits that could help to reduce the problems like allowing water to be taken during the winter months to store in reservoirs to help agriculture and water management to be used in summer months.

Question: Is Brancaster going to be a priority for survey? AW still in process of putting the lists together.

Question: Brancaster has been affected; a manhole in driveway has been overflowing into the house?

Thornham have similar problems in Church Street of manholes overflowing. Discussion of surface water and water table is the main problems. Ditches and dykes have been cleared out which helps take the surface water. Maintenance on the ditches and dykes to keep water flowing would help. Local knowledge is key to some of the problems.

Andrew Jamieson explained that as residents they could deal with many of the issues on their land. Riparian Owners could be noted and made aware of their responsibilities, ditches, manholes, water courses be mapped out by way of asset register. NCC could create a template of where drains, dykes, ditches are in the village.

Jade Kite – BCKLWN explained that if parishioners' toilets or showers are not working then to contact the Borough Council on 01553 616200 or use the chat on their website. The Borough Council will then assess on an individual basis as there is a criteria involved. Alive Leisure sites are being used to provide facilities like showering.

Mark Ogden – Norfolk County Council

NCC are updating the watercourse ownerships are on the website and a toolkit for parish council with data is being developed. There is a data map for Parish Councils of the parish.

Andrew Jamieson explained some of the responsibility of the Environment Agency and how he was trying to change responsibility to the Internal Drainage Board to deal with. However, this needs a change in legislation. IDB is a much smaller organisation than the EA but is local and keen to work with other organisations.

Question:

There is a lot of development for Brancaster with allocated sites. When planning applications come in Anglian Water are not commenting on planning. Concerns whether there is capacity for all the development.

Victoria – Anglian Water explained that AW are not currently a statutory consultee on planning applications. They are looking to become one but at present can only give advisory comments. There is a legal obligation to accept the connections and AW cannot say no. Regulated by Ofwat and Environment Agency. Sewage network only designed to carry foul sewage not surface water. When giving the flow rate figures to Ofwat AW can only base this on foul water not any other infiltration of surface water. Uptake of 20% for ingress or surface water only allowed. AW cannot update network to accommodate foul and surface water. Governed and funded for foul water only. Calculations take foul sewage network, number of property and how much foul flow discharged per day. AW cannot incorporate for additional wet weather incidents. This calculations can be shared. If pumping stations were bigger there would be problems in the summer as there would not be the volume and velocity to keep everything moving. During the summer the manholes do not overflow giving the overview it can cope, it is the surface water in the winter months is the problem.

Question:

Surface water is an issue as the playing field was a pond. However, highways and EA was working with the Parish Council, completed soakaways, pipes and worked with land owners ditches cleaned out. This has helped.

Question:

Government has stated that Anglian Water is not a statutory consultee. Parish Council only have the power to clear foul ponds, ditches and gutters. This is being pushed down to Parish Councils but it should be dealt with by higher departments.

Andrew Jamieson explained that local knowledge is key to help all parishes know where things are in the parish.

Question:

Anglian Water will reduce bill if rainwater is not placed into the sewage system.

Question:

Church Street Thornham the manhole has been discharging, is there any recourse to clean it up? AW attending every day to check ammonia levels. Now water dropped and not discharging AW will attend to do a clean up.

Question:

What areas are not being covered by the Internal Drainage Board and who pays for it, what can be seen for the future for the IDB. Rate payments are not getting the use when paying for it.

IDB – Map on internet of where is covered by the IDB. Most of the Hun River downstream. Burnham and cover the lowlands flood risk areas. IDB covers Fens. Legislation needs changing if IDB to cover other roles. Rate payers pay where the IDB covers.

Question;

River Hun: much of the water flows into the Hun. Who makes the decision not to evacuate into the sea. Sluice controlled. EA explained the sluice is fully opened. It is a main river and little maintenance on Hun as budget not stretching to doing all round the country. Dredging is not the one answer. Getting flood water on the flood plain and keeping water on there in a controlled way is a possibility.

Andrew Jamieson explained River Hun higher and not to do with the sluice as opened fully. Problem caused by over-growing reeds in the lower-level: needs dredging to allow water to escape. If flood plain used in the upper level would slow water down.

Andrew Jamieson gave the conclusion:

- Norfolk Flood Strategic Alliance to look at permitting abstraction licence for reservoirs to elevate flood water in the summer when draughts occur for agricultural purposes.
- Process to simplify maintenance more powers transferred to the Internal Drainage Board
- Anglian Water to be statutory consultee.
- Demaining rivers and dredging where appropriate and maintenance.
- Obligation for developments to consider the impact on new buildings on communities and infrastructure.
- Riparian Owners and obligations on land owners to deal with their responsibilities.
- Norfolk County Council Local Members fund to be used where possible.

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Useful Information:

Floodline Telephone Number: **0344 800 8013**

Anglian Water Email: anglianwatercustomerservices@anglianwater.co.uk

Infiltration document by Anglian Water (Awaiting further information - Link to Follow)

How calculations are made with regards to planning and foul sewage. (Awaiting further information)

Environment Agency:

Telephone number: 03708 506 506

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Internal Drainage Board:

[Map of area IDB deal with](#)

Norfolk County Council:

Mark Ogden Email: water.management@norfolk.gov.uk

NCC template document for Parish Councils:

Email: water.management@norfolk.gov.uk

NCC Local Councillor: Andrew Jamieson

Andrew.jamieson.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Borough Council facilities at Alive Leisure : Telephone: 01553 616200

Website. [Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Homepage \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Homepage (west-norfolk.gov.uk))