

Attachment 1.

Cllr Viney - Yarlington Parish Flood Update

Drop In Flood Meeting Pitcombe and Hadspen@ Hadspen Village Hall. A handful of Yarlington residents attended the meeting by open invitation. This was the first Drop In meeting for Hadspen and Pitcombe following the floods in May. It became evident that like Yarlington, many residents felt they had been left to resolve many of the problems for themselves. Tim Cook and Lesley Knight from Somerset Council (SC) were present at the meeting and gave a handout with relevant contacts titled 'Residents and Business Flooding Information', which was available on the SC website. Residents were directed to specific departments and contacts throughout the meeting.

Individual residents were invited to give their accounts of how the floods had affected them. In each instance, the focus was very similar to the experience of the Yarlington residents: Problems with infrastructure maintenance, and in particular, blocked culverts, gullies that had not been emptied for a long period of time, lack of proper ditch and hedge maintenance, and stream clearance compromised by debris. To date little progress was evident, echoing the situation in Yarlington. Priority was given to those communities worst affected; however four months on that excuse is wearing thin. The onus is on SC and the landowners to play their part.

An update on the Section 19 Report was provided, highlighting the size of the catchment area affected and associated problems of collating information. When asked, they were able to confirm that the meteorological report that led to the devastating floods is near completion. The request was made by affected residents that this part of the report should be released ahead of schedule to facilitate victims in their dialogue with insurance companies for their claims and future insurance quotations. In particular the requirement to define the type of storm for householders as this was a leading question on many forms alongside the question of the role of the rivers and surface runoff and the floods.

This request was well received and we were told the information will be passed on, we must wait and see if anything comes of this dialogue.

Villages are being encouraged to produce their own Flood Plan. Assistance with this process is available and, in essence, the information will be used to coordinate any future requirements for village evacuation either due to extreme weather; flooding, snow etc or services and utility failure.

The meeting was made aware of a further potential outcome of the Section 19 Report in terms of alert systems that are being considered to assist with the communication of flood risk to residents in villages and communication down river.

Residents commented on the problems they were having trying to communicate with the relevant departments, following the floods, not least the refunding of council tax, if they have had to leave their homes, and accessing the hardship fund.

Highways

Following on from a meeting with John Nicholson from SC Highways on Monday, 7th of August 2023, the following points were discussed, but sadly none of them to date have been actioned by SC.

1. The maintenance of Pound Lane and investigation of the upgrade of the lane for pedestrians, preventing the adverse camber near housing and to keep it safe for residents to walk along the road. Disappointed to see potholes in North Cadbury identified with white paint on 28 September but nothing in Yarlington once again.
2. The maintenance of the tarmac area by the signpost in the centre of the village where the manhole covers stand proud and it was agreed an area of resurfacing is required.

3. All the gullies throughout the village require emptying and jetting as they have not been maintained for many years, contradicting the councils view of 18 months cycle .
4. The sweeping of the roads to remove surface mud and gravel to the centre of the village and along Woolston Road.

I was assured by Mr Nicholson that this work would be addressed before the end of October 2023, to date work has been undertaken.

Cllr Beyer – North Cadbury Parish Flood Update

Cllr Beyer asked Debbie Haines, SC Locality Team Leader, if she could forward her email inviting everyone to join a mailing group for communication to anything related to the floods, to everyone affected by the May floods, including other parishes along the Cam. The email included a list of potential topics, which ranged from experiences with regards to insurance and how the flood damage was dealt with, to thoughts about flood mitigation, the installation of gauges and also renewing insurance.

Cllr Meyer was told that this email would be sent to approx. 100 people, although she'd spoken to some people who were not aware that they received it, so the emails may have got lost in spam. Cllr Beyer has compiled a mailing list of over 30 people, of those 17 people were happy to share their email address with others so that everyone can respond to each other. There was a big interest from some flood wardens, clerks and parish councillors from other parishes who would like to see all the parishes on the Cam working together on potential solutions.

One person, who was not flooded themselves, reported that their insurance company had increased the premium by £240 due to flood claims in the area. However, on being questioned they reduced it to an increase of £80 without hesitation. Cllr Meyer would like to encourage anyone to check the renewal date of their policy and challenge any increase. She would like to hear of residents' experiences with regards to this as this could be useful for others.

Everyone is welcome to join the mailing list, even if they were not personally affected by the flooding.

Cllr Beyer also attended and participated in the flood meeting held before the Hadspen parish council meeting, mainly for networking, on which Cllr Viney had already reported.