

Fen Drayton flood defence meeting - report

Tuesday 26 January 19.30 via Zoom

Present: Roger Davies, Sue Ellington (SCDC), Chris Gray, Lee Hillam (SCDC), Jackie Isden, Mandy Smith, Harry Webster, James Weeden,

Apologies: Paul Pinner

Introduction by Sue Gyles (meeting chair)

The meeting was convened to discuss the flooding of the village on 24 December and in January, to agree short and long term actions to mitigate future floods.

Current situation and concerns

The new bund constructed along the northern side of the village was funded by SCDC. It is designed to hold back floodwater from the River Great Ouse, which it has done since its construction. It does not stop water coming down from Conington, overflowing Oxholme Drain and flooding the village, which needs to be addressed.

Apart from the main culvert in the bund on Oxholme Drain, there are two others affecting water flowing into the drain – one in the recreation ground and the other in Brown's Lane.

Harry Webster suggested that weather patterns may have changed since the bund was planned in 2012, which could cause more frequent periods of heavy rainfall combined with high river levels.

Construction of bund and maintenance

Lee Hillam said that the maintenance of awards was generally good, though some could be improved and that the bund itself did its job when the river flooded.

Lee confirmed that apart from maintaining the sluice in the new Oxholme drain culvert, SCDC was responsible for maintaining the valve in the sluice at the north-west corner of the recreation ground in Holywell Ferry Road.

The flap in Brown's Lane is operated manually and is not a cause for concern.

Lee advised that, according to his records, the stream along Daintrees Road is a riparian watercourse and therefore the responsibility of the landowner/s.

Immediate/short term actions

The PC will obtain extra FloodSax (**ACTION:** PC to liaise with Lee). Lee advised that SCDC has a supply to help out the vulnerable and elderly and in emergencies but the village should look to purchasing its own supply. The cost of FloodSax works out at around £4 each. There are currently spare hessian bags at the village hall, and James Weeden has a small supply of FloodSax.

Oxholme Drain was dredged on 8 January from north of Ridgeley Farm to beyond Oxholme Bridge. Lee advised that the southern section of the drain through the village is scheduled to be dredged within the next two weeks. (**ACTION:** in hand with SCDC/Lee)

Repair the sluice in the NW corner of the recreation ground. (**ACTION:** Lee)

It was suggested that water level gauges on both sides of the culvert would be a great help, as it's hard to judge which side is higher by eye. (**ACTION:** Lee)

Also, could a grille could be installed on both sides of the culvert to trap debris washed up or downstream to prevent the valve being impeded. (**ACTION:** Lee)

Longer term actions

The parish council will draw up a flood defence plan. Lee advised that there is a template on the SCDC website, which was emailed to the PC members. Mandy Smith asked about borrowing a pump from SCDC during flood episodes. However, they cost about £4K a week to hire. The capital outlay for purchasing a pump would be a SCDC members' decision based on research and reports, but could be looked at as a long-term option.

Lee advised that SCDC is looking to expand its Inland Drainage team resources and has the budget to do this. Any money left over from this could go to parish councils for purchasing FloodSax.

The Covell's Drain flood bank along Cambridge Road near the A1307 has a low point that needs to be looked at. Lee will investigate this, and the water levels by the A1307 and the bridge on Swavesey Road.

How are the river levels are managed? The water level usually goes down more quickly than seen in the recent floods, and flooding events are likely in the near future as more heavy rainfall is forecast. Lee will look at this.

James will check out the A14 upgrade flood risk assessment.

Future meetings

To be decided at the next meeting (date TBA): flood defence plan, a pump and the viability of a survey of water levels/flood event management.

Meeting ended at 20.50.