



Flood Forum Walkabout – 5 July 2024 – 10.05am

Informal Minutes

Attendees:

Cllr Brigitte Ahier (Worplesdon Parish Council)	Cllr Nigel Mitchell (Chairman, Worplesdon Parish Council)
Janet Ashton (Resident) [arrived 11.30am]	
Alan Dillon (Resident)	Ivan Parr (Environment Agency)
Victoria Fear (Assistant Clerk, Worplesdon Parish Council)	Peter Sutton (Resident)
Jason Lewis (Highways, Surrey County Council)	Andy Treasure (Surrey County Council) [arrived 10.27am]

Apologies:

Helen Barnsley (Guildford Borough Council)	Janice Longman (Environment Agency)
Cllr B Akhtar (Guildford Borough Council)	Peter Trevena (Head Groundsman, Worplesdon Parish Council)
Cllr H Brooker (Guildford Borough Council)	
Cllr P Brooker (Guildford Borough Council)	Gaynor White (Clerk to the Council, Worplesdon Parish Council)
Ray Everest (Resident)	

Meeting at Halifax Close and walking towards Frog Grove Lane:

The assembled group noted the location of additional drainage which was not on the original drainage plans submitted to GBC for Halifax Close (to the left-hand side of the main entrance). This takes water from the highway and has a feed in running from the direction of the glass houses (approx. 225mm pipe).

The ditch to the left of the entrance to Pine Park is completely unmaintained and has been this way for decades. This land is owned by SCC Land and Property. These works to be undertaken by one department at SCC but the costs to be shared between two departments.

The ditch will also be re-dug between the two Fairoaks access roads (also by SCC).

A discussion took place as to what lay between the wooden panel fence to the right of Gunners Yard and the laurel hedge on the left-hand boundary of Fairoaks, as it was thought that historically there might be a drain along that line although when SCC made enquiries, no one at Gunners was able to substantiate this assertion nor was there any visible evidence of this.

Outside Sunnyside the ditch is currently obscured by vegetation (which would also reduce capacity in a downpour). This ditch is also to be re-dug and graded, sweeping the water around the left-hand boundary of Gunners and into the common land. This would eventually discharge onto the golf course.

Andy Treasure arrived at 10.27am

Land in front of Four Acre Stables, which had the ground level raised by persons unknown showed high nitrate levels. This area had been filled in reducing the capacity of this land to accommodate flood water which overtopped the main river channel.

The attendees walked along to Frog Grove Lane junction to observe the flow to the channel under Aldershot Road. The water has to dog-leg to get underneath Aldershot Road, lowering velocity and depositing debris which eventually blocks the flow. There was a suggestion that the last pier, furthest away from Frog Grove Lane could have been washed out. Ivan Parr and Jason Lewis discussed the benefits of a two-stage channel which would allow high flow to utilise the additional arches. It is important not to be tempted to over-widen the channel which could cause unintentional throttling.

ACTION: On the Four Acre Stables side of the road check land ownership on either side of the main river water course, directly adjacent to the road, as the channel is choked with debris and vegetation growth.

The group walked back to Halifax Close and utilised the gate to access the rear of the Halifax Close properties. The manhole cover was lifted above the chamber to observe the discharge from the various pipes and from the pump pipe. From this chamber there should be two pipes visible feeding into the ditch but only one was visible and discharging - showing that the second/lower pipe was obstructed.

Telemetry fitted to the Halifax Close pump highlights when the pump is being overwhelmed. There is both a flashing light and audible siren.

It should be noted that the Halifax Close attenuation tank specifications should be obtained to establish if groundwater is permeating the tank as that may be adding to the water levels for the pump to address.

It was noted that number 23 Halifax Close have thrown garden waste over the fence.

11.30 am: Reconvening at Merrist Wood Golf Course - walking towards rear of Halifax Close and continuing along to where the Frog Grove Lane main river emerges:

The attendees walked to the back of Halifax Close. It is not a main river at this point. As riparian owners, the golf course should do a better job of maintaining the ditch, which is an extension of the outlet at the rear of Halifax Close and is now filled with bulrushes.

The attendees were unable to access the pipe at the rear Fair Oaks Park due to dense vegetation growth. This had the occluded end of the pipe removed in February to allow water to flow more freely.

The attendees continued and walked along to the 12th hole, which is the same location of the 'whirlpool' video (shot in February 2024). Jason Lewis unblocked the water course at this location during our visit.

ACTION:

Whilst the suggestion was that a 2-stage channel at Frog Grove Lane could improve efficiency, specialist modelling would cost a significant amount of money. A Flood Risk Activity permit would be necessary from the Environment Agency. Ivan Parr to confirm whether modelling would be required to accompany a permit application.

The Environment Agency to write a riparian ownership letter to the owners of Merrist Wood Golf Course explaining that ditching can be considered a contributory factor to flooding therefore regular maintenance of the watercourses should be undertaken.

Meeting concluded 12:21.

Formal Flood Forum Meeting to take place on Friday 18th October 2024 at Worplesdon Parish Council Office (Unit 2, Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX) – 10am.