

Beyton Flood Resilience meeting

**Thursday 14 March 2024 in
Thurston Sixth Beyton Campus, Drinkstone Road, Beyton IP30 9AA.**

Parish Council representatives in attendance: Beyton Parish Council: Graham Jones (GJ), John Clark (JC), Helena Harris (HH), Tostock Parish Council: David Blundell (DB) and Jane Storey (JS), Thurston Parish Council: Brian Rainbow, (BR) Drinkstone Parish Council: Mike Walton (MW), Hessett Parish Council: Michelle Fisher (AF).

Others in attendance: County Councillor Penny Otton (PO), Amanda Mays (AM) Asset Manager, Drainage and Soft Estate, Suffolk Highways, Roy Crosby (RC) Beyton resident, Dr J Wheeler (JW) Thurston Sixth Form Beyton Campus, Jessica Fleming (JF) Chairman of Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee (FRMSSC), local farmers: Michaela Teagle (KT), Martin Crack (MC) and Craig Smith (CS) and Tina Newell (TN) Beyton Parish Clerk.

Apologies: Paul West

Interesting fact: Thurston recorded 51mm of rain February 2023 compared with 148mm of rain in February 2024.

140324/01 GJ as Chairman of Beyton Parish Council welcomed all to the meeting and invited introductions from all attendees before reading aloud the following statement of behalf of Beyton Parish Council:

What we are doing at the moment isn't working so we need to do something different. Many roads in the Parish have suffered with flooding: Thurston Road, Bury Road, Quaker and Cangles Lane with minor flooding in Tostock and Drinkstone Road.

Key observations: far too much water flowing into the village and not enough flowing out/ fast enough. The ditches in Beyton can cope with some water but the main flooding is caused when water is backed up.

Mitigations considered include slowing the water upcoming in i.e. hedgerows leaky dams; storing water i.e. bigger ditches; better soil filtration; interrupting the rain; preventative maintenance i.e. never have the time or resources to do things right first time but have time to put things right.

140324/02 Additional traffic movements created due to the concrete works on the A14 have resulted in damage to ditch edges.

140324/03 PO asked if there was any remedial work that can be done immediately and can Suffolk County Council (SCC) can offer to help land owners.

140324/04 AM confirmed Suffolk Highways have taken responsibility for maintaining the Thurston Road ditch, gulleys and culverts (although the legal agreement is still

being written) and this work has been commissioned as a high priority; of the 1300 flooding sites it is one of the 50 that has gone forward for commissioning and is one of AM's priorities.

GJ confirmed the legal agreement is taking too long and AM agreed to chase Suffolk legal again.

- 140324/05 GJ produced the original map confirming the removal of hedgerow and widening of the channel along Thurston Road to 3.5 metres wide and suggested this would help store water however AM said there is no money to do this work and was not sure if it was actually agreed. A former engineer at SCC suggested if this plan was executed it would make a lot of difference but may not be the answer. AM said widening the ditch would reduce the frequency handling the water at a higher level; JS asked if this would just move the water along to Thurston. AM said it would hold more water and confirmed the situation is challenging as there is fast water coming down into Beyton and slow water leaving the village.
- 140234/06 There is a pond on a farmer's field however this simply receives water and moves it on downstream.
- 140324/07 GJ thought the land owner had given SCC the additional land to allow the widening of the ditch; AM thought SCC are only adopting the ditch not taking the land and agreed to revert to legal for confirmation.
- 140324/08 HH suggested the water backs up from Hesselton at Cangles Lane; a new straight ditch has been created where there was previously a meandering ditch across the field resulting in water entering a new bridge at right angles – JC said he has never seen such extreme flooding in this area before.
- 140324/09 JC counted 9 right angle bends from Beyton Green through to The Planche, Thurston and they were all blocked.
- 140324/10 PO asked if there was anything land owners could do.
- 140324/11 JF said at a recent meeting of the FRMSSC information was forthcoming suggesting DEFRA has a new initiative which may provide funds to allow farmer's to build small scale reservoirs; if this comes into effect it may be for a consortium of farmers to come together and benefit from a reservoir to hold at times both of flooding and drought. JF suggested there are multiple solutions that would require all stakeholders to join force. There is no funding available from FRMSSC. JF urged everyone with an interest to look at the strategy Water Resources East published in 2023 (<https://wre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/WRE-Regional-Water-Resources-Plan-for-Eastern-England.pdf>).
- 140324/12 HH confirmed flooding is no longer an inconvenience with Beyton residents as some are unable to get into or out of their properties in times of flooding.

- 140324/13 A land owner confirmed even a small reservoir will take up a lot of land.
- 140324/14 GJ said BPC do not have the skills to confirm a plan of work that is required. AM confirmed SCC won't dig out the ditch along Thurston Road as this will create a sump; they will simply take out the vegetation and confirmed everyone has a part to play as water passes from high land to low land and the next land owner has to accept and manage it.
- 140324/15 JS confirmed a ditch in Tostock is blocked; if it is cleared this will create problems further down in Drinkstone.
- 140324/16 DB suggested this situation allows a unique opportunity for a simple survey to be carried out by a small number of volunteers recording the water level in identified streams and the height of the crown of the road stating the condition of the stream, the culvert and its size and with this data you would be better placed to appoint a drainage engineer to consider the facts and offer solutions.
- 140324/17 DB suggested a reservoir on land just passed the A14 would be a very good idea although costly.
- 140324/18 There was some confusion regarding riparian responsibilities and ownership of ditches. JS confirmed every land owner has a riparian responsibility to ensure water is running freely on their land and AM confirmed it is the responsibility of the land owner to judge when the ditch is full and to keep the water free flowing. JS confirmed SCC can clear out ditches and charge the land owner for doing so
- 140324/19 If water is flooding the highway, SCC Highways enforcement team can talk with landowners informing them the of the Flood Water management act and Common Law.
- 140324/20 AM agreed the suggestion DB made was a very good start stating if the Parish did some initial ground work the flood team at the County Council would be more informed and this should speed up their response; JF said a number of parishes are putting together projects and asking for assistance from SCC Highways.
- 140324/21 It was suggested a survey would identify issues to allow parishes to communicate and help manage the discharge of water into and out of each Parish.
- 140324/22 It was agreed BPC would ask if CIL money could be spent on such a project noting it is ultimately going to maintain the infrastructure. BPC will request quotes from engineers under the guidance of DB to carry out the necessary work and inform Tostock, Drinkstone, Hessett and Thurston Parish Clerk's.

- 140324/23 PO asked AM for SCC Highways to do as much clearance and maintenance as possible; TN will contact National Highways for confirmation when the culvert under the A14 was last cleared and when it will next be cleared.
- 140324/24 JW confirmed children have arrived late/not attended both Beyton and Thurston schools due to the recent flooding.
- 140324/25 The meeting was closed by GJ at 3.33pm.

Since the meeting Beyton Parish Council have received the following updates:

1. In response to the question posed re use of CIL funding:
The starting point before considering the use of any funding (including Neighbourhood CIL) should be that any potential works have been agreed with all the flooding agency organisations and that any such flooding works are supported/approved by them . This is because resolving a flooding issue in one location can cause flooding to occur elsewhere (which I am sure that you realise). It also may be that any flooding solution considered may need formal approval before works being under all types of legislation (including planning) dependent upon who is undertaking the works. In addition, if the works are deemed necessary it may be that whatever flooding organisation is involved will fund the works anyway.

District CIL cannot be used for funding investigative work only infrastructure - this is in accordance with the CIL Expenditure Framework. As your email covers aspects which are of an investigative nature to find solutions to the problems, this is not something that could be considered via CIL Bid.

From Infrastructure Team at MSDC

Penny Otton and Nicky Wilshere have been sent a copy of this email be see if there is any way this project/s could use CIL.

2. In response to a question posed re alteration of water courses:
The responsibility to manage flood risk from ordinary watercourses (streams and ditches, etc) in Suffolk rests with us, as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Therefore, anyone who intends to carry out works in, over, under or near an ordinary watercourse in Suffolk must contact us to obtain **Land Drainage Consent** before starting the work. The reason for this is to ensure that any works do not endanger life or property by increasing the risk of flooding, or cause harm to the water environment (<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/working-on-a-watercourse>)
3. G H Bullard & Associates LLP, a company based in Thurston with experience in flood and water management charge £90 per hour.

