

Ditches, drainage and flooding

I sent this request to Suffolk:

From: drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com <drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 12:19 PM

To: GHI Floods <floods@suffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: Ditches

I am trying to secure a map of the ditches and watercourses in the Drinkstone Parish. I understand that Suffolk has a list of assets that will assist this process. Can you please advise where I might secure a map of the ditches in the parish.

Suffolk response 1

Dear Mr Walton

Thank you for contacting the Suffolk Resilience Forum.

I have forwarded your enquiry to the Suffolk County Council Flood Management Team.

They may be able to help you or at the very least point you in the right direction.

Please come back to us if this route is unsuccessful.

Kind Regards

Vicky



Vicky Fisk
Suffolk Resilience Forum
Risk and Resilience Officer

✉ SuffolkResilienceForum@suffolk.gov.uk

Fire and Public Health Directorate

Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

Suffolk response 2

Hello Mr Walton,

We do not specially have a map with all the ditches and watercourse in an area however we will use the National Library of Scotland which, has all historic maps with watercourses and ditches that can be looked at. Below I have attached a link that takes you to the page for all the maps in the Drinkstone Parish. Hopefully this is what you are looking for.

All the possible maps for the area: [Programmable Search Engine \(google.com\)](#)

One of the maps set up which includes Drinkstone and Rattlesden: [View map: Ordnance Survey, Suffolk LV.NE \(includes: Drinkstone; Gedding; Rattlesden; Woolpit.\) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952 \(nls.uk\)](#)

Kind regards,

India Webb

Flood and Water Management Team

Flood and Water Engineer (career grade)

Suffolk County Council

Parishioner comments

Comment 1

Where the Black Bourn reaches Blacksmiths corner the gradient of the river alters, It changes from a swift flowing stream in the roadside section below the Rectory and up to the junction, to a more sluggish one as the river turns east beside the road to Woolpit before passing under it. Inevitably in times of peak flow this can lead to water levels rising to the point of overtopping the constrained artificial roadside channel where the faster flowing water meets a section where gradient is less.

I dont think that realistically anything can be done to prevent the river periodically over topping its channel and flooding the road. Fortunately as Daphne says the river rises and falls quite quickly so the road is not usually blocked for long unless a vehicle breaks down in the flood water. There is a reasonable alternative route via Hill Farm Road and Deadman's Lane.

I think we would be better to check and clear the few principle road culverts in the village for any obstructions each autumn, as Graham Todd does at Chapel Lane, rather than getting led up the 'forming a sub committee creek'.

Comment 2

I think this chimes with what the consultant implied. There are maps, but they are incomplete. One thought was to run a project to map our waterways more fully.

I am cooling on this idea. It is uncertain what it would achieve that would benefit us and warrant the effort involved. There will also be inevitable difficulties with landowners.

The flooding in the village is a pain, but does not threaten properties. Flooding on Chapel Lane, which did affect properties, seems to have been resolved by the ditching work carried out a couple of years ago and the repair of the culvert under the road.

Any mapping of ditches and drains will be of academic interest to Suffolk CC only.

There is an interesting article in today's Guardian about the hundreds of drainage boards who are the responsible bodies. We would need to question who precisely we would be dealing with in any initiative.

As a small council, covering a small area we really have little power to affect anything.

Comment 3

A few years ago Giles Young wrote an article in the parish magazine about the Black Bourne - our floody river at Blacksmiths Corner.

It rises in Bradfield St George, runs through Hissett into Drinkstone lakes. From there it runs past the Rectory, under the A14 in Tostock parish and alongside the nature reserve, past Mickle Mere at Pakenham. It more or less follows the A1088 north, through the Euston Estate and eventually enters the Little Ouse on the Suffolk/Norfolk border.

That gives an idea of the complexity of any water flow management initiative.

The old OS maps also designate the lands bordering the river between the lakes and Blacksmiths corner as flood prone. Modern field drains may well have solved this by draining more water into the river.

The problem with the BB is that after exceptional rainfall it is overwhelmed by the volume of water coming downstream. It flows freely with no obvious local blockages. A way to reduce the flood risk would be to establish water retention measures upstream.

The lakes might act as a water holding reservoir but are pretty silted up these days. Would dredging them help or make things worse? Even if Paul Thurlow could be persuaded to do anything, it may well cost several tens of thousands of pounds and cause huge disruption and environmental impact.

Park Road floods are caused by that culvert which seems to get clogged up on a regular basis and which we all know about.

Again I ask, what is the objective of any drainage subcommittee, and what can we realistically achieve?