RAMSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 29th October 2008 at 7.00pm in Ramsden Memorial Hall with Mr Laurence King, Principal Engineer,WODC

Members Present: Mrs Holly Deans (HD) (Chairman), Mrs Sally Miller (SM), Tony Shuker(TS) and Mrs Sarah Wiggins (SW)

Others Present: Mr Laurence King (LK), the Clerk and 14 Parishioners

Item Subject **Action**

78. Apologies

Mr Clive Cowen, Cllr Simon Hoare, Ms J Aldwinkle, Mr R Lord, Mr D Popplestone, Mr J Tucker, Mrs S Tucker, Mr FR Williamson

79. Declaration of interests of Councillors with regard to items on the agenda

None to declare.

80. Flooding

a) Riparian responsibilities and how the Highway Authority is involved

LK explained that roadside ditches are usually the responsibility of the landowner (who owns the land up to the edge of the road) and not the Highway Authority (HA). The HA has responsibility to drain the highway and rain falling on it, but not to deal will flow from agricultural land. Nor is it responsible for maintaining ditches except where these have been constructed specifically to drain the highway. Identifying landowners is often difficult. There are powers under the Land Drainage Act (LDA) to compel landowners to remove obstructions and maintain flow in ditches, but local co-operation and persuasion are to be preferred. A landowner cannot be asked to better a ditch e.g. by enlargement or piping.

New laws next summer would make the Environment Agency (EA) the single authority taking charge all aspects of surface water management, and give increased powers of action and enforcement.

Terminology : A ditch, drain = a watercourse. A drain is piped watercourse. A culverted watercourse is also a watercourse.

Every watercourse is the responsibility of the riparian owner (RO). If a watercourse / ditch is a boundary, responsibility is shared (a bank each and shared bed).

Questions and discussion followed. For ease of reference and use, these minutes collate the information on different topics, rather than following the flow of discussion.

Modelling : The EA has no model for the Windrush waterway, but a strategic Flood Risk Assessment covering the whole district is being prepared with WODC as coordinator. WODC with the EA has put in a bid for over £1m to DEFRA to do hydraulic modelling of the Upper Thames tributaries. Suggestions had to be tailored to budget, and decisions tended to be made on a cost benefit analysis. 14 homes were registered as flooded in Ramsden but it is acknowledged that some residents did not claim so were not registered.

b) The Ramsden Flood Defence Report

More information needed to be gathered.

Which are the best options for Ramsden ?

Residents highlighted 3 priorities:

The need to hold water back above the village at the top of the (i) High Street and (ii) Wilcote Lane, and (iii) to revert the flow off Akeman Street to its historic pattern across the fields to the watercourse at Blackbird Assarts Lane (BA Lane).

(i) The Upper Village (Area 1)

WODC were in discussion with Hilltop Garden Centre regarding measures like the creation of an attenuation pond and aimed to secure co-operation. **Mr K. Jack**

LK was asked to find out what the HA could do about surface water on the B4022 – there was more than could be contained by the grips, and it caused problems ponding at Whiteoak Green as well as pouring down Ramsden High Street. Increased training was suggested for operatives – LK would pass this information on to OCC. **LK** **LK**

In heavy rainfall, water flows from all the driveways on the north of the B4022 onto the highway. There was concern that the ponds at Heath House Nursery might be overflowing and adding to the surface run-off.

Maintenance

OCC currently clears grips and gully pots 1¼ times a year. A recommendation had been made to OCC that the frequency should be increased. Lateral pipes were only inspected if a problem was suspected – as with the problem outside the Royal Oak earlier this year.

Ownership

Historically there was an open stream down Ramsden High Street, with small ponds all the way down that went when the stream was culverted. It was unclear who constructed the culvert. An upsized highway carriage drain right through the village and safely into the watercourse at BA Lane would make a huge difference to the village and alleviate ponding at the BA Lane cross roads. The fundamental questions are:

- Whether the culvert is a carrier drain or a culverted watercourse ? – If the pipe under the road is a carrier pipe for drainage, the HA is responsible for it. If it is a culverted watercourse, responsibility reverts to the RO, i.e. village residents and landowners.
- What size should it be to carry sufficient water ?

Area 1, Option H; Area 2, Option D needed to be progressed. **LK**

(ii) Wilcote Lane and Lower Village (Area 2)

There was a problem with the grip on Wilcote Lane – it protected some properties at the expense of others. The flow of water through The Grange could be stopped with a ditch extending 50 m one way and 28m the other, at a cost of possibly £2,000 to £2,500. WODC could advise on the kind of ditch – possibly perforated drains with granular beds spaced along the ditch, rather than a blind ditch and bund, which could create surge problems if there was overflow. (Option A) **LK to advise**

A lot of water also came down under the top gate and down the highway. The second priority for this zone was to take water onto the glebe land via the grip, creating a ditch and bund to protect the cottages currently at risk of flooding without jeopardising Park Cottage, and linking with pipes, ditches, and soakaways safely to the watercourse at BA Lane (Option C).

Because of the rise in road level, it was no longer an option to have substantial drainage in front of Park Cottage. Road camber is wrong from Handcroft, Holly Cottage and Yewcot to the bend where the level rises again just before Park Cottage.

Thames Water : Flooding by sewage

in the longer term, new surface water sewers were needed, taking old combined sewers off line, or the risk of flooding with sewage persists.

Residents were advised to fit non-return valves in sewer pipes on their own properties. **Residents**

It was ESSENTIAL to report every incidence of foul water flooding to OFWAT, insist on getting a reference number so that it was recorded on the DG5 register, and send the information to LK. This would ensure that the seriousness of the problem was recognised. **Residents**

(iii) Akeman Street and The Playing Field (PF)

Old maps show a tank in the field opposite the PF gate. This was installed to take the water from the culvert which runs along the PF verge. The culvert collects the water from **LK**

the PF and from the ditch above it on Akeman St. [*Mr. J. Swinburne, Singe Farm, has pointed out that the ditch has been problematic. Akeman St. being narrow, traffic mounts the soft verge in order to pass and gradually pushes the earth back into the ditch*]. Referring to the map, the contours suggest that this route is the natural flow line of water from Akeman St towards the BA Lane ditch. A problem remains with water flowing down the lower stretch of Akeman St. and Jordans Close.

LK was asked to check he was satisfied that the affordable housing (AH) development would not discharge any water onto the highway. LK's understanding was that there was porous paving on the access ways and a French drain to the rear for roof water.

Finance

- Finance was an issue. The PC was not allowed to finance work on private land – LK would find out if there could be exceptions to this. **LK**
- Grant sources should be investigated. **?**
- The village was not poor - residents would be likely to need to contribute to joint funding initiatives. **Residents**
- WODC can fund limited new work, but then becomes responsible for maintenance. Clear agreements on future maintenance on shared schemes are important.
- WODC can advise on contractors. Ditches must be constructed with correct levels.

Actions

The village needed to co-ordinate action, maybe have working groups etc. The cottages in Lower End were suffering most, so would be the first focus of activity for alleviation. Work would be done in stages and the effects assessed.

1. To put pressure on Hilltop to deal with surface run-off. (Ar 1, C) **WODC**
2. To find out what the HA could do about surface water on the B4022. (Ar 1, D) **LK**
3. Ask the HA to increase training of operatives making grips. **LK**
4. Ask the HA to carry out maintenance of culvert and gullies (Ar 1, H & Ar 2,D) **LK**
5. Mr P Saugman (PS), possibly assisted by Mr M Barnes, would obtain quotes for the ditch above The Grange and act as co-ordinator. (Ar 2, A) **PS**
6. Consider change in the camber of the road in Lower End. Advice from LK or HA. **LK ?**
7. Find the tank in the fields opposite the PF and investigate flow if possible. (Ar 2, F – modified) **LK**
8. Check that the AH development would not discharge any water onto the highway. **LK**
9. Fit non-return valves in sewer pipes on own at risk property. **Residents**
10. Attempt at retrospective reporting of sewage flooding incidents. **Residents**
11. Consider how to safely send water from PF down the fields to the watercourse, rather than down Akeman Street. **LK ?**
12. Routing the water across the fields via the grip in Wilcote Lane. Ditch and bund in the glebe land and a perforated pipe to take the water safely to the watercourse by BA Lane. This work possibly needed to be done as a package, with advice from LK. (Ar 2, C) **Village co-ordinator needed**
13. PC to consider writing to WODC outlining preferred schemes to progress and requesting matching funding from next year's budget. **Cllrs**
14. Monitor effects of Actions 1-8 and 11, before embarking on 12 or investigating possible upsizing of culvert / highway carriage drain. **All**

The Chairman thanked LK for attending and for his help and support.

The meeting closed at 9pm.