

Carlton-on-Trent Flooding Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup>  
August 2007 at 7.30pm at Carlton-on-Trent Village  
Hall

Present:

Ian Harrison- Strategic Manager for Risk and Resilience- Newark and Sherwood District Council  
Rob Fisher- Head of Emergency Management and Registration- Nottinghamshire County Council  
Stephen Broadhead- Newark Area Drainage Board  
Terry McManus- Environment Agency- Technical Specialist  
Margaret Burrop- Severn Trent Water Networks Sewerage  
Christine Rose- District Councillor- CHAIR  
Peter Ward- East Midlands Government Office- Resilience Director.  
Andy Statham- Head of Environmental Services- District Council  
Sarah Beresford- Minute taker  
32 members of the public of Carlton-on-Trent, Little Carlton and South Muskham

Apologies for absence: George Vere-Laurie- Carlton-on-Trent Parish Council Chairman  
Ernest Holland- Carlton-on-Trent Parish Councillor.

The meeting opened at 7.30pm. Mrs C Rose welcomed everyone and suggested that this was to be an informal meeting with an aim of moving forward with a plan to improve the issues which led to the flooding.

Mrs Rose thanked everyone for attending and welcomed the panel, the residents and Mrs S Saddington (County and District Councillor- Muskham and Farndon and members of the public from Little Carlton and South Muskham.

The panel around the table introduced themselves to those present and the floor was then opened up for questions.

Mr Terry Cooper - Carlton-on-Trent Parish Councillor opened the meeting by thanking Mr Broadhead for the action taken since the flood in cleaning and dredging the dykes surrounding his property. Many residents felt that the poor state of these water courses contributed to the flooding.

Mr Broadhead replied that the culvert is piped all through the village which is of limited capacity as it is not an open drainage channel. The pipe taking the water to the culvert drain is also at risk of floating debris and would be at risk of getting blocked. The site in question possibly just had too much water to deal with. Mr Cooper asked if we need further action to prevent a re-occurrence. Mr Broadhead indeed agreed that the culvert is an old structure and suggested a CCTV survey to inspect the culvert. The issue of further building work at the back of the culvert was raised at which Mr Broadhead stated that he was not aware of any planning permission that would affect the precise route of the culvert. Mr Cooper then mentioned the resurfacing work recently completed on the A1 and how, due to improved surface material, water drains much more quickly away from the carriageway, but unfortunately puts the pipe draining the surface water under too much pressure. Following completion of the A1 resurfacing, the dyke formed was dug very deeply to allow surface water to leave the A1 quickly- but it fed into a very small diameter pipe which quickly flooded the dyke, overwhelming gardens and land in the village.

One resident asked what time scales are in place, bearing in mind the recent planning applications at the rear of The Old Forge, Carlton-on-Trent for some action to be taken.

Mr Broadhead stated that due to excavation of the dyke, the flood risk is minimised. Mr Broadhead then went on to say that a maintenance schedule is in place for Internal Drainage Board maintained watercourses and that the grid

protecting the watercourse was recently replaced. The actual structure of the pipe is privately owned by the landowner but the IDB replaced sections of the pipe some years ago. Mr Cooper stated that in the time he has lived there (5 years) the dyke has only been excavated 1-2. Mr Broadhead affirmed that this was the usual clearance schedule for a water course of this type. He did agree however, that with hindsight, the overgrowth and poor state of the dyke may have contributed to the flooding on this occasion. Mr Broadhead stated that some water courses are purely the responsibility of the landowner and not the Environment Agency or the IDB.

Little Carlton had serious issues with a dyke flooding many gardens and properties and one resident explained that the volume of water appeared over just a few hours. The pumping station in the village, originally built for 40 houses could not cope with the sheer volume of water. There had been Lorries pumping water out of the village now for the best part of six weeks. Margaret Burrop from Severn Trent stated that the problem had been exacerbated as one resident was found to be draining a large swimming pool into the mains drain. Margaret Burrop stated that the sewage system is built to cope with a reasonable amount of water. One resident asked if the overflow which suddenly arrived in the village was redirected from Carlton-on-Trent. Margaret Burrop stated that the problems were caused by-freak weather conditions, the ground being much more porous and planning policies creating much more concrete, patios, less natural ground soak ways taking the water and inappropriate articles being flushed into the mains sewage system which blocked pumps and created flow issue- this included fats and oils which block pipes and pumps. Margaret Burrop stated that what happened was uncontrollable and was purely an operational issue, not a capacity issue. One resident stated that he could not accept that extra housing was being put up in the villages and the pumping

stations were not upgraded to cope with the extra waste disposal. Margaret Burrop contradicted this thought process and stated that new development is what drives the ability to upgrade a pumping station system. Margaret Burrop again stated that in this area there is not a capacity issue.

Rob Fisher stated that during the flooding, the Fire Station deployed the High Volume pump to Carlton-on-Trent and this large volume of water was emptied directly into the Trent.

A resident from Little Carlton- who spends much time riding around the area on his bicycle stated that the culvert under the A616 was not blocked at the time of the flooding and normally under usual circumstances, any flooding in the Little Carlton area comes from the Trent.

On this occasion however, the flooding came from the opposite direction. The dykes surrounding Little Carlton were very badly maintained and one was partially blocked with old tyres. As far as the residents know in the Little Carlton area, there has been maintenance work undertaken on these blocked dykes apart from those at Bathley.

Mrs S Saddington received a round of applause at her contribution to the debate. Mrs Saddington stated that when the Flooding Scrutiny Committee comes back together it is very important that all agencies work together without apportioning blame. The Public and statutory bodies need to be very clear about who is responsible and assumes ownership of what in terms of dykes, ditches, and culverts. There are many dykes in which there are blockages from silt and often developers block dykes with builder's rubble, so therefore regular dredging is essential. Mrs Saddington asked Peter Ward, the Government representative to also take back the message that it is imperative that Severn Trent are made a statutory consultee in planning applications for all- not just 10 houses and above in the same way as the Environment agency. It is ludicrous that there can be as many as 5-6 small developments in a village which can amount to quite a lot of

housing without the Water authorities consulted. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is totally unsatisfactory for tankers to be pumping water out of a drains system and gardens and homes to be experiencing sewage leakages.

Mr Peter Ward agreed to take back the comments and feed the information into the official flooding inquiry.

One resident from Little Carlton asked why, as on this occasion the Trent did not flood-the surplus water was not re-directed into the Trent.

Andy Statham stated that if we had not experienced such freak weather we would not all be here together and therefore it is a positive step that this has highlighted the issues such as the culverts not coping.

Andy Statham also stated that the residents locally are the eyes and ears of the community and they have the best local knowledge. It is imperative that fly tipping is reported and cleared to prevent such matter blocking dykes and ditches.

Andy Statham stated that in situations where the landowner assumes responsibility for maintenance they are only legally obliged to ensure water flow- not determine the size of the culvert. He asked that local parishioners inform the District council of blockages or any other water course issues where these are not maintained by the statutory bodies. The IDB can provide a map of all the water courses that they and the Environment Agency maintain and the rest are largely the responsibility of the landowners. The residents present all agreed that it would be most useful to have details of the hierarchy and who is responsible for what, and who can be contacted in the event of a problem.

The attention of the meeting then turned to Severn Trent. Margaret Burrop again reiterated that operational issues with the pumping stations are often due to the disposal of inappropriate

matter including grease, fats, oils and sanitary products. One resident asked if the capacity issues are going to be investigated during the next AMP period. Both village residents in Carlton-on-Trent and Little Carlton felt that their pumping stations are both inadequate. Margaret Burrop stated that the pumping stations have been subjected to a CCTV analysis and Severn Trent gave a three month commitment for releasing the findings of this analysis.

During the flooding crisis Severn Trent employed a large number of Lorries which were deployed to empty the water from the village into a manhole in South Muskham. This resident clearly stated that South Muskham capacity much be much more capable than Little Carlton to cope with this volume of water in addition to their own.

Mr Ian Harrison informed the meeting that he fully endorsed the words of Andy Statham. He informed those present that there was to be a conference at Kelham Hall on October 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the issues and look to see what could be done better in the future and to work more closely with local knowledge. This may include informing Parishes of severe weather warnings in order to give residents time to act. There is a map recently sent out for all Parishes to complete to show where the serious flooding actually occurred. There is also a consultation paper going to cabinet from DEFRA to ask that all privately owned watercourses go under statutory control.

One resident asked if the changes to the Trent Fluvial system at Nottingham would impact in this area and also if the rumours are true that the flood bank at South Muskham is inadequate. Terry McManus from the Environment Agency stated that as far as they are aware the bank at South Muskham is more than adequate. They also affirm that there will be some differences in the water level of the Trent in this area due to the changes at Nottingham but these will be marginal

and insignificant. There then followed a slight disagreement regarding a statement made by Paul Lockheart at a meeting stating that the affect will be known and that remedial work will be required. This was clarified at being required at Bleasby and that is where the impact of the Nottingham changes will effect in terms of the furthest away from Nottingham. One resident then asked the question, if the statutory bodies are so convinced that the Newark Villages are not in any way at risk, why do they not inform the Insurance Companies of this. Mrs Saddington voiced the general feeling that we are either in a flood risk area or we are not. Terry McManus stated that threshold values for each property have been sent to Parishes.

Mrs C Rose asked Margaret Burrop why Carlton-on-Trent has had repeated issues with the failure of the pumping station at Carlton to the extent that they involved the Consumer Council for Water to help achieve an outcome. Severn Trent has supposedly put in a new panel but this has not yet been confirmed.

One of the greatest problems with Severn Trent is their reporting procedure and that often reported problems are ignored. There has been a collation of the ignored emails, letters and telephone calls over the last 24 months. Margaret Burrop agreed to take these issues back to raise them as a concern. Margaret Burrop again stated that operationally she believed that the pumping station was perfectly adequate although this was disbelieved by many of the residents present. Mrs O'Brien stated that Carlton-on-Trent is the last in a long line of villages feeding the station and if residents further down the chain are disposing of inappropriate waste into the system- it is Carlton-on-Trent who bears the problems caused by this. Mrs Rose also disagreed and stated that there are many other pumping stations in her District which do not have any problems- so why is it just the

Carlton-on-Trent one that experiences "operational issues".

Margaret Burrop did inform the meeting that Severn Trent was auditing the call centre in Coventry from a customer service point of view and this may change.

Mrs Rose also informed the panel that Carlton-on-Trent has undergone years of poor drainage issues with the drainage system and finally the County Council acted last year and replaced large sections of drains which were poorly maintained and incapable of the job required of them.

Rob Fisher invited one of the Parish councillors, Mrs R Whate to take up the offer of looking at organising maintenance schedule to prevent a re-occurrence of this.

Residents of Little Carlton reported that some of the drains in the village, due to new surfacing of the roads, stood much higher than the actual surface of the road. This meant that the surface water had to be considerable deep in order to drain, which often left surface water standing for a significant period of time.

Mr Cooper asked what the capacity of the down pipes at the massive Caledonian Sheds. These new structures are extremely effective at quickly draining water from their structures, but what happens to this water. Stephen Broadhead informed the meeting that the Caledonian rain water goes down the Carlton Mill drain away from the village in the normal course of events.

The developers at Caledonian have always asked the IDB consent as part of any new development on the site and statutory policy states that water must not drain from a new development at a higher capacity than if the site does not exist.

One Little Carlton resident asked a question to the Environment Agency about flood prevention boards and the availability of these in the event of a severe weather warning. Terry McManus stated that the EA have Trent Patrols which travel up



and down the River when there is a flood risk assessing need and trouble shooting. There is a Health and Safety issue regarding residents self erecting these boards.

However, Rob Fisher for the Nottinghamshire County Council stated that community self emergency planning is a particular interest and spoke to the meeting about the Community Flood Warden scheme. All residents present agreed that they would like more information on the scheme and would like the villages involved in such. The villages' would be expected to appoint a Flood Warden who would deploy various emergency protocols and act as point of contact. Rob Fisher stated that he believed Parish Councillors would be better involved in the contingency of self emergency planning as they know the local community best. The flood warden would also have details of the dedicated Emergency phone line. Terry McManus handed out some booklets regarding the rights and responsibilities of residents living next to water courses.

Peter Ward left details of the National Government Inquiry due to be held to look at the flooding issues.

Mrs Rose recapped the main points made at the meeting and thanked all those on the panel for their time and attendance.

Mrs Rose thanked all the residents for attending from both Carlton-on-Trent and Little Carlton.

The meeting formally closed at 21.20