



Oldbury on Severn Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Flooding and Planning Committee Held on Friday 6th December 2019 at 09:30am At the Memorial Hall

Present

Keith Sullivan (Chair), Dylan Griffiths, John Cornock, Glynn Poole, Barry Turner, Jimmy Nichols, Matthew Riddle, Andrew McGrath

Mark Parry (SGC), Nigel Riglar (Director of Environment & Community Services, SGC), James Druett & James Thomas (Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board)

Clerk: Emma Pattullo

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed all attendees.

2. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Coles, Colin Taylor (Environment Agency) and Kieran Warren (LSIDB).

3. To outline OPC's objectives:

(a) reduce the volume/rate of flow of fluvial water into Oldbury Pill

(b) increase the efficiency of drainage from Oldbury Pill to the estuary

(c) improve tidal defences

KS outlined the above objectives, which had formed the basis of a work plan being developed by the Flooding & Planning committee.

4. To receive presentation – OPC's view of why we need to do this and our early thinking

KS gave a presentation which summarised why this committee has established the objectives as outlined in section 3. It was emphasised that whilst committee members do not have the technical expertise to determine appropriate solutions and are reliant on SGC as Lead Local Flood Authority to drive such work forward, the committee as part of the Parish Council have a duty to represent the interests of parishioners and make sure that their interests and concerns are given due consideration.

5. Discussion - How can we work together to achieve these things?

An extensive discussion was held. The following is a summary of key points made and actions taken.

5.1 Reduce flow into Oldbury Pill

Surface water management in Thornbury: MP reported that SGC have recently received a grant from the EA to look at management of surface water across the Thornbury area. This work has recently started and is expected to report in about a year. This will include modelling work, including looking at provision of hydraulic brakes to slow the flow of water into Oldbury Pill and allow more time for it to disperse via the Pill Head. The modelling will be informed by new sources of data from instruments installed as part of the Challenge Fund work. MP agreed to update this committee on progress during the year.

Action: MP to provide updates

It was suggested that it should be possible for CIL funding from new developments in Thornbury to be used to fund improvements.

Bank heights & flood plain: JT commented that this should not be a priority as previous work by Andy Wallis concluded that bank heights in the upper Pickedmoor catchment were lower than those in Oldbury, therefore any overtopping of the banks would be on to farmland in the upper catchment, not into the village. JD confirmed that LSIDB dump dredged spoil away from the bank crest and thus the bank heights should not increase over time. The Oldbury flood of 2016 was due to damaged or missing flaps (which have since been renovated) allowing water through the banks, not overtopping.

This was disputed as overly simplistic and the committee felt that reduced flow was an important objective.

MR noted that the new Agricultural Bill, which is expected to be presented during the new parliament, is aiming to shift funding of agriculture towards provision of 'public goods' (i.e. provision of wider benefits) rather than purely on agricultural production. Farmers may be paid for allowing their land to flood at times of high water level in order to reduce flood risk lower down the catchment.

Hill Pill: JT/JD reported that LSIDB are still looking at ways to increase flows through Hill Pill, to lessen the problem of silting below the pill head. This is likely to involve some transfer of flows from the Oldbury catchment, but this is not likely to have a significant effect on the risk of flooding in Oldbury. JT agreed to update this committee once a decision is made.

Action: JT to provide update.

LSIDB pumping strategy: JT/JD confirmed that the pumping strategy has not changed and stated that if the pumps were not used when required, this would increase the risk of flooding in Shepperdine. They added that the pumps are used to manage and balance risks as much as possible.

Monitoring of SUDS in Thornbury: MP confirmed that SGC are developing a monitoring regime.

5.2 Increase the efficiency of drainage through Oldbury to the estuary

Flaps: it was suggested that a wider and/or additional flap structure at the Pill Head should be investigated as a means of increasing the length of time over which water can flow out to the estuary and the efficiency with which it does so. MP responded that any changes to the Pill would be the responsibility of the Environment Agency and that he will encourage the EA to attend a future meeting.

JT believes that the EA have modelled the effects of increased sea levels on the operation of the flaps and suggested that there was an expected decrease of 20-30 minutes in the period during which the flaps are open. The EA should have more detail.

Church Hill: MP confirmed that the works at Church Hill should be complete by Christmas and that a clean-up will be carried out. SGC will be carrying out further work in Oldbury in the new year to sort out some other issues including some raised during the open day at which the plans for Church Hill were presented to parishioners.

Church Road: No progress was reported.

Flooding in other areas of the parish: Works have been carried out by LSIDB to improve culverts around Kington Lane, however the road still floods near Fewsters Farm. MR will be holding a site meeting with Nick Blanchard of SGC to discuss and will report back to this committee.

Action: MR to report back

It was noted that much of the flood water in this area is run-off from surrounding fields, Maize crops in particular can have high soil compaction leading to increased run off compared to grass. MP noted that SGC are involved in a "River Frome project" which amongst other things is looking at improving land management to reduce run-off. It is possible that the findings and outcomes from that project may also be applicable to parts of the Oldbury area.

5.3 Improve tidal defences

Shoreline Management Plan & raising of tidal banks: the SMP is now approaching the end of its current epoch, in 5 years time. It has not really been updated since first development around 25 years ago and EA reports show that the tidal defences are likely to need work soon. It is also now less certain whether a new power station will be built, which would have required improvements to the defences at least in the Shepperdine area. MP reported that he has recently attended an EA workshop which was looking at how the SMP can be updated. Stakeholders including parish councils will be consulted further on in the process.

6. Discussion - To agree way forward

The work plan will be updated to reflect information provided today and copy to SGC.

Action: Clerk/FPC to update work plan.

MP will circulate the revised workplan to the Environment Agency and request comment, and will encourage EA staff to attend future meeting(s).

Action: MP to facilitate discussion with the EA

NR agreed to prompt the EA at a higher level to consider their responsibilities towards this area and review the priority of the area in future considerations.

Action: NR to encourage prioritisation by EA

MP will also ask Scott Jones (new Drainage Manager, SGC) to attend the next meeting.

7. Dates of future meeting(s)

The next meeting of the Flooding and Planning Committee will be held on Friday 21st February 2020 at 9:30am in the Memorial Hall.

8. Meeting closure

The meeting closed at 11:00am.