**Open Meeting re Pett Level Flooding**
**29 August 2023**
**Pett Village Hall**

Hosted: Marsham Brook Residents Association (MBRA)
Chaired: Sally Ann Hart MP (SAH)
Speakers:
Ian Nunn - Environment Agency (IN)
Keith Glazier – ESCC (KG)

**Q&A**

- Terry Rogers (MBL resident):
    - Q re Chick Hill culvert responding to Keith Glazier who stated that ES Highways had assessed whether widening would help flooding issues and had concluded that it wouldn't
        - Terry asked whether that was really the case given Marsham Sewer could have a lot more capacity if its banks were better maintained and/or widened
        - Ian Nunn stated that in the past the cost of widening the culvert and connected work on the sewer would be £2m+ and necessary benefit ratio of 1:7 would be unlikely to be met
    - However conclusion was that this is still something that should be reviewed alongside other ideas

- Kathleen Amos (MBL resident):
    - Raised issue of Johnson Creek which has become overgrown and appears to be continually polluted with sewage
    - Representatives from Rother Internal Drainage Board confirmed that works on the Johnson Creek were in hand

- Mark Smith (Rosemary Lane resident farmer)
    - Need to be aware that sewer releases are not just coming from Fairlight WTW but another pumping stated on Rosemary Lane which also floods
        - MBRA confirmed that there would be further Qs put to SW about releases from other works upstream of Fairlight
    - Would like a lot more detail on what any attenuation plans might look like
        - As recently as April/May he was still having to pump water when putting in a fence post, so any plans to hold water in that are will need to factor in large amount of standing water already in the ground
    - Marsham Sewer totally overgrown on his property
        - Therefore thinks work to slow flow there will be a mammoth undertaking

- Andrew Dunlop & Caroline Turner (Lunsford Farm resident farmer)
    - Witnessed 6 floods in 50 years
    - Last 3 has been when he has taken specific hydrological interest as such can state that rainfall from Sep 2022 - to 16 Jan 2023 was the equivalent of 12 months average rainfall
        - That aligns with past flood incidents in 1973 and early 2000s
    - Flooding will always be a winter issue because that's when ground is saturated and rainfall has nowhere else to go
    - In respect of the Chick Hill culvert

        - Witnessed what was happening on 16 January (along with former EA employee) and water was hitting and diverting into the reed bed
        - One possible solution to that issue:
            - Stop water getting across the road by making an earth bank on western side of the road to make a “sea wall”
    - Shared photos of work done (at their own cost) in past to create more flood plains lower down the Marsham Sewer




    - Point being that there is no further land to flood downstream beyond Chick Hill:
        - So need to slow the flow
        - Don’t enlarge the culvert
            - Will make flooding downstream worse
    - Questioned pricing of £2m to do any major remedial works:
        - Works shown in photos were done by a  good local contractor for £2k back in the early 2000’s
    - Agreed with point raised by other resident that cleaning out west side of Chick Hill
        - Get rid of trees and build up bank to keep water in the marsh

- SAH
    - Should speak to all landowners about what they have done in the past
    - Introduced question of whether farmers/landowner might get paid for works to be carried out on their land

- James Justice (Winchelsea Beach resident and councillor, family have lived and owned property in Pett Level since 1920s)
    - Point that there also used to be a ditch on the eastern side of Chick Hill which has now been built over blocked
    - Householders are responsible to clear out the ditch
    - On the western side, in the past (up to the 1980s) there were never any trees before running along the Marsham Sewer and these now need to be cut back
        - The Marshland is not being managed properly
            - It has become a wooded copse

- Rukhsana Mosam (MBL property owner)
    - Pointed out that recently approved planning on Marsham Brook Lane was to improve an existing building (not build a new one) which was currently an eyesore and was contingent on living quarters in building being raised 4 feet to avoid flooding
    - Asked whether Southern Water have been asked to increase the capacity at the Fairlight WTW
        - SAH confirmed that Southern Water are looking at it but any lasting solution to the issues in Pett Level needs more than just that

- John Williams (Pett resident)
    - When will government step in to help residents
        - SAH referred to Flood Re (https://www.floodre.co.uk/) a government backed scheme to help those who find themselves unable to get home insurance because of flooding
            - MBRA made the point that FloodRe only applies to properties built before 2009
            - John requested that this information should be communicated to residents

- Chris Saint (Pett resident and member of Flood Action Group on behalf of Pett Parish Council)
    - Clear that more information still needs to be gathered in order to continue to make progress
    - When residents last tried to push for flood improvements in 2016 discussions soon became rudderless when it became clear that funding any scheme would be an issue
        - So need to make sure funds are available
    - Asked whether diversion of water by Hastings Borough Council to slow the erosion of local cliffs has had an impact
        - IN: certainly adds to the problem. The EA will follow up with Hastings Borough Council on the topic

- Maggie Sullivan (Fairlight resident)
    - Maggie and her family have suffered decades of sewage flooding
    - What is current structural integrity of Chick Hill culvert?
        - IN: good and functioning properly
    - Can we jet culvert under properties on eastern side of Chick Hill?
        - IN: ditch is completely grown over so culvert is not visible however agreed that EA would look into it
    - Commented on statistic given in meeting that 95% (sic) of flood water being surface water
        - Stated that % in built up areas was even more so residents should not be alarmed by this figure
    - The issue of sewer maintenance and repair also needs to be addressed by Southern Water
        - Current claim that all local sewers are at a state of repair of 4 or 5 is not true
        - This means there is an issue of infiltration of surface water in sewers which is adding to the issue
        - Need to put more pressure on Southern Water to invest more in infrastructure

- Sarah Whiteman (Winterstone Farm resident farmer)
    - Family have farmed local land for 100 years
    - Was out at 0500 on 16 January and witnessed the amount of water flowing down from Fairlight
    - Pointed out the issues of blocked ditches on Peter James Lane
        - Thanked KG for work that has been done to date by ES Highways to unblock some of these
    - Sees the farm as a choke point for water coming downstream so flow needs to be slowed higher up

- Contributions from attendees who did not give names
    - Multiple Southern Water trucks are moving sewage every day from Winchelsea beach so any claim that a lasting solution has been arrived at there is incorrect
    - Issue of planning:
        - Rother DC said in 1970s that no more planning permission would be granted however permissions have continued
        - All local properties have their own sewage systems (because there are no mains sewers) and so all are contributing in one way or another