

PITTON VILLAGE FLOOD ACTION PLAN.

Issued January 2024

This plan is intended to assist Pitton residents in preparations for any future flood event and includes details of the nature of such events and practical arrangements for mitigating the impacts.

Following the first of the “modern” events in 1995 and 2001, (the first since 1961) a community self-help group, the Pitton Village Flood Action Group (FAG) was set up to try to better understand the basic drainage problems of the village, to establish better lines of communication with the various authorities with responsibilities for flooding issues, to prepare a flood plan and to help to organise for any future event.

The FAG now operates within the auspices and remit of the Parish Council.

This is an update of the plan originally prepared and subsequently adopted by the Pitton and Farley Parish Council.

The Problem.

Pitton sits in a valley which technically comprises the source of the River Dun. Whilst its permanent flow commences from the lake on Clarendon Estate and flows east to join the River Test, the upper reaches, encompassing Pitton, comprise a winterbourne which flows (to a greater or lesser extent) only sporadically.

Following long periods of persistent winter rainfall, the water levels of the aquifers in the chalk substrata of the valley rise to the point where springs can break through and flow as a winterbourne down the valley and through the village.

The slow build up of water in the aquifers is monitored by borehole readings at Lopcombe Corner and Clarendon, which give some 5-7 days warning, backed up by the signs of water accumulating and flowing sequentially in the fields above the village.

The gradient of the valley through Pitton is very slight and so, if the rate of water entering at Townsend is comparable to, or in excess of, the rate flowing out into Clarendon, water will start to build up in the centre of the village.

The Effects.

Whilst the area of the village and the number of properties directly affected is relatively small, the effects on transport, businesses and community life are very disruptive.

Water accumulates in the area of Townsend and parts of the High Street, Black Lane and Church Lane, and up to 3 or 4 houses have been temporarily inundated in the past and others have had disruption to sanitation or have had water in gardens or outbuildings.

Townsend and parts of High Street and Black Lane are closed to traffic, resulting in the cancellation of bus services (including school buses), restrictions on medical staff or carers attending to the sick or elderly, on deliveries to the shop and other businesses and closure of the church.

KEY CONTACTS FOR VILLAGERS.

Pitton and Farley Parish Council.

Steve Williams.	01722 712797 07796 302727
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Pitton Village Flood Action Group.

Chris Sankey.	Flood Warden.	01722 712581
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Stuart Mariner.		01722 712599
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Tim Vaughan.		07884 002076
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James Sinclair.		01722 712220
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Wiltshire Council.

Switchboard.		0300 456 0100
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Responsibilities of Agencies, Councils, landowners and other parties.

Environment Agency (EA)

As the winterbourne is part of the River Dun, which is designated as a “main river” the Environment Agency has authority over it. This is handled from their Romsey office. They issue groundwater information, monitor water levels and advise other relevant organisations, respond to pollution incidents and record details of all flooding events.

Wiltshire Council. (WC)

Drainage Management.

Previous mitigation works to improve the outflow from the village, including the installation of a siphon, a pumping chamber and works to the channel which flows out under the White Way road bridge were carried out by Wiltshire Council (or their predecessor Salisbury District Council).

In conjunction with the Highways Department they maintain these works and also supply and maintain pumps to help discharge excess flood waters. Pumping involves additional outflow pipework along the High Street, which discharges into the main channel above the road bridge. They may install crossovers providing access to properties affected by this pipework.

In conjunction with Southern Water they have supplied portaloos and appropriate facilities for relevant properties and assess and deal with any pollution issues. They coordinate the cleanup after an event.

Highways Department.

Maintain safe conditions on the road and organise road closures, traffic diversions and signage and marking the road edges to ditches and Aymers Pond.

Social Services.

Monitor residents at risk.

Pitton and Farley Parish Council. (PC)

Maintain a contingency budget to provide sandbags, skip hire and/or similar necessary items not provided for elsewhere. Maintain pressure on all relevant Authorities and organisations to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities.

Southern Water. (SW)

Southern Water provides the sewage system for the village and have a pumping station in Slate Way. If it is overwhelmed, they will carry out emergency pumping or remove sewage in tankers. They clear blockages and/or make repairs to public sewers and may take action to protect properties from discharges from the public sewage system. In conjunction with Wiltshire Council, they have provided portaloos.

Wessex Water. (WW)

They provide the water supply to the village and may take action to prevent flooding by water from the public water supply mains.

Southern Electricity. (SE)

They attend to life threatening electrical emergencies and emergencies at their own facilities.

Wiltshire Police. (WP)

Apply for road closures. Responsible for public safety and provision of police “Slow” signs and if appropriate enforcement of temporary speed limits.

Riparian Owners (owners of land adjacent to a watercourse).

They have a duty to clear and maintain their ditches, watercourses and culverts and to accept flow from their upstream neighbours and discharge it to their downstream neighbours. They must ensure that their actions or inaction do not cause flooding to their neighbours.

Pitton Flood Action Group. (FAG)

Whilst the Flood Action Group is a community self-help group without any political or legal powers or responsibilities and which works under the auspices and remit of the PC, it aims to promote or assist, where possible, the above agencies and organisations to anticipate and mitigate the impact of any events.

Actions may include -

Appoint and support a Flood Warden.

Disseminate flood warnings and updates to inform residents.

Help identify vulnerable residents.

Help organise, fill and distribute sandbags as appropriate.

Assist in monitoring pumps if agreed with Wiltshire Council.

Offer the community help, assistance or advice as appropriate.

Advice for “at risk” property owners.

Advice from the Environment Agency includes

Move to a safe area if relevant.

Prevent water entering the property if possible.

Switch off electricity and gas at the mains.

Keep an emergency pack of torch and radio (with batteries), candles, matches, camping gas cooker and bottled water.

Move valuables and furniture from floor areas liable to flood.

Move vehicles from flood risk areas.

Weigh down manhole covers with something heavy.

Block downstairs WCs - eg with half-filled sandbags.

Put plugs into sinks and baths and weigh down, disconnect the washing machine and dishwasher.

Notify the Flood Warden of any foul drainage problems.

Advice for other village residents.

If at all possible, avoid driving through flood waters, as the wash from your vehicle can inundate houses which would otherwise escape any flooding.

If it is essential to drive through, keep your speed to an absolute minimum.

Please continue to use the village shop as much as possible as its passing trade will have been greatly reduced.

Prior to the winter.

The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (Southern) publishes via their website, groundwater levels taken at wells at Clarendon (www.flood-warning-information-service.gov.uk/station9162) and at Lopcombe Corner (or check www.gaugemap.co.uk or www.floodassist.co.uk)

Whilst the Environment Agency does not issue official Flood Warnings for this area, it does provide groundwater bulletins. Residents can register to receive information by calling 03459 881188.

Wiltshire Council will -

Inspect and clear out the siphon annually ahead of the winter.

The Flood Warden will-

Monitor the Environment Agency flood line and the published levels of groundwater at Lopcombe Corner and other relevant sources.

Check relevant ditches and culverts (where accessible) and request the clearance of any obstructions.

Contact Wiltshire Council Highways and/or Drainage Departments, the Environment Agency and Southern Water for an update on their winter preparations.

Check any supplies of sandbags, gel bags and other stored equipment.

Warnings of a potential event.

The Environment Agency advise that if the groundwater level at Lopcombe Corner reaches 93m a flood notice may be issued and that at 97m the winterbourne will usually be triggered and the water travel down the valley to the village.

If the groundwater level reaches 90m, the Flood Warden will inspect the fields above the village for signs of rising springs.

In addition to monitoring of groundwater levels, early warnings of a potential winterbourne starting in the valley are seen in -

Springs rising at Best Farm on Clarendon.

Water collecting at New Manor Farm.

Water ponding in the fields in the valley above the village.

Water flowing down Dunstable Road, above the village.

Water collecting in the garage pit at Aymers House.

Aymers Pond and the ditches at Townsend filling with water.

These signs have historically provided some 7 to 10 days warning of water disrupting the village, giving time to put necessary actions and mitigation plans in train.

Not all events when the winterbourne starts to flow through the village will result in property damage, but disruption to travel and the community can continue for many weeks.

When a flood event is anticipated

The Flood Warden will in coordination with the PC initiate as appropriate-

The ordering of sand for sandbags.

Provision of information notices for display in the village warning of potential disruption.

Contact with Wiltshire Council to request the provision and delivery of pumps.

Informing the other relevant agencies -

Environment Agency.

Wiltshire Council Highways Dept and Drainage Dept.

Social Services.

Stagecoach Buses.

Southern Water and Wessex Water.

Parish Council

Police

Salisbury Reds Buses

Southern Electricity

Provision of sandbags and/or gel bags to protect properties.

Householders should be aware that it is their direct responsibility to protect their own property.

The National Flood Forum has a directory of suppliers of sandbags and gel bags, flood boards and air-brick covers. www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Wiltshire Council or the Parish Council may provide a limited supply of sandbags or gel bags to properties that are at imminent risk. Any such provision would be prioritised by level of need - for example the elderly or infirm.

In the event of a flood.

The Flood Warden will in coordination with the PC -

Keep a log of phone calls and communications during the period of the event. In the Flood Warden's absence, it will be passed to the Deputy Flood Warden.

Warn residents in the at-risk area of the possibility of flooding and that they should make preparations.

Seek Volunteers to assist in filling, moving and placing sandbags to protect at-risk properties.

Seek volunteers to erect barriers with sandbags as appropriate.

Help check on elderly or sick residents in the at-risk area.

Warn residents to finalise moving furniture, valuables and vehicles.

Ask Wiltshire Council to install and maintain emergency pumps.

Ask Southern Water to prepare for the emergency disposal of sewage by tankers.

Request road closures as appropriate.

As appropriate, assist Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency in monitoring of the flood, checking that the inlet of the siphon is not blocked and that the pumps are operating efficiently.

Liaise with Parish Council, Wiltshire Council, Environment Agency, and Southern Water throughout

Take photos and make a record of events.

After a flooding event.

The Flood Warden will liaise with Wiltshire Council in the clean-up of the roads, disposal of used sandbags and the clearance of silt and debris etc.

If appropriate, the Flood Warden under the auspices of the PC will seek volunteers to carry out or assist with the collection or disposal of sandbags.

The Flood Warden and the Pitton Flood Action Group will prepare a post event report for the Parish Council to provide to Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency to include (where the information is available) the extent of the flood, water levels and any properties directly affected. Try to identify any specific problems encountered in order to seek solutions for the future.