



**Minutes of a meeting of Thatcham Flood Forum Steering Group
held on Wednesday 19th March 2014, at 7.00 p.m.
in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road**

Present: Iain Dunn (Chairman)
Mel Alexander (Thatcham Town Council Officer)
Brian Barnes
Stuart Clark (West Berkshire Council Officer)
Steve Kelly (Thatcham Weather Station)
Leo Pieri
Nick Townsend
Brian Woodham (Cold Ash Community Partnership)
and 2 local residents

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. John Boyd, Cllr. Geoff Findlay, Peter Lavarack and Cllr. Garth Simpson.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2014 were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising from previous meeting

Item 3 (Item 4 (7.2)) As requested at the last meeting, Bryan Lyttle, West Berkshire Council Planning Officer, had been invited to attend this meeting to discuss incorporation of flood alleviation works into developments, along with the effects of implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood Water Management Act 2010 regarding Sustainable Drainage. Unfortunately Mr. Lyttle was unable to attend this meeting. It was agreed to invite him to a future meeting as the Forum was keen to seek confirmation that the Surface Water Management Plan was considered as part of the planning process.

Item 6 Stuart had provided Leo and Nick with a map of all drainage in Thatcham.
Stuart would provide Leo and Nick with contact details for Thames Water.
Mel would provide Leo and Nick with a map showing the parish boundary.

4. Updates:

4.1 Rainsford Farm

Iain had some comments from Bob Hewitt regarding the Rainsford Farm outlet that he would pass to Leo and Nick. Stuart confirmed that there was camera footage on the DVD provided.

4. Updates continued:

4.2 Surface Water Management Plan continued

Brian reported that construction of the first attenuation pond, east of Cold Ash Hill (phase 1), would commence in the first week of April and continue to the end of the summer. It was reported that this basin would now hold 20% more capacity than originally anticipated, thereby offering a greater level of protection. Capacity was now anticipated to be 24,000m³.

The application for funding from Defra for construction of a basin on Tull Way had not been successful. A full explanation of why the application was declined was being pursued. However, funding had been received to carry out the detailed design work for this scheme.

Dunstan Green and Dunstan Park proposals were currently going through the preliminary design process and more information would be available in May 2014.

The design for Cold Ash Hill phase 2 was to be reconfigured in light of phase 1 offering a greater level of protection.

4.3 National Flood Forum

Nothing to report.

4.4 Water Bill

Stuart agreed to forward an email he had received regarding insurance.

5. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)

Stuart reported that 70+ responses had been received to the recent consultation and these would be looked at the following week. Cold Ash Community Partnership had submitted a response in support of the need for a LFRMS but highlighting some areas of concern (appendix I)

6. Adverse Weather

The following reports had been received following heavy rainfall in December 2013 and January/February 2014:

6.1 Ditch adjacent to Turnpike Road (appendix II)

Stuart advised that this ditch was maintained by West Berkshire Council's Countryside department and the complaint had been passed to them. Mel to pursue.

6.2 Kennet Heath – 2 reports (appendix III)

Officers from West Berkshire Council had attended the area following reports of concern over water levels. No properties were in imminent danger of flooding. Stuart would look into this matter and provide responses to the questions raised by local residents.

6. Adverse Weather continued

6.3 Lower Way

It was reported that water was pooling across Lower Way, between Thames Water depot and Derwent Road, making it impassable at times. Stuart requested that this information be included on a map recently sent to Thatcham Town Council requesting information on highway flooding.

Thanks were recorded to West Berkshire Council Officers and the Emergency Response Centre for their efforts during a difficult period.

Stuart encouraged residents to report problems to enable them to be addressed.

7. Siege Cross

The Forum was advised that a consultation evening regarding proposed development at Siege Cross was to be held on Thursday 27th March 2014, 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. at Thatcham Baptist Church, Wheelers Green Way, Thatcham. Iain and Brian Barnes confirmed that they were both attending.

The Forum asked Mel to check the flood report “A year in Perspective” for comments regarding this land.

8. Action Plan

8.1 To consider moving action number 1.7 to a higher priority

It was agreed to wait until a response had been received from the Environment Agency regarding no allocation of funding for construction of Tull Way basin, in order to identify if it was necessary to raise the priority of this item. This would be discussed again at the next meeting.

8.2 Progress review

Action 1.4 Leo and Nick were gathering information and preparing questions for relevant authorities. Stuart had flood models that could be used to identify gullies etc that were the highest priority for maintenance. It was noted that the Surface Water Management Plan highlights roads that carry rain water run off.

9. Any other business

With construction of Cold Ash phase 1 imminent the Forum was keen to ensure all publicity reflected that this was a multi-agency project and press releases etc should be approved by all partners prior to publication and all partners should have an opportunity to add comments. Mel to email relevant agencies to advise of this.

Mel asked the Forum for it's thoughts on hosting a “flood awareness” event. It was agreed that this sounded a good proposal and more information should be prepared and presented to the next meeting. Stuart advised that a similar event had been held at Northcroft Leisure Centre after the 2007 flooding and information may be available from this. Stuart had details of suppliers and funding for resilience measures.

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10. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28th May 2014, commencing 7 p.m. in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber.

The Forum requested that the following two items be added to the agenda of the next meeting:

- 1 to discuss whether Thatcham Flood Forum should express an opinion on all potential large development sites
- 2 to discuss financial contributions from the community towards flood alleviation work

There being no further matters the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

DRAFT