



**Minutes of a meeting of Thatcham Flood Forum Steering Group
held on Wednesday 18th March 2015, at 7pm
in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road**

Present: Iain Dunn (Chairman)
Councillor Brian Barnes (Thatcham Town Council Representative)
Councillor Roger Croft (Thatcham Town Council Representative)
Peter Lavarack (Local Resident)
Leo Pieri (Local Resident)
Nick Townsend (Local Resident)
Brian Woodham (SWMP Funding Group Chairman)

In attendance: Mel Alexander (Thatcham Town Council Officer), Stuart Clarke (West Berkshire Council Officer) (for minute number 2) and 17 local residents (for minute number 2)

1. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Garth Simpson (West Berkshire Councillor).

2. Gravel extraction near Waterside Farm

A local resident had approached the Flood Forum with concerns regarding proposals for gravel extraction at a site close to Waterside Farm. It was noted that a planning application had not yet been submitted. Stuart confirmed that the application would require a flood risk assessment. Cllr. Croft advised that he had had an informal meeting with Grundon, the proposed applicant, in February. The proposal was to extend the existing extraction site. The residents' main concerns were noise, transport and flooding. Cllr. Croft confirmed that transport to and from the site would be via Colthrop and not Crookham Hill. Residents were advised to submit their concerns to the Flood Forum for a collective response and also to respond with individual concerns once the planning application was issued. Cllr. Croft advised that, as a District Councillor, he would "call in" the application at West Berkshire Council which would result in the application being debated at an open meeting. One resident presented Stuart with photographs of flooding in the area in 2014, Stuart advised residents to include all similar material when submitting concerns to the Flood Forum and/or individually. Stuart confirmed that he could commission an independent hydrologist's report if he felt he did not have the technical expertise to comment on this application.

Stuart Clarke and 17 local residents left the meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2015 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chairman. It was noted that the date of the fundraising launch event changed after the last meeting to Friday 6th March, instead of 13th February as originally planned.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

Item 6.2

Leo enquired whether a response had been received from Thames Water regarding the CCTV footage of Rainsford Farm Syphon. Mel explained that she had not yet responded to Thames Water following the last meeting due to workload.

5. Fundraising

Brian circulated an updated fundraising action plan (version 4.0), many actions had been completed. Feedback following the fundraising launch event on 6th March 2015 had been positive and the event had gone very well and Media coverage afterwards had been good.

Leo confirmed that an application was live of the Find Me A Grant website (www.findmeagrant.org/wberks - Application Number WB11089).

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5 Fundraising continued

As at 18th March a total of £80,427.50 had been either donated or pledged. It was agreed that further publicity should be initiated at various trigger points, such as £100,000 funding reached and start of works at Tull Way.

Brian confirmed that an application had been submitted to Berkshire Community Foundation and it was likely that the Flood Forum would be required to present to the Board, more information was awaited. Brian had an application to submit to SSE, the deadline being mid-April.

Cllr. Croft offered to source details of businesses that could be approached for sponsorship. Leo had discovered a website that he found very useful, Kompass Business Directory. It was agreed that businesses would expect some form of recognition for a donation, such as a plaque or certificate. Leo and Roger offered to contact various local businesses and organisations to seek sponsorship. Distribution of flyers/posters amongst town centre business was underway and this would be extended to various housing estates and community organisations.

Nick had recently attended a flood exhibition in Swindon which had great involvement from local schools. Roger offered to speak to the headteacher at Kennet School to see if raising awareness of the flood alleviation campaigns might be of interest as a school project.

6. Henwick Park

It was noted that the site of the proposed development "Henwick Park" was wholly within the parish of Cold Ash, not Thatcham. Thatcham Town Council's response to the developer stating that it did not wish to meet at this time was noted.

7. Siege Cross Farm

It was agreed to respond to the consultation on an application for development at Siege Cross Farm expressing the Flood Forum's concern at historic flood risk in the area, as the site was above previously flooded properties, and long-term maintenance of the drainage systems. It was agreed to recommend production of a new Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham should this development go ahead as the current Plan did not include provision of 500 homes at Siege Cross Farm.

8. Any other business

It was noted that two objections had been submitted against the planning application for the Tull Way flood alleviation scheme. Leo offered to investigate what concerns had been raised.

9. Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 20th May 2015, commencing at 7pm in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____