

NOTES FROM A MEETING TO DISCUSS EXCESS WATER AND SEWAGE ISSUES IN NORTH NEWBALD HELD ON MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2024 AT ERYC BEVERLEY DEPOT

Present

Newbald Parish Council (PC)

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC)

Environment Agency (EA)

Yorkshire Water (YW)

Introduction

It was agreed that the meeting would geographically follow the beck and identify issues that were occurring as we moved upstream from The Beckies to The Mires.

The Beckies had a significant number of natural springs within the land itself, there were also many that drain down the fields opposite, run across the road and join the flow of the beck as it moves towards the school. This year, the water has overflowed near the small wooden bridge and re-entered the beck further down the road. Running water along the road has caused issues with drivers spraying water onto the paths and then the temperature dropping has caused ice on the whole area making driving and walking treacherous.

At the Townend junction, water is very high on both sides of the road, however the banks appear to have contained it.

Sewage issues begin in Woldgate where their pipes feed down under people's properties and join the main sewer line near the end of Dot Hill Close. From there, sewage spills out onto the road from all of the manholes up to The Mires.

There is a culvert on Eastgate under a private driveway, between Dot Hill Close and Eastwold. The water in the culvert and in the drain on Eastgate exceeds the capacity of both the beck and the drain and are spilling out onto the road. Clear clarification of Riparian Responsibility is required for the homeowners on Eastgate.

Fast flowing water continues along the whole length of Eastgate to The Green, creating a second 'beck'. All of the amenities and junction boxes are full of water and internet connection is patchy.

The culvert under The Green requires maintenance and repair, however it isn't obvious that this has impeded the flow and appears to have managed the capacity of water.

There are continuous sewage issues along the whole length of the village, culminating on The Mires. Houses on either side of the road have had significant spills of sewage and excess water. Vactors are currently on a 'loop' emptying the

main drain at the furthest point and have been present for over a week. These are also causing some issues for those residents and businesses in that area, as the vectors completely block the road as they operate. The french drains that ERYC installed over The Mires to help with excess water, are completely overwhelmed and unable to cope with the volume that we currently have. Land further downstream is inaccessible due to the fact it is too wet and boggy to investigate further.

Overview

YW confirmed that the sewage pipes in the village are only designed to carry foul water drainage and not surface water or rainwater. They also confirmed that from their latest investigation the lining they had installed in 2021 (at a cost of £650,000) was intact and was working as designed. However, those areas not yet lined and the privately owned pipes leading to the main sewer were still allowing significant amounts of surface water and rainwater to ingress into the pipes which were causing the issues with the sewage overflow. The cost of lining these pipes would involve financial investment by householders as well as YW. Furthermore, it was confirmed that there were no blockages in the sewer pipes further down the network (there had been about 6 weeks ago but this had been cleared). The overflow is being caused entirely by the amount of additional water getting into the network. YW acknowledged the difficulties when the contracted workers on site from Morrisons were saying differently ie there are blockages, the lining has crumpled, there is reduced capacity for sewage and the pumping station is inadequate. This doesn't help to get the real issues across to the residents.

Becksies

The PC confirmed that the Becksies is a Site of Special Scientific Interest managed by them in conjunction with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. There was a significant amount of water leaving the Becksies onto the road, something which villagers had never seen before. The decommissioning of the water storage facility close to the Becksies was also discussed. Both YW and the EA confirmed that this sort of facility is only useful for the collection of excess rainwater and not surface water arising from springs. Capacity of the Becksies was increased by digging an additional pond. However, once full, it can only overflow again. Unfortunately, this year it didn't seem to have reduced the amount of water leaving the area. In addition, the Chair of the PC thought there could be an issue close to the footbridge at the end of the Becksies which was causing water to back-up.

Action – The Chair of the PC would write to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust asking them to review current management of the Becksies to determine if there was anything further they could do to reduce the outflow of water.

Eastgate

It was agreed that there was water leaving the beck on Eastgate due to the excess amount of ground water in the area. This seemed to culminate outside Drop Hill Farm where the beck goes under a cattle grid and driveway. The EA confirmed that they did not believe that this pipe was blocked but that with the current volume of water in the beck it wasn't possible to check. Some of the residents had reported that any use of water in their homes (eg, showers, washing machines, baths etc) caused flooding of their patios and gardens as the foul water had nowhere else to go. The PC also reported that much of the underground utilities infrastructure on

Eastgate (KCOM/BT boxes) are also flooded resulting in poor connection issues for residents.

One factor that had been raised by a number of residents was the possibility of widening the beck to increase its capacity. However, the cost of this would fall to those with riparian responsibility for the whole area of the beck. Furthermore, it was believed the beck was narrowed many years ago to prevent it going dry in the Summer resulting in a foul smell.

Riparian responsibility was then discussed. Comment had been made in the Village that if there was a path between a property and the beck then the riparian responsibility passed from the house owner to the Highways Agency. ERYC disputed this and stated that they were only responsible for the maintenance of the surface dressing of the path and driveways and not the ground and culverts below it which still belonged to the householder and thus the riparian responsibility remained with the resident. ERYC said that they were not landowners and they would update and share a leaflet regarding riparian responsibility which clearly states ERYC's responsibility.

Action – ERYC would provide the PC with a copy of the Riparian Responsibility leaflet which would then be distributed to those affected. Residents who have a different view on their responsibilities would need to engage directly with ERYC and, if necessary, seek their own legal advice.

The Mires

Once again, the sewage and excess water polluting The Mires was caused by excess ground water in the foul water drains. Yorkshire Water had tried to alleviate this issue by contracting Morrisons Services to pump out sewage throughout the day between 8am and 6pm. This may have helped reduce the problem, but the recent lack of rainfall may also have improved the situation allowing the water table to slightly decrease. The Chair of the PC raised the issue of where the tankers were being parked as this was blocking the road and is disruptive to residents and businesses and asked if it was possible to use an alternative manhole. YW said they believed that the manhole being used was the furthest down the system which is why they were using it. The unhelpful approach from some of the tanker drivers was also addressed as was the attitude of some obviously concerned residents.

Actions – YW agreed to look at where the tankers extracted sewage from the system.

- YW would address the attitude of the tanker drivers with the contractor.

Other

YW confirmed that the Elleker pumping station had sufficient capacity to cope with the amount of effluent it was receiving.

YW confirmed that there was a capital project being considered for lining more of the foul water drains within the Ings Drive area of Newbald.

YW confirmed that they would carry out a limited clean-up of areas contaminated by sewage. This could include jet washing and disinfecting of areas and will include removal of hay bales used to absorb sewage. However, it may be that residents may need to claim through their own household insurance for more significant damage.

YW confirmed that they monitor the levels of sewage in the system and also test the Beck to measure levels of contamination which they reported to the EA when necessary.

YW will continue to attempt doing the camera monitoring in the lined pipes - this can only be effectively done as the water level drops and they can see where the ingress of soakaway water occurs.

ERYC confirmed that they would be installing a new culvert at the junction of Eastgate and The Green in Financial year 2024/25.

ERYC confirmed they would send a road sweeper to the area once the sewage excess had been stopped to remove silt and debris on the road. There are also patches and areas of tarmac that will need inspection and possible repair.

ERYC offered to provide details of their current policy on residents' responsibility for flood prevention measures with helpful links and information.

EA asked YW for sight of their mitigation plan designed to resolve further issues as they had received numerous complaints regarding sewage spills in the beck. The EA stated that given current climate change concerns, this issue was likely to reoccur again in future years.

EA circulated graphs which showed the amount of rainfall and water table levels of the last few years in Newbald. EA agreed to email a copy of the graphs to the Clerk for wider circulation.

Conclusion

All attendees felt that although no immediate solutions had been agreed progress had been made. Flooding and sewage issues were being experienced across the whole of the County and many villages in our own area including, Elleker, Kilham, Driffild, North Cave and Sancton had all experienced significant concerns in the last few weeks. Each agency will complete their actions and agreed to look for possible solutions to assist in the future.

A further meeting would be held in the next couple of months. Attendees would inform the PC of their availability.

After Notes

Since the meeting, YW have clarified the difference between surface water and ground water. Surface water (predominately rain) is different to ground water (the water from the water table and other naturally occurring underground water such as from springs). Although they often intermingle, the distinction is important because in some areas where only surface water is an issue, there are steps that we all can take to help (such as using water butts) that won't really make a difference in areas of groundwater flooding. [This blog](#) on the gov.uk website is from 2019 and gives a helpful description of groundwater flooding that may be of interest.

ERYC have provided leaflets on Combined Resistance and Resilience Measure and one on Riparian Responsibilities. In addition, they have provided a report that ERYC Asset Management prepared on these questions a few years ago. Maintenance responsibility for the beck belongs to the adjacent landowners as does responsibility

for the bridges over the beck; the Council was never given responsibility for maintaining these. This also contains details of what a highway is and what it is for; the Council is responsible for maintaining the roads and footways for people to pass and re-pass but not drainage ditches or becks and it does not own the land.

Sandbags

The issuing of sandbags is covered within current ERYC policy. This policy contains the following publicly available information which shows the hierarchy and decision making progress for any sand bag deployment.

“The council does not provide sandbags to members of the public on request. Resources are not available to deliver sandbags to private properties, particularly when a widespread flooding event may be taking place. The council holds a limited supply of sandbags, which will be deployed depending on the potential scale of the flooding and using the following priorities:

Prevention of loss of life or serious injury

- Work to prevent flooding from watercourses, supporting flood banks, etc
- The maintenance of access for emergency services
- Protection of the primary highway network and transportation routes
- Protection of vital utilities, electricity, communications networks, pumping stations
- Protection of vital facilities within the community
- Protection of council property including care homes, schools, etc.

If supplies are made available to the public they will only be issued where officers have assessed the situation and feel that there is an immediate flood risk and that sandbags would help prevent flooding. The council will assess the situation following reports of flooding or potential flooding or when the Environment Agency has issued a flood warning or severe flood warning for an area. Sandbags will not be issued for flood alerts.

If sandbags are issued they will most likely be placed at strategic points in areas known to be sensitive to flooding, for example on street corners, for collection and placement by the property owner.

However, with little warning of some types of flooding occurring it is often difficult to get supplies to communities in time to be of any benefit to prevent flooding of property. Residents are encouraged to think about how they could protect their own property, particularly if it is in a known flood risk area. Advice on property protection and known flood risk areas is available from the National Flood Forum and the Environment

Agency. Advice on actions to take if you think your home is at risk of flooding can be found here:

[**GOV.UK - Using sandbags \(external website\)**](#)

[**National Flood Forum - sandbags \(external website\)**](#)