

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS – November 2015

Bethersden Village Drainage and Flooding

Various parts of the village have suffered serious flooding problems for many years. More recent stormy weather has aggravated the problems, including surface water getting into the sewage system and causing flooding, and some parts of the system have not had adequate capacity.

The Parish Council made this a major project in 2014, and managed to get all the various agencies involved to a meeting at Ashford Borough Council in September 2014. Since then a great deal of diagnostic work has been done leading to repair work and system upgrades.

The work continues, and outlined below is the current progress by the relevant agencies:

- ABC – Ashford Borough Council** – Report Coordinator
- SW - Southern Water** – Sewerage & foul water drains
- EA – Environment Agency** – Rivers and streams (e.g. Bethersden Stream)
- KCC – Kent County Council** – Road maintenance and drains

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Baileys Field Garage block - As previously confirmed by ABC Housing Services - An all-new drainage system was installed to take surface water from the concrete apron down to the **SW** surface water system alongside the A28. This included installing kerbs, road gullies, rodding eyes and drainage as well as renewing outfall pipe down to A28 which does not belong to HRA. No further actions.

Millfields I have visited the site on behalf of Building Control and found that elements of the surface water scheme are inadequate and I have advised Building Control accordingly. The developer has now responded and stated that the issues raised have been resolved; we are awaiting further information from them to clarify some points. Once received, I will support Building Control and undertake a follow up visit to review this. Once I have I will report back with an update (estimated mid-December).

George Field

The developer has resubmitted an application to resolve the drainage problems. I attended a meeting a couple of weeks ago with our Building and Development Control Service where the developers re-submitted design was reviewed and discussed, with further suggestions made by

Building Control for improvements. The developer appears keen to work with Building Control to get these outstanding issues resolved. The next step is awaiting and reviewing the design followed by remedial works by the developer. Should our concerns not be alleviated then my Building Control colleagues will continue with any required action as appropriate.

SOUTHERN WATER

Apart from the substantial amount of work which has already been carried out over the last year, the Southern Water sewer rehabilitation team have a programme of work scheduled post April 2016 (2016 – 2017 fiscal year). This is on those sections of the main foul sewer network that have been surveyed to date. Regular inspection of key points in the system will continue into the future.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Note from their technical advisor - With regard to the Bethersden Stream we have undertaken quite a lot of work over the last few years as summarised below.

4/2/2013 Met with residents of Forgefield with Steve Parish from Ashford BC to discuss the flooding issues over the winter they had been experiencing from the Bethersden Stream and also from surface water and sewage flooding. Minutes circulated with all contact numbers included for all of the relevant authorities. At this time over the winter the Bethersden Stream had "come out of bank" along Forgefield, but not reached the threshold level of any properties.

14/02/2013 Met with Neil Speers from KCC Highways to discuss siltation in culverts beneath Church Lane/School Lane that carry the Bethersden Stream. A CCTV survey that we had commissioned had identified that the culverts were severely silted, which would have reduced the culvert capacity and potentially led to the backing up of Bethersden Stream, increasing flood risk upstream, i.e. in Forgefield. KCC Highways confirmed that they only undertook visual inspections of the upstream and downstream extents of the culvert and did not have funding to remove the silt from the culverts. From a flood risk perspective we were concerned regarding the potential to increase flood risk and with the information provided from residents with regard to the number of times the stream had come out of bank over the winter, decided to clear the culverts as emergency works.

17/06/2013 We undertook clearance of the Church Hill/School Lane culvert to remove the silt that had accumulated. The survey also highlighted the presence of a gas main which had been placed through

the culvert and KCC Highways agreed to look at getting this rerouted - this work has been completed.

Summer 2014 - Our Operations Field Team removed the fence across the channel between the school and property in Norton Lane; this had been causing a blockage across the channel and causing debris to back up.

Late summer 2015 This year our Operations Field Team have undertaken some pioneering (tree removal) works and some minor channel bed realignment immediately downstream of Church Hill/School Lane culvert.

While I had received a few emails from a Forgefield resident last winter reporting the sewage system backing up , we are not aware of any flooding to properties that has occurred this year as a result of flooding from the Bethersden Stream.

I would be keen to find out further information around what happened and when these events occurred for our records and so we can fully understand what the issues are in the village. **All flooding incidents and any blockages in the Bethersden Stream should be reported via our 24 hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60, so that the Flood Incident Duty Officer is aware.**

We have also commissioned a fluvial flood risk model for the Bethersden Stream and as part of this work I have asked for the impacts of a blockage in the Church Lane culvert to be investigated. This work is still waiting to be finalised.

The Environment Agency current view is that it is important for the capacity within the Church Hill/School Lane culvert to be maintained so that this is as efficient as possible in passing flows downstream. The Norton Lane culvert invert level appears to have been set too low, resulting in the culvert being submerged immediately up and downstream. **Both of these culverts are KCC Highway assets.**

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KCC recently confirmed the replacement of the damaged manhole cover outside of Totney. They state that this was dug out and that this appeared not to be connected; however it is not clear what should have been connected, or whether this was re-connected.

Potentially a new action for KCC Highways is to clear the Church Hill / School Lane culvert and for KCC to investigate the issues raised by the EA in relation to the Norton Lane Culvert. It may well be the case that KCC will clear the Church Hill / School Lane culvert and the EA will no doubt inform KCC Highways that they have identified this issue.