

Our Ref: SP/FC/304016

1st November 2021

Your Ref:

Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council
C/o Mr Michael Mortimer (Clerk)

Sent by Email to: bandf.pc@outlook.com

Dear Michael,

Re: Advice re flooding issues at Fersfield

Further to our previous correspondence and meeting regarding the flooding that occurred at Bates Lane and The Street, Fersfield, predominantly causing incidences of internal flooding at properties known as The Old Chapel and the Bungalow, the Street, Fersfield.

The River Waveney forms the county boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk and flows from its source at Redgrave to the sea at Great Yarmouth. It is a classic lowland river, slow flowing and meandering until it becomes tidal as part of the Southern Broads. Fersfield and Bressingham is located within the Waveney (u/s Frenze Beck) Water Body of the River Waveney Operational Catchment. From our meeting it is my understanding that tributaries located in the vicinity include the Hundred River which flows to the North and West of The Old Chapel and a small length of ditch along the Street between The Old Chapel and the Bungalow and part of Bates Lane before heading west to Lopham Grove and back to the Hundred River.

The flooding events described at the meeting confirmed that following heavy rainfall, a large quantity of surface flood water, with a strong flow, surged from the land north of Walnut Tree Cottage between Old Common Farm and Common Farm, Fersfield. The water continued to flow at speed southwards down Bates Lane towards Pond Farm and Church Farm and south down The Street past the properties known as Shangri-La, Willow Bank, Holly Cottage and The Bungalow. Flood water was channelled by both highways and accumulated at the junction of The Street and Bates Lane causing waist high water levels and a strong flow towards The Old Chapel into the ditch system and Hundred River. Flood water entered the Old Chapel and caused internal flooding to a number of ground floor rooms of the property.

It appears from our site visit that the properties impacted are situated at a lower level to the highways to the north and south, creating a natural low for surface water flooding to channel and accumulate when the local drainage system is at full capacity and unable to cope with heavy rainfall. For such a flood event to occur it is likely that the capacity of surface water drainage including land drains, highway drainage and private property drainage were exceeded due to the significant levels of rainfall that fell during the event and these surface water drainage systems require further investigation to ensure that future events are limited or avoided.

It would be of benefit to understand what correspondence has occurred to date with surrounding property and landowners regarding their assets contribution to the local drainage network and if there has been a parish wide review of their responses to the flooding. Furthermore, the properties that have been affected by the flooding should determine if it is appropriate for them to also protect their buildings and properties through flood protection measures where possible.

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It would also be of benefit of the Parish Council to confirm that the floods were reported to Norfolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority including written statements from the affected properties. Furthermore, to ensure that future flood events are not exacerbated by poorly maintained surface water drainage systems, I would advise that the Parish Council writes to all residents and local landowners seeking to remind riparian owners of their responsibilities to undertake appropriate levels of maintenance to drainage features within their ownership and within the catchment, to sustain the efficiency of the drainage system. This will ensure that principal drains, watercourses, ditches and culverts are maintained as a measure to protect local properties from further flooding and to ensure the capacity of the local drainage network is able to better cope with significant levels of rainfall. This would include landowners throughout the Parish, including those to the north of Walnut Tree Cottage, east and west of Bates Land and east and west of The Street, to ensure that the ditch system can flow to the River Hundred and into the Waveney. I would also advise that the Parish Council look to work with property owners and NCC Highways to assess the road structure to identify if it could be amended to route flood water away from the affected properties to alternative points of discharge, where possible.

I would advise that the Parish Council should look to work with Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk District Council, Environment Agency and DEFRA to determine and identify flood mitigation strategies and identify any grants towards flood mitigation for property owners in the locality. This would include assessing the potential to install property level protection measures, reduce run-off and increase the attenuation of flood water to reduce the impacts of flooding. Property owners could also carry out their own measures where funding is not forthcoming. Furthermore, the Environment Agency does have guidance on their website for any communities looking to prepare a Flood Plan for the community and this suggests working with Norfolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority to develop a local flood risk management strategy for local sources of flooding.

I have enclosed a plan below showing the Surface Water Flood Risk Map for the area and this states that the area is at High Risk of Surface Water Flooding. High risk means that each year this area has a chance of flooding of greater than 3.3%. Flooding from surface water is difficult to predict as rainfall location and volume are difficult to forecast.

If you have any queries or require any further assistance with contacting any of the above authorities or organisation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Parke', written in a cursive style.

Scott Parke, BSc (Hons) FAAV

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