



**Minutes of a meeting of Thatcham Flood Forum Steering Group  
held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015, at 7pm  
in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road**

Present:           Iain Dunn (Chairman)  
                      Brian Barnes (Local Resident)  
                      James Clark (Local Resident)  
                      Peter Lavarack (Local Resident)  
                      Leo Pieri (Local Resident)  
                      Cllr. Linda Verner (Cold Ash Parish Council)  
                      Brian Woodham (SWMP Funding Group Chairman)

In attendance:  Ashley Book and Ian Binding (Thames Water)  
                      Bob Hewitt (SMA)  
                      Mel Alexander (Thatcham Town Council Officer)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roger Croft (Thatcham Town Council), Nick Townsend (Local Resident) and Stuart Clark (West Berkshire Council Officer).

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

**3. Matters arising from previous meeting**

The following matters from the previous meeting were noted:

Minute number 5.1.2 - the revised plan for the Dunstan Park scheme did not require submission to the EA for project approval.

Minute number 5.2 – Iain had spoken to Gardner Leader seeking advice on the liability of Steering Group Members with regard to funds held, they had advised that the Flood Forum would be “safer” as a charity. It was agreed that further clarification was required as to Member’s current liability.

**4. Rainsford Farm Syphon**

The Chairman welcomed Ashley and Ian from Thames Water to the meeting and thanked them for attending to discuss the Flood Forum’s concerns over maintenance of the syphon at Rainsford Farm. A survey of the syphon, commissioned by Thames Water, was carried out in May 2013. The report, along with photos from the CCTV footage and a location map produced by Bob Hewitt, were circulated. Ashley and Ian confirmed that structural surveys, along with cleansing and maintenance, were carried out every three years. As far as Thames Water were concerned no work was required on this syphon, however, Ashley and Ian advised that the section running under the railway was the responsibility of a different department within Thames Water and they would not be able to answer questions on that section, but offered to liaise with colleagues on any queries regarding that area. It was noted that the Syphon would be likely to flood with an increase in the capacity of water sent into it. Although not a statutory consultee, Thames Water would submit comments if requested to do so on future planning proposals. A status update, to include the section under the railway, could be requested via Ashley.

The Chairman thanked Ashley and Ian for attending and for their contribution and they, along Bob Hewitt, left the meeting.

James recommended carrying out a visual inspection of the ditch downstream of the syphon, advising West Berkshire Council of any maintenance requirements. Also, to identify any other drainage assets along the canal and assess their condition and status.

**5. Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham (SWMP)**

**5.1 Updates on the SWMP**

**5.1.1 Tull Way Flood Alleviation Scheme**

A decision on the planning application was expected to be made on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Discussions were ongoing between West Berkshire Council and the preferred contractor regarding cost. Work was not expected to commence before spring 2016, due to ground conditions.

**5.1.2 Dunston Park**

Negotiations with the land owner were still ongoing but agreement was expected soon. Detailed designs would then get underway.

**5.1.3 South East Thatcham**

Richard Benyon MP had recently raised in parliament a request for completion of flood alleviation works in Thatcham. A decision was expected on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 from the Flood and Regional Coastal Committee regarding inclusion in the funding program for design and construction.

**5.2 Fundraising**

At the time of the meeting in excess of £121,000 had been raised from grants and local contributions towards completion of Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan. It was agreed to follow up letters recently distributed to businesses with a telephone call.

£159 had been raised running a silent auction at Thatcham Family Fun Day on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June. It was agreed to write to all local businesses that had donated items for the auction thanking them for their support and to send an acknowledgement item to the Newbury Weekly News.

**5.3 Kennet School students**

Roger Croft had made contact with Kennet School to enquire whether students might be interested in engaging with the Flood Forum regarding the Surface Water Management Plan and the school had confirmed its interest in this proposal. It was agreed that a separate meeting was required to discuss the format of the school's involvement along with wider community engagement. James suggested involving other partners, such as Thames Water.

**6. Charitable Status**

It was agreed to proceed with registration as a CIO Charity, unless information was forthcoming indicating that the level funds raised to date were sufficient. It was agreed to contact A-Plan insurance for advice on fidelity insurance.

**7. Any other business**

It was suggested that local companies offering voluntary team building work in the local community might be interested in carrying out some ditch maintenance. It was agreed to pass this suggestion to Stuart Clark, West Berkshire Council.

**8. Date of next meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015, commencing at 7pm in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.07pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_