

Minutes of a public meeting held at the Cross Keys, Thursday 4th October 2012 at 7.30pm

The meeting had been arranged by some residents of the village following the extensive flooding of Tuesday 25th September. Mr. John Weedon, Chairman of the local Parish Council, had been invited in order to give details of past and present action taken by the PC. Approximately 70 people were in attendance.

Howard Fricker opened the meeting at 7.30pm. He explained that he has lived in the village for 22 years and during the last 10 of those has suffered flooding of his property on 5 occasions and that for him, enough is enough. He suggested that this be a one-off meeting for residents, affected or not, to come up with ideas, maybe even an action plan, to better manage the problem in future. He cited a recent edition of "Watchdog" on BBC tv that underlined the fact that becks should be wider, deeper and be free of obstacles if they are not to cause flooding problems.

HF then introduced Denise Morley, a newcomer to the village who had not been affected, to give her observations. Denise explained that she and her husband had come to the village following retirement from the police and hoped to spend a considerable time here, having invested heavily in their property, only to discover that flooding of the village is a not uncommon event, albeit not always as serious as that experienced last week. This has led to concerns about insurance cover, resale value of property and response by the authorities.

JW was introduced and he first congratulated villagers on the excellent community spirit shown on the day. He had brought various communications on this subject to show what the PC had been doing on this issue and what (if any) response was forthcoming. The last serious flooding took place in 2008, following which a flood alleviation scheme was raised. However, this could not be actioned until a professional feasibility study was carried out, the cost of which, at a minimum of £7,500, proved prohibitive. Grants were applied for but not received, so we will need to go back and start again, although we do already have an engineer's report. The top surface of Mill Lane has disappeared so a meeting with the Highways Authority has been arranged. JW agreed to pick up the threads again and keep villagers informed through meeting minutes and newsletter. He suggested that 2 people are required to be co-opted to work on the project to keep it as a priority and to relieve, who some of the burden on the present PC. Jane Travell, who was badly affected and Dawn Southern, who was not, duly volunteered to take up the task.

HF then asked if any of the other residents wished to comment. There follows some items raised:

- Lack of sandbags – the Council vehicle carrying same did not appear and the Fire Service was too busy. As to having a stock in the village, the District Council had been approached but no action has been taken. The owners of Old Brook House and Manor Farm offered to hold some on their properties.
- Police – people were angry that the main road through the village was not closed, leading to further damage caused by vehicles being driven through the water too fast. JW did call the police but they explained they had run out of Road Closed signs
- Army – why weren't they involved? Paul Hodgson agreed to investigate
- Becks – regular maintenance work is essential. Years ago, a villager was paid to do same, so is there any support to pay for it now from village funds (Council not interested)? No need as working parties will be set up on a voluntary basis to operate twice a year.
- Council responsibility – what is it? Legally, if the beck runs through your property it is your responsibility to keep it clear. If the beck is outside your property, you are responsible for half of the maintenance. This, in the opinion of the meeting, is as good as saying