

**Cirencester Flood Forum  
Cotswold District Council Chamber, Trinity Road, Cirencester  
19 May 2023, 1400-1600 hrs**

**Attendees:**

James Spicer, Environment Agency  
Evie Kingsmill, Environment Agency  
Joe Cuthbertson, Environment Agency  
Jake Morley, Thames Water  
Karen Nelson, Thames Water  
James Blockley, Local Flooding lead at Gloucestershire County Council  
Laurence King, CDC  
Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC  
Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC  
Cllr David Fowles, CDC  
Mark Oliver, Land & Property Manager, Cirencester Town Council  
Cllr Andy Jopp, Cirencester Town Council  
Cllr Nick Bridges, Cirencester Town Council  
Professor Peter Hammond, WASP  
Ashley Smith, WASP

**1. Welcome from Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP**

GCB:

Good afternoon, everyone, it is two o'clock. An extremely warm welcome to all of you. This of course is the second time around. We've had our meeting this morning in Moreton. As I walked in somebody said, "Well you don't look too grumpy". So I said, "Well it was all right." We covered a lot of very constructive ground this morning, and I'm sure we will do the same this afternoon.

So can I firstly, on your behalf, we usually have a cabinet member from the District Council, but they haven't yet formed their cabinet, so in their absence, Laurence, can I thank you and any District Councillor who's present, I can see Nigel there, other District Councillors are present, I can see our councillor from South Cerney and others, new councillors indeed. Do you want to, I'll give you the opportunity since you're new to introduce yourselves. Do you want to do that?

Cllr Clare Muir, CDC:

Yes, so, I'm Clare Muir. I'm the new councillor for Lechlade, Kempsford & Fairford South.

GCB:

Congratulations, well done. And?

Cllr Michael Vann, CDC

Michael Vann, new councillor for Fairford North.

GCB:

Right. Well done. Well, since we did it this morning, it's only fair to do it this afternoon. Let's let all councillors introduce themselves.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC

Juliet Layton, representing South Cerney village.

GCB:

Well done you for being re-elected. And we've got Nigel? Anybody else other than Nigel?

Cllr Nigel Robbins, CDC:

Nigel Robbins, Cirencester Town

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC

Mike Evemy, Siddington & Cerney Rural, deputy leader of Council.

GCB:

Right. Well done. Any other councillors? No. Well can I thank all of you for allowing us to be here. It's a great venue and it's very helpful to be able to be here.

Now, we did have minutes but I'm assuming that we've moved on from the minutes. We've got written reports which I hope people will find a bit of an improvement on what we had before. But can we sort of take the minutes as read unless somebody's got a burning point that they don't like. Good. Let's move on to the future. We've got reports so shall we move I think straight to James Blockley. James, you're over there, well done, this is your second time around today, so thank you very much for all your help. Do you want to just introduce yourself for those who haven't met you before, and just, we've obviously read the reports, but if there's anything you want to highlight in the reports and ongoing work, we'd be particularly pleased to hear that.

James Blockley, GCC:

Thank you, yes. For anybody who hasn't met me, James Blockley, I'm part of the flood risk management team for Gloucestershire County Council. Our main function is to act as Lead Local Flood Authority. I said it this morning, I'll say it again, "Lead" is misleading. In fact we're not, we have no jurisdiction over other agencies.

I would prefer it to be called Coordinating Local Flood Authority, because the thing we can do is to bring everyone together and make the best of our collective efforts. Our role is to manage flooding from ordinary water courses, ground water, surface water. We also have a responsibility to act as statutory consultee to major developments. So any new development with more than ten dwellings, or more than one hectare, we provide advice to the local planning authority on whether that proposed development is at risk of flooding, and to assess whether or not it has the potential to cause flooding offsite. They're our two main functions. We do a whole load of other work as well but that's it in a nutshell.

In terms of updates, I think the big ticket item for us was, we were talking in this room not that long ago, about natural flood management as being a tool in the wider flood risk management box, working with natural processes, trying to emulate how nature deals with water and give it a helping hand. We were saying that these projects don't so much need capital funding. NFM interventions, many small interventions compared to one large one. They're capital light. You need people. And this was one of the big discussions round this table before, how do we get more people on the ground to try and get more properties protection through natural flood management? And I took the action away to try and come up with some money, which I did. Gloucestershire County Council is funding £60,000 per year, in perpetuity, to actually pay for the officer themselves. We've worked with the Environment Agency to submit a business case which is slightly off this patch, and that is going to be the same amount of money but in capital over 4 years. So it's £60K a year over 4 years. Our first round of recruitment was unsuccessful. We went back round and managed to recruit an excellent candidate. He comes to us from Natural England where he was working as the catchment sensitive farming advisor. And, with the project as we see it, it's not so much about having experience of natural flood management, it's more about being able to communicate, being able to build consensus between communities and landowners, to work with communities and develop their potential to deliver natural flood management. The other thing I would say about the project is, it is

there to add value to what is already under way. So there's excellent, excellent natural flood management work already under way in the county. We're not seeking to override some, or duplicate that. We're only here to help, identify where there's gaps, and seek to plug those gaps. So Pete Belk has been with us for a couple of weeks. And he's going to be, I've said to him, for the first three months minimum I want your job to be looking at what's what, meeting the right people, learning from other projects, starting to identify where the gaps are. So we expect big things from that project, and I'm particularly proud that, again, like most of what we do, it was a partnership effort, it wasn't just Gloucestershire County Council and EA. We had buy-in from Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, Wildlife Trusts, Severn Rivers Trust, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the list goes on. The job description was written in partnership because it's a partnership project for partnership benefit. So that was the big ticket item. Other things that I could mention but I won't go into too much detail because you will have that for yourself, is Daglingworth, a natural flood management project there, very small scale to start off with, but it could have significant benefit for the town and will continue to work up the catchment. Siddington, we became involved, it's one of the many areas we became involved in after the December 2020 flooding. We're just at the moment waiting for, we checked on this this morning to see if we had any progress, and we're still waiting for Atkins to give us a quote to put a culvert under the road to redirect water through, what we discovered from mapping were old channels that have been disconnected, so basically taking water out of the main river and spreading it out before releasing it back in more slowly. They're the two main projects that we had in this area. I won't go into any more detail at the moment Sir Geoffrey.

GCB: That's a really helpful introduction, thank you very much. That's what the County Council has been involved in. I just wonder, Michael, as deputy leader, whether you wanted to say anything on behalf of the District Council? Congratulations again on your election.

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC

Thank you. Andrew Docherty obviously as you know didn't stand for re-election. We now have Michael in his ward, so he will certainly be the expert from the perspective of the Council, but also we will be appointing a new cabinet portfolio holder for flooding at our meeting on Wednesday next week.

GCB:

Yes. Thank you for that. Yes, Nigel?

Cllr Nigel Robbins, CDC:

Could I ask James one question? (Of course.) We learn from the Environment Agency's paper that they've got some funding to do a study of the Churn catchment area. Could you James please explain the support or linkages between your work and that particular project?

James Blockley, GCC:

Well it's really a case of the projects getting off the ground, both the Churn project and my project, but we work closely right across the board, it's not, you're main river, I'm ordinary watercourse. There's always blurring of the boundaries. So all I can say at the moment is that Pete will be working very closely with the Churn project. I'm not going to say anything about the Churn project because that's yours not mine. But, yes, rest assured we will be working closely together.

GCB:

Okay. So if there's no other comments officially from the District Council, do we have a representative from the Town Council? Is Andrew here? Yes, Andrew, right at the back, welcome. Do you want to say anything on behalf of the Town Council?

Cllr Andy Jopp, Cirencester Town Council:

Yeah, everything's gone well, really, we had high water levels during December, January. We've

worked with the EA and we've worked also with Thames Water very very successfully. James has been very helpful from the EA. And we've worked with the private sluice gate owners as well, which has worked really well this year, and that's kept most of the properties dry this year.

GCB:

And have you and the EA come up with this MOU on the sluice gates, or is that work ongoing?

Cllr Andy Jopp, Cirencester Town Council:

That's been delivered, the MOU. It's been delivered now. It's been really great.

GCB:

Brilliant. Well done. Fantastic.

So I think we next come to, have we got a Meysey Hampton stakeholder, a report I've got here?

Meysey Hampton representative:

Yes we have. There's three of us here.

GCB:

Ah, right, do you want to give a report on Meysey Hampton?

Meysey Hampton representative:

Yes, it's a local issue. We've been talking to Thames Water for over a year now and getting nowhere, so we wanted to raise it here. Basically, I don't suppose everybody's read the report, but basically there's a sewage pipe between Meysey Hampton and Poulton and it's about 800 yards long. Last June it became blocked and ever since then there's been 24/7 tankering from the pipe, very loud, all day and all night. And there's no evidence whatsoever of Thames Water making any progress in fixing it. The current suggestion that they will build a second tankering site will just annoy another set of residents. It's suggested there's no long-term solution to actually fix the problem itself. It has been suggested that the tankering is helpful for reducing the chance of discharges at Ampney St Peter. So we're really looking for some confidence that Thames Water are actually on the case and trying to fix it. Really that's why we're here. Is anybody from Thames Water here?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Yes, I'm Karen Nelson

GCB:

Have you read the report?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

I have read the report.

GCB:

Sorry, do you want to just introduce yourself so everybody knows who you are?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

I'm Karen Nelson, I'm the regional network manager for Thames Valley. So as of last August, July/August time, we have had a problem with this. So the pipe is 2000 metres long, it pumps from Meysey Hampton to Poulton, and it's a pressurised pipe. And so the only way to transfer between these two stations, or those two points, is by using a pump station. We were made aware of the issue and a team went out. There are always, well there are usually, I should say, two reasons why that can be. One, it can be a burst, when we can usually see the water, and a discharge, and we can jump on it, manage the flows and go through a repair, when it's showing where it is. The other cause can be through a blockage, which is not seen. Our pipes are buried, it's a deep pipe, it goes 2000

metres, there are limited access points. It doesn't have manholes like a gravity pipe, in those ones you don't have the pressure inside, to be able to do that because of the flows. We have got some access points but they are in very challenging locations. The team have undertaken endless hours on site. I've never known so much equipment, so many different options, we have tried literally everything. I've been in the team for 12 years and I've never come across a rising main that appears to be blocked and we can't clear it. We have had times where we've managed to get some flow back, and then within 30 minutes it stops again. There is something fundamentally wrong with this pipe. I don't think there's any integrity issues with the pipe itself. We've replaced parts of our pump station, we've replaced valves on the pump station, we have at our access points, we've replaced air valves, we've done everything. We've done it from the bottom end, we've done it from the top end. The profile of the rising main is a very gradual increase, and then it drops, and then there's a great big hike up to Poulton. And we don't know where the issue is along there. Then we went into this wet winter. We had relentless rain in November and December. The ground conditions where we need to get access to identify or finish our investigations, became impossible. We would have caused so much breakup on the fields, the access, which is private land as well. So we escalated to another team at Thames Water who normally go out relaying pipes. There is no need that we've established at this stage to relay that pipe. We are really sorry for the disruption. We know tankering is really, really disruptive. We do it to safeguard customers and safeguard the environment. There is no other way to discharge. We've had a lot of conversations with land and neighbours around the alternative, which, it won't remove the whole process of that flow management, but we are trying our best to get it away from the properties to give some respite. That requires conversations and really positively yesterday, I think we are finally moving forward with land agents and with land owners, to be able to put in a tank which will act as our pump station. We will connect up and pump from there to take the flow away, as we then, our plan, there is a plan to take it section by section to identify which specific section the problem is. But we haven't been able to, we haven't managed during the winter, we lost a lot of months because of the conditions.

GCB:

Well to complete the picture, I was summoned by a group of residents in Meysey Hampton last week. As a result of that fact finding visit, I was not all happy with the situation. Now I know it's a difficult problem. But some of those residents have suffered 24/7 for nine months lorry tanker movements all through the night, keeping them awake at night. I just don't think it's good enough. So I wrote a fairly strong letter to your CEO, and I'm expecting a fairly comprehensive reply. But I would have thought with all, I mean you're one of the biggest water companies in the country, with all your resources, there must be ways, with electronic equipment or whatever, to try and find out what is wrong with that pipe. But I would say to you, nine months is too long, you're not proposing a fix for another three months, that's a year in total, when people are being kept up at night, 24/7, it's not good enough I'm afraid.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

I accept it's not good enough. We have cameraed the pipe. We just genuinely cannot find the blockage, I don't want them to be having the tankers out. I want the problem resolved and I want to use money wisely, because I've got loads of other things I could be doing. We genuinely don't want to be out there. We want to fix it and we will be pushing for it and I'll make sure.

GCB:

I mean as a practical man, surely there must be possibilities of cutting more manholes into the pipe as you go along, if necessary put a temporary bit of pipe round, where they've cut the pipe out, and put a manhole in and find out whether it's blocked between A and B or C and D or E and F, until you find the blockage.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

But that would involve large excavations in multiple places, to dig down onto the pipe, which is

difficult sometimes to find because there is no indicators of where the pipe is, we have to find the pipe. We have to dig down and we need to cut windows in.

GCB

Okay. Well, I didn't realise I was going to run into that storm quite so early in the meeting. But I would say to you, look this is a matter of priority, because those residents, I wouldn't want to be living in those houses I have to say.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

This is a first for this kind of situation, and I do accept

GCB:

Well I've never come across anything like it before in 30 years as a Member of Parliament. But as I say, please, please make it an absolute priority.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Absolutely.

GCB:

Sorry, yes, Councillor. Sorry, Michael. No, ladies first. (Absolutely.)

Carol Musgrove, Meysey Hampton resident:

We've known about this problem of the underground pipe being squashed, blocked, whatever, since September. The pumping station has been pristine since June or July. They've replaced every part; so I was told by your colleagues. But what's happened is, since September, you've known about the blockage in the pipe, somewhere on the land adjacent to us. And we're now, is it another six months down the line, and this pipe is no nearer to us and no more accessible, than it was you know way back.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

So there was definitely activity post September, going into November and December, there's been meetings, there's been a lot of people going out and we've been, some of our focus has been at the far end up at Poulton, and then down to a gateway which, I can envisage it on a plan but can't tell you which property it goes past. It goes past one property before it drops out into Poulton.

Carol Musgrove:

That's actually been spoken about quite recently because they had to have permission from the landowners, and to my knowledge one of the landowners still hasn't signed.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

That's the, in terms of access, as I say there was a meeting yesterday and we are finally moving. We see it as a priority and we do need to be pushing it forward. We can't do anything until we get that permission.

Carol Musgrove:

This is definitely the second summer. I'm not holding my breath.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water

We'll try our best. We've got to make use of what, the fields have been dry for at least the last week anyway.

GCB:

We've met. Can you, for the sake of the meeting, my minute-taker, just say who are please.

Carol Musgrove:  
Carol Musgrove, resident of Meysey Hampton.

GCB:  
Yes of course, we've met. I met Mrs Musgrove and other residents there. The other problem we're now going to run into is you're now wanting to put a temporary pipe down into the bottom on the A417. That side is pretty wet. And it's also going to inconvenience a whole lot of other people, the mobile homeowners. You'll be in there and out there pumping. So I'm not sure that you've necessarily come up with a better solution. You've just shifted the problem from one place to another. And instead of having a hard standing like you've got at the moment; you've got a soft standing down the bottom there. So, I think you've got a real problem there.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:  
It's certainly a big problem and we are doing everything we can to manage everyone's expectations.

GCB:  
Okay. All right. Well we've heard loud enough, and I'm sorry to get a bit cross about it, but it does seem to me a year to solve this problem is rather a long time.  
Anyway, let's move on. Sorry.

Cllr Mike Evely:  
If I can just ask one last

GCB:  
Yes of course Mike.

Cllr Mike Evely:  
There's a whole load of detailed questions in the report. I'm not suggesting we go through them here, but could I ask for a response separately?

GCB:  
Yes. What I might do is, I've only seen those questions today. What I might do is actually add an addendum to my letter to your chairman, and no doubt she'll come back to you.  
Jake, yes?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:  
Those questions have been seen and they have been answered.

GCB:  
So any answers that we get, we'll certainly make sure that you get them as the local councillor, but I will also put them in the minutes. So thank you everybody for that. We could now go, I think, to Joe from the Environment Agency, please. Good afternoon, welcome, thank you for coming. We've obviously had your report. Is there anything you want to add at this stage before anybody asks questions?

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:  
Good afternoon, Sir Geoffrey, and hi, everybody. Only a couple of things to add really. So I just wanted to highlight I'm here with my colleagues Evie Kingsmill and James Spicer. My name's Joe Cuthbertson. I'm the local flood risk manager in the Environment Agency's Thames area which covers this patch. In terms of what we do, there are a lot of similarities with what James described for Gloucestershire County Council but, from a flood risk point of view, the Environment Agency leads on main rivers, which are some of the, most of the larger rivers in the area, and the risk from the sea,

which of course isn't a problem here. In terms of the report that we've submitted, hopefully it proceeds as read, but there are a couple of things that I just wanted to highlight if that's okay. (Of course. So first, we've heard references to this winter already. It has been a wetter than average winter. We had the wettest March in England for over 40 years. Actually in this part of the world it was, for the Environment Agency's patch of Thames Valley, it was the wettest since our records began in 1891. So it's been exceptionally wet, the winter, and we've had periods of high flow in lots of the rivers, particularly around this area. In January we issued flood warnings. We sent officers out to speak to the affected communities and verify the river levels locally, and overall I think there's been a successful incident response. I'd like to say thank you to Cirencester Town Council in particular for the way the Memorandum of Understanding was operated. I was really pleased that we were able to review that, and thank you for your comments about James earlier, in fact James did a timely review of that MOU in the autumn prior to the winter's high flows. So I'd sort of flag that as a successful point. A couple of other things to mention which we did touch on as much as anybody would like. It's the positive news about the installation of CCTV at the Thomas Street trash screen which I think has been welcomed locally. That's enabled us to monitor that remotely and provide a more efficient response to incidents, and also just to maintain it more effectively. And we've also heard mention of the funding allocation for the natural flood management. It's worth just saying that's at a really early stage, so it's great news that the funding is there, thank you Evie for enabling that to happen. We'll work in partnership, as James has already said, to make best use of that funding, but we're in early days in terms of scoping exactly how it's going to be used and how it will relate to the other projects, and we'll use it in the most effective way. I think there's quite a bit of detail in the report, which I won't go into, so hopefully everyone's got a copy of that, so we'll be happy to take any comments or questions.

GCB:

Thank you, Joe, that's very helpful. Did everybody get hold of the reports? Did they receive all the reports? Juliet's nodding her head, Nigel's nodding a head, so hopefully that means that most people have. If you haven't, we can supply hard copies, not now I don't think but we will be able to supply copies. Great. Well I was going to extend a warm welcome to Thames Water, and I still do that, so thank you very very much for coming and I don't know whether, which of the two of you want to, Jake's going to comment? Thank you very much indeed Jake, and both of you for coming.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

My name's Jake Morley. I'm the local government engagement manager, so I'm the link for political or council stakeholders that want to know more about Thames Water. So we've brought a report, circulated prior to the meeting on a few topics that we hope will help solve or contribute to solving flooding issues. One of the things we do from an operational point of view is lining. So I've got some statistics here. It says as a total for the area which is south Cotswolds area which is in Cirencester we have done 787m of sewer lining, 16 patch sewer repairs, and 1 manhole cover replacement. In Fairford 59m of sewer lining, 2 patch sewer repairs. South Cerney is 753m of sewer lining, 2 patch sewer repairs, 2 manhole cover sealing. At Ampney St Peter that's 118m of sewer lining, 2 manhole cover sealings. And the reason we do this is because those areas are identified by Thames Water as having particularly high groundwater, and groundwater can have a significant impact, not only on flood water but also on sewage treatment works but the timing for the discharges, but it's certainly a contributing factor. So the vital work that Karen's team does and also asset management in identifying weak points in the network to line, it goes a long way. It's not a programme that you can finish off, it's an ongoing process, so where it's the most vulnerable point, where it's most affected by groundwater, what weather we've got coming in the next couple of months, over the winter, what can we do proactively? And so from that we produce a report every single year for each of these impacted areas. We currently have 52 of them. Four that are most notable in this area are the Cirencester area, the Ampneys, and the Fairford area as well. So those are the three significant areas that are affected, along with Moreton in Marsh mentioned earlier. So, yes, this list goes a long way because groundwater or inundation from surface water, whether it be roadside gullies or drains,



when it's not maintained well, will infiltrate into the foul network, and obviously produce more flooding, and this can lead to flooding into people's homes. In reality we shouldn't be treating clean water that comes out of the sky. We have been liaising with other agencies to attend where possible and work with them in tandem on a number of occasions, and we are open to questions at the end of the session.

GCB:

Thank you, Jake, that's very helpful. The last person, Laurence King, who's sitting on my extreme right. Laurence, there was a really big tribute paid to you at the Moreton meeting for all the work that you do. I know you can't speak, you've got a bug, so I'm not going to ask you to say anything unless it's absolutely necessary, (I do have a voice, but not a lot), but you did have a huge tribute paid to you at Moreton, and it was felt that if the District Council were able to help you with a little bit more staff, that would be a good thing too. So, well done you. I mean you really do do an awful lot for the district. Great credit to you.

Laurence King, CDC:

Thank you. Can I just mention?

GCB:

You don't have to, with your voice, if you don't want to.

Laurence King, CDC:

I just wanted to raise a point with Jake actually. Could you just go back to that list of sealed manholes in Cirencester? (Yeah, yeah.) I'm sure you said "one"?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

There are more to be done.

Laurence King, CDC:

There you go. That was what I wanted to hear. (There are more to be done.) Is there a timeline for that?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

During the summer months, when we've got access.

Laurence King, CDC:

This is May. Do you know a number?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

I don't have a number off the top of my head, but I do know that following the connectivity of, we always seem to be impacted, we always get impacted on Christmas Eve. We were really pleased to hear about the Memorandum of Understanding and to be able to understand when these things are happening. I think there is a key one, that does have an impact to us at Thames, because I think that there is a risk that river banks are breached. It's sacrificial land, so it's not necessarily impacting customers' properties, but it does impact on land where we've got manholes. I think they're the ones that we still need to seal, so we need to do that. And that will be addressed by me and my team. And I also know that there are some manholes that we need to expose around the Stratton area. But we're still doing our investigations, and no matter how many manholes we do here we'll still be going at it and doing the right thing for everybody to try and...

GCB:

I suppose the problem is, Karen, the more you seal, the more you renew a particular manhole, it then puts a weakness further down the system and the next one wants doing.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Yes. We don't want to seal everything. The manholes breathe for a reason. That system needs to breathe, otherwise we're going to end up with just complaints about odours, and we'd have H<sub>2</sub>S, hydrogen sulphide, that will attack our pipes and degrade them and it collapses. So we seal the ones we categorically know we need to, and then we let the rest of the system breathe. But it's key to do the ones where we know these manholes will be sat under water for a period of time, which is what we're experiencing each winter. And that's why I think, I know in the past when I've come, there's been, why were you not ready? We do prepare. We prepare from September, making sure we've got all the teams ready, our equipment and everything. We deploy the resources. But it hits us so fast down here, and that's where the sudden link of, this can't be just weather, this is, it's a manual action that's happening somewhere that then overwhelms us. So now we are closer to that and we have some understanding when people may be operating stuff.

GCB:

Well done, thank you. Nigel.

Cllr Nigel Robbins, CDC:

Yes. Could I ask Jake, please, what's happened to a couple of the proposals from the previous meeting of this group, or perhaps even the previous one before that? Certain properties in Cirencester have quite large roofs, and it was found that their rainwater was going directly into the sewage pipes. I think one bit of remedial work was carried out. But the other two properties, like the Lewis Lane Centre, I'm not aware that anything's happened there. And the second thing was about tubs. There was a plan to install lots of tubs around, because, in a small way, but incrementally they can absorb water. Can you say a bit about those initiatives please?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

Not off the top of my head. I don't have the information in front of me about those missed connections and what they've done in the last year. It may be that those misconnections have been solved, but I will certainly take away those questions, especially about the water butts. But it's certainly something we encourage, and we have got some of the councils to encourage them to get as many out as possible.

GCB:

Yes of course.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

One of the challenges of removing water that we don't want in our network is around what other facilities to divert that water to. We don't have any authority to put that into another asset that belongs to somebody else, and their asset won't have been built necessarily to cater for that flow. And we've got a discussion, debate, whatever way you look at it, in other areas for exactly this reason. We've come across someone who pumps out their basement to protect their property, and they pump straight into our network because it is just, we're so open and exposed to our own manholes and also private manholes protecting their own properties. It overwhelms us. It costs us loads of money for our tankers and our investigations. We want to be able to say, you can't do that, but we're having to check all the legal sides of things around, what are our powers to get that out? I think we've said before, it's natural instinct to want to protect your properties, but we can't be putting it back in a network where we're spending lots of funding to get water out. We need to work collectively again around how do we, where do we put this water.

GDB:

So Laurence, you want to say something.

Laurence King, CDC:

Most of it's been picked up by Karen. But just to clarify a point Jake that mentioned. Misconnections, which are a huge problem, because nobody really knows how many there are. And it's the clarification between missed connections and a conscious combined system, and getting the surface water. There was an initiative by Thames Water to disconnect surface water from the combined systems. That initiative seems to, locally in Cirencester, seems to have fallen a bit flat. So it would be good to know whether Thames is still interested in progressing that initiative. It would be good to get some feedback on that please.

GCB:

Yes, that's very helpful.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

It's one of the other areas that we're looking at. We have responsibility for our pipes, but there's a lot of private network as well, and it's how can we explore how we can deliver something to stop that getting into our system. There can be a lot of bits out there, so it's working through the legalities of, could we go and do some repairs on some private? We don't particularly want to take over that network, but it's in the best endeavours of everybody that that's fixed. So we're at the very early stages of that, just exploring.

GCB:

Karen, we were given the figures this morning for the amount of pipes totally likely to need lining in Moreton and the length that had been lined. Do similar figures exist for Cirencester?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

It's always hard to determine how many, how much you need to do, and in another area I was asked, if money were no object what would you do? If money were no object we could go and seal everything, but that water would find a way. So we do need to work collectively. And realistically we don't need to do everything. We need to get past that threshold that makes it have no detriment that we can currently see or feel, but then once you pass that threshold you do still need to go on because things will continue to deteriorate. So now we're on this road I'm really hopeful that we can continue. We're three-and-a-half years into a new structure in the team, with a new way and approach in comparison with where we were in 2012. So I'm pleased with what we're seeing, we just need to do more of that.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

To answer your specific question about, I can give you the numbers for Cirencester, so that is in the GSM which exists on our website, which I'm happy to share with anyone who wants to see that. They are quite long. But the length that's categorised as high risk is 35.94 km which represents 37.3% of the network.

GCB:

Great. That is on your website? That's very helpful.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

That will be delivered as a project. And in the meantime, the team will be working towards that.

[Sound of thunder]

GCB:

Very helpful.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Can I just make a comment - it always rains when I come here!

GCB:

They know we're having a flooding meeting. They want to punish us. Right. Hands up all over the place. Michael.

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

Thank you, Sir Geoffrey. Could I ask about Cherry Tree Drive and South Mead in Siddington. South Mead is just over the boundary into Cirencester. Reading the report, I'm wondering whether they're covered by what's written in para 3. It talks about Siddington Road, and Cherry Tree Drive comes off Siddington Road. I've just found the pictures on my phone from 14<sup>th</sup> January when effluent was coming out of the manhole covers in Cherry Tree Drive. And that's a recurrence of what happened in, I'm looking over at Laurence, in the 2020 incident. And you know, the road was obviously, you guys had to go and clear it all up afterwards because there was you know obviously sewage effluent. And in the previous incident it actually went into gardens. I wasn't made aware that that happened this time, but it was clearly an unpleasant incident. So my question is, does that relate, what you've written in para 3, does that cover Cherry Tree Drive? Or is that, or can you tell me what's happening if it's not what's related to there? And if it is, can you explain what AMP 7 PR74 are?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

Yes, point 3 is about the Siddington Road cluster. Sorry, I didn't bring the specifics. When did that flooding happen?

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

This flooding was on 14<sup>th</sup> January it was coming out of the sewers. I'll show you on my phone. You can see the pictures.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So those things you mentioned, that was in relation to really high rainfall. (Yes.) I don't know whether that simply required a better look or CCTV to look into the network and find out if there are any blockages. Because sometimes even during high rainfall events it might not be a specific flood problem or flood risk.

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

Yeah. And this was the recurrence, because we had this one and the previous one we had flooding but being very aware of the further down in Siddington. But obviously the impact of this flooding was as well, that it blocked up the sewage discharge from the mobile home park there where there are 87 mobile homes, many of them lived in by very vulnerable residents. And I know you're aware of that because obviously we had the incident before where you had to actually move some of those people out because they couldn't use their toilets or their showers or anything. So I'm just keen to get an understanding, and you don't need to give it to me right now, about what is actually happening with regards to the Chery Tree Drive situation, and also if that's linked up to the South Mead one. I would very much welcome just a written note.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Yes, we're happy with that.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

And you want an explanation for AMP

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

Well yeah, what those terms meant.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So AMP stands for our Asset Management Period, so that's our funding cycle which is a 5 year period.

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

So that's the current period which is from when to when?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So it's currently 2020 to 2025. So AMP 8 will mean 2025 to 2030. (And PR24?) PR24 refers to our business plan, so it's currently at the sort of iterative stage that we send off to Ofwat to explain what capital projects we need, what funding we need for the next period the next AMP period.

Cllr Mike Evemy, CDC:

Thank you.

GCB:

Happypish, Michael, with that answer? (Yep, thank you.) Yeah? Great.

Cllr Nick Bridges, Cirencester Town Council:

Can I? (Yep, of course.) Lovely. I'm Nick Bridges, Cirencester Town Councillor. I'm a bit concerned about this use of AMP is it 7, and then the other one's the PR24 because most people when they read those sentences don't understand what it's actually meaning. What you're really saying is, well, we're going to put this on hold while we do further analysis, and the analysis won't be finished until 2025. Our analysis and what we do from it will be affected by what Ofwat expect of us in their package of funding and service requirements. So there isn't really a commitment there to do something about the problems in Siddington Road and on to City Bank Road. So I'm just concerned. It's like obfuscation that's going on here. What we really need is a commitment to do something. With the Siddington Road problem, we were expecting the 650 houses that were taken off up at the Cranham? Estate area, we were expecting that to solve this problem, or at least that's what I was cautiously told. Clearly, because we're still having problems, it hasn't happened. We're still looking for a solution. And we've been told you're going to do this analysis again. And I've been coming for ten years now, and every time I'm being told, we're going to do some further analysis. We need to do more than just analysis. We need to do more actions. So what would you hope to do next as the result of the analysis? I'll leave it at that.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

I think depending on where it sits within the team, in asset management or the operations team, something can be done within the short term, from our personal perspective. I wouldn't be able to commit to anything. Karen can sort of speak for her team. But in terms of what you're saying, in terms of obviously, so I understand it's frustrating because you hear a lot of what you're saying is analysis. We're very tightly regulated, or very tightly watched by Ofwat what we spend, that's customer built, you know, it's not funding from the government, it's customer built. So we have to make sure that we do the right work. If it turns out we do a bit of work and it hasn't solved the issue or we have to really nail down the right solution. So analysis is ongoing and it will be until the end of the AMP period. It is over to the operational, over to operational action, we can speak to the operations specialists who are our people on the ground and know the area sort of intimately and see what they have in the short term to come up with.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

There's further intervention planned for City Bank. We're reliant on English Heritage or National Heritage and the archaeological people for us to be able to start that work so we'll be able to put some communication to get people on to alternative tanks during times we need to to maintain the service to them. It's not ideal but that's what we are having to do to keep a service to the customers.

We are still continuing our investigation. We will do lining and talking to one of the other teams who are very much in the asset planning team that look forward in the 5 year cycles etc, in terms of the spend, it's very difficult to challenge and to get money for infiltration, it's something that we're not regulated for, pollution and flooding. I see that activity but we've just got to get that case across, why we need that to help us deliver the stuff, and that we need plans and drainage strategies to help deliver.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

A large effort in this round has gone into making those cases, which is why asset management, as I explained to the meeting in Moreton, they couldn't attend this time round because they've got their heads down pretty much every single day looking at these ongoing studies of where the, of where we think the weaknesses are and how do we make the case to the business and therefore to Ofwat of how to fund and come up with long term solutions rather than just quick fixes. So that, that's why you say these investigations are ongoing, they'll go on every single year and we'll find out exactly where the flooding is and vulnerability in the network. We'll make that case to the business, and we'll hopefully get that long term solution for the flood issues.

GCB:

Can I just back up what Nick's just said. We've been holding these meetings for ten years. The problem in Moreton of the open sewage settlement area, and Cherry Tree Drive, and Hereward Road as it happens, these problems, these deep-seated problems have been going on for the last ten years. Now that's two Ofwat settlements. And I just wonder really, I mean you're spending billions on the tideway tunnel in London. We're on the furthest reaches of your area. I really do think we need a bit fairer treatment in terms of investment and infrastructure. And I think I'll be making that point to the chairman. You know, it's not good enough, it really isn't.

Ashley Smith, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution:

Can I chip in something you might find useful in that respect? (Yeah.) So I'm Ash Smith from Windrush Against Sewage Pollution. We've spent a lot of time speaking to Ofwat over the years at chief executive level. I'm not saying that you're misleading anybody here, Jake, but the reality is Ofwat do not control the fine detail of what Thames Water do. They control very broad expenditure, and since 2014 this is from two chief executives and not one, water companies have great freedom to do what they need to do to fix problems when they're not delivering the right service for a community. So there is no block by Ofwat to stop this. I appreciate the funding that reaches you is very difficult to achieve because there's great control of funding at the top of the water industry, which is why it's such an effective cash extractor from communities. But let's dispel that myth that this is somehow Ofwat's fault and that they keep doing 5-year incremental reviews of who's putting what into what pipe, because that's certainly not true.

[Applause]

GCB:

And my fear is, Ash, that it will get worse, because as the pressure comes quite rightly on storm discharges, which Ash and others have been campaigning so hard on, it's all in the public domain and quite right we should stop these storm discharges and particularly the discharges that are non-storm. But all the focus is on that. Are we going to find that there's not going to be focus on sorting this individual day to day problems out?

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Not from my team. My team are spread across so we are already devoted to storm discharges associated specifically directly from our network, and our storm discharges from pumping stations and treatment works, and during the last 12 months with our reorganisation those three departments have been brought much closer together. And we've always worked closely with pump

stations and other management, sewage treatment works we've worked together, but we are now under one umbrella. So if there's a problem it will come down to the right people to fix it, and it always seems to come back to myself and my team because we are the source of all evil wherever it is in the network. So it will be focused on. And all those alarms that are around there, we monitor, we've got somebody who monitors them day in, day out. The automated processes that go on in Thames, me and my team make sure we specifically follow those up. In certain areas they're very closely linked. Because obviously if water's coming in from infiltration, there's more volume, and those storm discharges are likely to discharge. So actually, that funding and that investment will resolve both issues. And now those are quite closely knit together.

GCB:

Right, where am I going next? Nick do you just want to follow up on that?

Cllr Nick Bridges, Cirencester Town Council:

One positive and one negative. The one positive is, thank you for lining more sewers this year than either of the previous two years. Each year you're increasing. So that's a big thumbs up. The negative is going back to this, you know we still have health workers walking through sewage to visit Southmead. We have kids and dogs playing in sewage on the recreational field. We have elderly people unable to flush their toilets and using water cans or buckets in the winter. You know, every time you say, well it will be at the end of an AMP period, that'll be in a year and a half's time. That's a hell of a long time.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Can I just say I don't work in AMPS. So the business works in AMPS and my team work every day of the week to try and get to the bottom of this, we just have to spend some time. So we'll fix some things and there will be an incremental improvement but you're not going to see the sudden, all of a sudden these things you just described which are all unacceptable, to suddenly stop overnight. We will just need to tip the balance and ensure that we get to that point, but how long it takes I can't say.

GCB:

Okay, well thank you for that. Clare?

Cllr Clare Muir, CDC:

Thank you. I've got a query about the Fairford sewage works, the most infamous sewage works in the country. I've seen the upgrade plan, but it's just a bit more detail around that. Has that been costed? Has the funding been secured in the long term plan, and the confidence level that I can see a lot of projects due to complete in 2025, so I'm just thinking, what are the confidence levels of that project completing, and is there an ideal start time and a more detailed project plan that can be shared with the community? On a plus point, thank you for the responsiveness following the meeting with Lakeside residents. Actually the feedback has been, the response and the alerting to stopping the problem before it floods there has been appreciated.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So absolutely happy to take details, and can share what we're allowed to share about the plans. So 100%, and, yeah, to the point about Fairford is we really appreciate that local intelligence, that goes a long long long way. Because had we not had that, I don't think you know we mightn't have had that solution and been productive. One thing I would reiterate is that some of our best assets are our customers and local stakeholders. If there is a problem that we're not seeing, a problem that may be reported but we're not giving the significance to the problem that you really think we should, you should bring it to our attention, bang on the door, because we need to know about it. We can move really quick if we have to. So it takes a bit of effort I'm afraid, but I'm happy to take those details.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

There's some work in Fairford that the team have uncovered in terms of some joints that need sealing and some private network that we need to push the right buttons to get that fixed by the right people, and also a bit of third party defect when somebody decided to put another utility through our pipe, which then creates a lovely route for groundwater to get into our network.

[Multiple speakers]

GCB:

Well done, thank you. Jan Bayley?

Jan Bayley:

Thank you, Sir Geoffrey. Firstly can I, I just want to respond to Thames Water, but firstly I just want to speak generally to start with. Firstly, thank you again for organising the flood meetings. They're very valuable. And thank you also for asking for the notes to be circulated in advance. [Applause. Hear hear.]

GCB:

And they came from one or two helpful people. I think Nigel suggested it, and I can't remember was it your suggestion Nigel I think? I can't remember, whoever it was.

Jan Bayley:

Thirdly, because I wrote to you, can we record at this meeting our thanks to the Environment Agency for all the work they've been undertaking on the Siddington Mill Bridge by James, FWAG and his team. They've done an excellent job. They've cleared the channel and the overflow channels. They've also cleared downstream and upstream. And it's worked. A, we've got maximum optimum capacity, and, B, we've got a much higher rate of flow which is really helpful.

But turning to the situation over winter. I don't think we were really tested, because, despite what the EA were saying about the quantity of water, we were monitoring and all the rest of it, and it didn't equate to the circumstances in early 2020, we were never on a flood warning, there was no flood alert. So although the work was done after that, I still think, you know, we're not really testing it at the moment.

Moving then on to Thames Water. Yes, let's take that first. As part of our investigations into what is causing the flooding around us, we've looked and have located now a Thames Water drain which goes under Siddington Road. It carries stormwater. It goes under Siddington Road. There's manholes grates spewing out water there. We did phone you on three occasions for you to come and investigate. I've been accompanying your teams, and showing them all the manholes. Your pipe, the drain, discharges into the River Churn about 50 metres below Siddington Road bridge. They couldn't get in there because it was all overgrown. But Paul Martin to my left has now cleared full access to it via the bridge after James's excellent work. We looked at it yesterday. The flow return trap on it is not there. And we reckon what is happening is that (a) the stormwater from Love Lane cannot escape, it's washed a lot of the road away, it's spewing out from the manholes, and it's a shame my husband's not here to hear this, it floods the field permanently north of Siddington Church, and we reckon what is also happening is not only can that water not escape, it's already I would say 8% below the existing river level, so there's no way it could work in times of reasonable flow, let alone peak flow. So it's coming all the way back up your pipe, coming through those manholes, it could be infiltrating the sewage network. Nothing's happened about it. Although we kept saying, please will you investigate the outfall, nobody came. So we've done it. And it's washed the road away. You know the state of the potholes round there. Have you factored in the impact of that storm water drain allowing water to come right up and inundate all that area?

And finally, for Thames Water. In the field between the River Churn and the village is a manhole which is over the sewage pipe which serves Preston and the new care village which is enormous. Well I know you've got storage facilities there, but nevertheless that field is completely inundated. It's not sealed around it. So we've got more water entering the sewage system at that point, and as



far as we're aware there's nothing, it just doesn't seem, we can see the connections, we can see where the water's getting in. We've tracked back all the way back to the river. But we can only put it in your hands. And nobody's, as far as I'm aware, nobody's ever been out, apart from your guys, they came from Hertfordshire to look at the manhole, but nobody's ever looked at what's going on there.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Okay. I'll pick that up with the team. I need to look at those maps. (Well, they've got the plans.) It'd be really useful, so if the team have come from Hertfordshire they're not my local team, so that hasn't come through to myself. I don't know if Shelly and Dave, I haven't managed to track them, but I will speak to them, to Dave, I'll be seeing locally and Shelly, so I will make sure this is looked into, because I know that this has a lot of history. We can talk about the ditch etc. We're moving in the right direction and that's...

[Multiple speakers]

Jan Bayley:

So we'll have to talk later. Yes, we'll talk at the end and I can share all the details.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Yes.

GCB:

Karen, Jan and her colleagues really know what they're talking about. They've been at this for a long time.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Yes. I will have the conversation; I'll see if I can move it forward.

GCB:

Okay. Lovely. Thank you.

Jan Bayley:

Sir Geoffrey, can I, the main question really, I just got sidetracked with this Thames Water issue, and it's largely been answered by James Blockley's report, but this progress on W S Atkins, because in James's report you refer to "the culvert". Now I just wondered what you meant by "the culvert".

James Blockley, GCC:

There's two. My colleague Peter's been leading on this, and I think that we have had a conversation. There's an existing one and there's one to be reopened as well. I don't have the details to hand, I will look on here and speak to you afterwards. Laurence, are you aware of which one's there that we're looking at.

Laurence King, CDC:

Well I think we're actually talking about a new culvert which would then link into the old swilley system. But, as James said, I think there's been talk about looking at an existing one and replacing it. Yes. I am slightly concerned about the time lag between this issue being raised and getting this delivered. The expectation was we'll be delivering it before Christmas. There's clearly a delay in getting the design off the ground I think. James and I will be having a chat obviously to see what we have to do. It'll become critical because without further options, without the design, we can't move forward. But this is a scheme I'm very keen to see delivered before Christmas. And obviously the district will be helping the county deliver it in whatever way we can.

Jan Bayley:

Can I just come back? I think I know where you're talking about, the existing culvert. And Laurence, you and I, and all of us were looking at that. I think it might be a simple job to do it, although having looked at the whole area with Peter, and Geoffrey, again, can we thank the work that's been undertaken by the team, Laurence and Peter Sirrett and James here.

GCB:

Indeed.

Jan Bayley:

It's not easy, getting them all down here. But I do think the role of this drain is fairly critical. So I think all issues would be factored in together.

GCB:

And tribute to your team. A bit of self help is worth an awful lot, so well done all of them for clearing it. Not an easy job.

Hands up all over. Juliet.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

Thank you. Well I'd actually like to thank Thames Water because they've done, they're doing a huge amount of work in South Cerney on Clarks Hay. There is a however. And the however is, why did you choose to do it in winter when we've already talked about you can't do work when there's a high water table? And South Cerney, as everybody knows round here, has got a very high water table, which meant the work, and I wrote, not flippantly, but I wrote a thing saying, I know it will be an inconvenience for our residents having the road shut, but it will be a temporary thing, short term, and the benefit to the village is going to be fantastic. That was probably in November. We got the road open at Christmas for a few weeks, and then it closed again. And we've only opened it again for a few weeks, and it's going to be closed again. And this is ridiculous. When the water table is low enough then they get those pipes in. It's caused. It should work brilliantly, I think, for shifting the sewage. But I just wonder, where's the connection between somebody's asked the contractor to go out and do the job, and what the lie of the land is because you must all know it, because I think that's all taking a long, long, long time and must have cost a fortune actually, because you've simply not been able to keep water out of the pipework.

Also in South Cerney we've had in January with the high rains flash flooding in the streets. They've cleared actually quite well. But we've had Clarks Hay you know has been flooded for quite a long time. School Lane which gets flooded from the Churn. So I think this might be to do with, you know, the natural management of flood water. We've got to work together on that. But School Lane is, the access to that for the residents there or for anybody taking shortcuts from somewhere else to get to the village, that can be inaccessible for several weeks when we've had the flood, and nobody quite knows how to use the sluice gates because they're privately owned and they were put in by one of the lords of the manor thinking he was going to stop his manor being flooded. So they're a bit of a complicated issue. They're there but nobody quite knows how to use them, or are not allowed to really. And we had flooding through the walls, through man holes covers, through BT, and that's a big issue that's just continuous. So I don't know how we deal with that, and I'd really love to have some answers.

The management of water, as I said last year, it wasn't the floods I was worried about, it was the fact we've continually got the disappearing water in the village and that's still going on. It's directly coming from, I'm pretty sure, a housing estate that is still pumping 24/7 despite there being no rain. And they're still pumping it. They've nearly finished or they've finished the build. It should not be still happening. But that's joining in with the Shire Ditch where your outage goes to. So we then get your volume of outage plus theirs, flooding all the way down the local footpath, so we've had

flooding issues right down off the Spine Road because of that. So this is kind of EA and Thames I think. Because eventually when the housing development is finished, you will sign off, you will be taking on the responsibility for their surface water and their sewage. And I mentioned it last year, I think you've got to be cautious about what you're taking on, because at the moment we're absolutely pretty darn sure that they're pumping groundwater but they say it's surface water but it's a very very deep rising main they've got there that they're pumping from. So that's another concern and the disappearing lake's a concern. Sir Geoffrey, you know all about that too.

And another one I'd like to ask generally about the control thing we've had big developments up in Spine Road, we've got care homes, we've got holiday homes, and since 2016 we've had an issue at the pumping station in Robert Franklin Way. We've had lots of emails to Thames Water about this. Because we get odour. And it's to do with the odour, as you were saying much earlier about not being flushed out, and things sit in the pipes, and it's to do with the dosing at the other end, which is managed by Mainstay. But potentially I would suggest that it's Thames Water who is mainly responsible for making sure that if there's a private company feeding into their system, or, you know, private controls on it like Mainstay, that our residents in South Cerney should not be affected by something that's been developed over the past years and over a mile away. And they are being affected frequently and, as I said, since at least 2016. At least. So those are my main things, but thank you for the work you are doing. We will find out how beneficial it will be once it's, you know, once we've got all the roads open, once everything's finished and completed.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So in terms of the developments, I think we should catch up offline about the state of them and I'll definitely speak to our representative. I can't give you a list of the checks that they go through before they're adopted, but I'll tell you that if they are responsible, prior to adoption but in terms of their responsibility to maintain, but I can give you the checklist that we go through. In terms of the pumping station, I'm not sure, why we're doing that, why no, but we'll get back to you on that.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

Just to clarify the School Lane one, I'm sure it's been said after you asking for feedback. It's around the river Churn? So School Lane flooding is when the Churn breaches? (Yeah.) Okay.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

Yeah, so it will come, I mean the water table is so high it comes up through the tarmac. Yeah. But we had that, we had a pool of water that, School Lane's got a little dip down into it, and it's at the entrance and it can be blocked for weeks.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

I just wanted to clarify that. So the multi agency team will have a discussion.

GCB:

But I know a fair bit about this dewatering of this development, and those pipes are very deep. And I went there even during a very dry time in the summer, and there was a pipe like that, discharging into the river. So they were pumping a lot of water. And I suspect that was more than just surface water. And, you know, the suspicion is that the lake, half a mile away Juliet? (Yes.) Went dry because of it. So I did write to the EA about this but I don't think anybody's really got to the bottom of it. But I think we need to go to a little bit more effort to see what – Laurence?

Laurence King, CDC:

Very sort of quick update on that. The developer will be on site for about another two months. They have carried out a lot of repairs on their main line, the surface water drainage system, which is separate. They have accepted that they are having a lot of ingress from groundwater which obviously is being having to be pumped. So there's an acceptance of that now. But they're now working on the minor lateral pipes which are pressurised, and the volume of water still coming in is such that they

can't carry out the final repairs. They are minded to do that as quickly as they can, on the basis that they're only going to be there a couple of months. They want to tarmac the road. And, yes, your connection services are already aware that they will be asked to adopt that surface water drainage system, but we've all highlighted to Thames that they need to be very careful of what they take on, and make sure it does become a correctly sealed system for surface water only. But, yeah, they're going to be struggling for at least another month if not longer with the water table so high. And it's quite interesting how Thames Water came on site in the full knowledge that there were high groundwater levels in the immediate area but they just kept on.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

So I think when you do your work for Bourton on the Water...(Yeah.)

[Multiple speakers.]

GCB:

You've had good warning.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

I think the other warning is, it's best not to build on flood plains.

GCB:

Hear, hear. Hear, hear. Definitely. Definitely. Yes, would you like to introduce yourself for the record please?

Cllr Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council:

Richard Harrison of Fairford Town Council. Just going back to the Environment Agency. We had our flood relief scheme implemented after the 2007 floods. It was implemented in 2013, and we've been asking for a number of years because the flood relief, the flood risk maps, it would be the second or third where the river was able to spill out into the town since then, and they don't seem to have been updated since. We keep being told that these are going to be updated. Do you know what the status of that is?

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

It's not something I'm directly aware of actually, in terms of, I'll just have to check with my colleague.

Evie Kingsmill, EA:

Yeah, so I'm Evie Kingsmill, from the Environmental Agency. It is my team that are responsible for taking on models and updating the flood map. And I was aware of issues at Fairford but I don't have details that I'm able to provide, but I will check.

[Multiple speakers]

Cllr Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council:

I thought there was a general programme of updating these flood risk maps, but it doesn't seem to have reached us yet (No.) despite our specific scheme.

Evie Kingsmill, EA:

And it generally, once the specific scheme and the model that we've used has got signed off so that it's verified that it is to the standard that we can update the flood map, it will then go in and update the flood map, and so our programme's just really dependent on where we have those models in updating is not necessarily done on a kind of a programme.

Cllr Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council:  
It's been ten years now since the, goes back to 2007. (Yeah.)

GCB:  
Evie, it should be a relatively simple problem to fix. Presumably the issue is insurance, is it, Richard? (Sorry?) The issue is insurance, is it?

Cllr Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council:  
Well I guess for some people it is, eventually.

GCB:  
Or even selling their properties.

Cllr Richard Harrison, Fairford Town Council:  
Yeah, I think, I don't know the details but we as a town council we've been pressured repeatedly to ask the same question. (Yep.) But we haven't got a solution.

GCB:  
Fair enough. Well done. You've raised it. Right, I'm looking round the room. Yes, Nick.

Cllr Nick Bridges:  
Last year, on pages 24 and 25 of the transcript, you describe the lack of inspection or maintenance of the culvert under Foxcote Street as an accident waiting to happen. Somebody else described it as a high-impact problem if anything goes wrong. And yet it's not appearing on the Environment Agency notes for this year as being something under progress. So can I keep it on the record (Yes), can I keep it on record so we actually get that inspection of the culvert done.

GCB:  
Who's, is that Highways?

Cllr Nick Bridges:  
No, I think that is Environment Agency.

James Spicer, EA:  
My name's James Spicer. For those who've been here in the past, I am the new Sean Shackelford. Sean having moved on to a new role in a new team. I'm aware of the culverts in Cirencester. They were last inspected in, something tells me, 2013. There or thereabouts. At the minute we don't have the resources to undertake a survey there. The Environment Agency role is obviously to oversee any shall we say flood risk management of that culvert. This isn't to try and fob it off, but the ultimate responsibility for looking after a culvert rests with the landowners above or beside it. So theoretically that means every homeowner above a culvert is responsible for it. In the past we have conducted surveys of this culvert, and others, when we had a bit more resources. As it stands we don't expect to have those for some time, so for the minute it will remain uninspected. The last, I didn't bring the last inspection notes. I'm not aware of any imminent disaster, should we say, underneath. We know it's got issues, we know it could be better. It's got service crossings across it. But really it's not, what we know of the culvert, it's not on our radar at the minute, primarily just through lack of resources.

Cllr Nick Bridges:  
How much do you need?

James Spicer, EA:

I couldn't even give a number at the minute, nothing that's even remotely accurate.

GCB:

But they are small properties there, so I guess that, you know, they're not going to undertake this on their own. It's either going to have to be EA, Town Council, somebody's going to have to do this. And if the thing is in, if it is, if you think it's in, I don't know why, Nick, I can't actually recall, why do we have reason to think that it's in poor condition?

Cllr Nick Bridges:

Because someone went down there and saw utility pipes and stuff falling into the gully, and we think that it, I mean obviously they've put trash screen improvements in front of it, but there are potential problems there if they get these utilities. So we think the structure may be unsound. So, but without somebody going down there that knows it and knows how to analyse these things, we just don't know. It's you know a very key location in town. If you did have a blockage there, you could easily have widespread flooding in the centre of town.

GCB:

Well, sorry, I don't know your name. (Sorry, James Spicer.) James Spicer. A camera survey can't be that expensive, is it?

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

Can I come in here, James? Thanks for the detail on that one James. I think camera surveys of extensive culvert systems can be quite expensive. I think that 2013 one we did commission on the basis of risk. It was quite a while ago now. I think probably for this one the next steps from my perspective would be to get a better understanding of those specific risks that you raise. So we can look at that and then make a judgement call about what options there might be available and who might need to be involved. I wouldn't want to make a specific commitment, as James explained, because the riparian owners, as I said, the owners who live above or beside these culverts, are legally responsible for this. I fully recognise that they're small homes. They might not be resourced to do the work. But we might not be either. And we obviously put our efforts into flood risk, we'll focus our efforts where the risks are greatest. So I think under, getting a better understanding of the concerns will help myself and James's team then make a judgement call on what next and who needs to be involved. If that sounds agreeable to everyone.

GCB:

As you say, once you've discovered what needs to be done, I mean a stitch in time saves nine. If that culvert were to collapse, it would cause huge inconvenience to a lot of people, so obviously it is better to make sure it's surveyed sooner rather than later. Maybe, I don't know where the resources will come from but once we know what needs to be done then James perhaps can start to sort of co-ordinate with all the other agencies and see who can do what. But thank you for raising it. I don't think we, it doesn't want to go to sleep, Nick. It needs something to be

Cllr Nick Bridges:

It needs to carry on ticking along until we get it solved.

GCB:

Absolutely agree. (It's potentially a big problem.) Yep, I agree. If it collapsed it would cause a major problem.

???:

That was the area that was first hit by the flooding at Christmas a couple of years ago.

GCB:

Yep. Yes. So one can assume that that had a lot of water through it, that will not have, will not have improved its condition. Undoubtedly. Okay. Anybody else? Yes.

Chris Bates:

Sorry, I'm a bit lost with where we are on the agenda.

GCB:

Well we've had the reports and, sorry, if you could introduce yourself?

Chris Bates:

Chris Bates.

GCB:

Yeah, of course, Chris.

Chris Bates:

Just reading the reports as I have flagged up before. I know it's still on his radar but I wanted to mention it again about extending the bund. Two winters ago the water actually came round the top of it. It's weather like that. The only slight issue I have is that I think it's getting a bit poached by the stock in the field. So I don't know if somebody at some point could just go down and have a look just to see.

The other issue is that the development at the Bell, in Bell Lane, they have put in a retrospective application to change the main drainage system. A lot of water comes down from Bell Lane. I actually think it's increased the problems coming down to the bridge, but it also carries a lot of sediment there. I'm wondering if LLFA who approved the scheme in the first place will be looking at these plans to make sure they are okay. There's 47 pages of technical details. I'm not capable of assessing it, and I think maybe they should.

GCB:

So who is technically responsible for looking at those drainage plans? Is that a planning matter or?

Chris Bates:

The LLFA were involved with, approved it all in the first place.

GCB:

Right.

James Blockley, GCC:

Is this a, sorry, just to explain, was there a discharge of conditions on the original application?

Chris Bates:

No, they were meant, well this is another thing. One doesn't know. They've put an attenuation pond and all these sort of things. I mean, they've still, this development's been going on now for years. The pond has never worked. It's literally not had any water in it, so I don't know whether everything's connected up. You know, I don't know who's meant to inspect that. This is not, this is, they've amended that permission, the approved drainage scheme. They've amended it without, it's a retrospective planning application.

James Blockley, GCC:

Okay, well if it's linked to the original plan it will come across our desks. Can you just remind me what the name of it was?

Chris Bates:

It's Wheelers Rise. It's just come through on planning in the last week. I mean they did the change about 3 or 4 months ago.

James Blockley, GCC:

Well it will come across my desk. I haven't seen that one come through the system yet but I'll make sure that we look at it.

Chris Bates:

Well it's come through to the parish council.

James Blockley, GCC:

Yeah, sometimes there's a lag.

[Multiple speakers]

Chris Bates:

Thank you.

GCB:

Well done ,Chris. Thank you. Any other questions? Yes. Yes?

Cllr Neil Green, Kempford Parish Council:

Thank you. Neil Green from Kempford Parish Council. Kempford is situated in the middle of the Thames and the Coln really. And we have an increasing number of quarries being dug and extracted. The disruption to the natural hydrology, the groundwater and the land drainage is a massive concern for us, by the aggregate producing industry, along with the pumping of sewage into the Dudgrove brook, the Thames and the Coln. Can we have any guarantee from the Environment Agency that they are looking at this? And every planning application that goes in for a quarry, it just seems to be taken on its own merits, and we don't seem to have it as a collective, and we're getting more and more and more lakes that are flooding with rain. And it's clearly channelling our water in a certain direction. And we're getting a lot of flooding now between the areas, which we have sent through photos to both Thames and to the Environment Agency.

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

Happy to respond to this one? (Yes.) So a couple of answers. One of my colleagues Nick Reeves came to spend some time (yeah), to visit, which helped us to really understand your concerns about the different sources of flood risk in the area. It sounded, from what I heard, the visit was productive in that Nick was able to explain our role, how we comment on the planning applications that are under way, and the type of work we're doing. So I'd be very happy to have a follow up conversation with you on this. But from my perspective we were well engaged with all the local planning authority applications where we act as statutory consultee. A big part of our role is ensuring that we will object if it's likely to increase flood risk elsewhere or on the assessed development. And we do the same thing with this type of development as well. So it sounds like you've still got outstanding concerns about this.

Cllr Neil Green, Kempford Parish Council:

We do. And we need to have a direct line of communication, so that when there are events happening that you're aware really quickly, something we're missing at the moment.

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

All right. Let's have a quick chat at the end of this if that's all right with respect to how we go



forward.

Cllr Neil Green, Kempford Parish Council:  
Yes, happy to do that.

GCB:

Simple question, Joe. Are you able to take into account the cumulative effects, or do you just take the individual application into account when you're assessing it?

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

Well as, we touched on this a bit in the Moreton meeting.

GCB:

Yes, we did.

Joe Cuthbertson, EA:

Ultimately, each consultee, and others coming in could add anything to that, but I think from the Environment Agency perspective it's down to the developer, who, it's their role to prove that their development doesn't increase the flood risk elsewhere and it's safe for the lifetime of that development. Depending on the complexity of that, that's often underpinned by some quite detailed modelling and a risk assessment which should take account of the latest surrounding, so the most up to date baseline or what the surrounding receptors are, what the latest flood risk is, it should also look forward in time, so that it considers climate change projections. So it's quite an all-encompassing requirement, particularly for the bigger developments. We touched on model updates. Of course, land management, urban development, it does change over time, which is why it's important that these developments and their planning applications are supported by robust data that does take into account cumulative changes to the landscape, to urbanisation, over time. So yes, we look at each development on its own merits and will provide our comments to the local planning authority, who, as we touched on at this morning's meeting, is the ultimate decision-maker on whether permission's granted or not. But the requirements to prove that flood risk isn't increasing should take into account those wider changes and therefore pick up those cumulative impacts that happen over time. I know that probably sounds fairly complex.

GCB:

No, no. I think that's very clear. So maybe, Neil, what you need to do is to keep prompting the Cotswold District Council the questions to ask to make sure that those questions are asked. (Gloucestershire.) Your council has got a vital role to play in that. You know what's going on on the ground. (Sorry, Sir Geoffrey.) Yes, Stephen?

Stephen Andrews, Kempford Parish Council:

It would be Gloucestershire because it's a mineral application.

GCB:

Oh it's Gloucestershire. Sorry, I was thinking it was. Yes. In which case Gloucestershire can, in fact we've got a direct line here Neil to our team leader here. All right. Any other questions? Stephen.

Steven Andrews, Kempford Parish Council:

Thank you, Sir Geoffrey. Just to follow up on. My name's Stephen Andrews, Kempford resident. Just to follow up with Thames Water on the point that was mentioned in passing, which was discharge into the Dudgrove Brook from the STW that's down Washbourne Lane. It's not on your list at all. But we do know from the very useful online, the sort of thing that's been put up, that actually there is discharge there, so it would be useful for you to put it on your list in the future for making sure that the Coln stays clean.

Karen Nelson, Thames Water:

We will be monitoring and that will be prioritised together with everything else.

GCB:

Okay. Right. Nick.

Cllr Nick Bridges:

Just going back to the GCC report, and all these reports are great, thanks for having them, but the final line was about Highways. We've got localised flooding on one lane of the Kings Meadow roundabout. So just after the remedial works has happened, we're still getting the problem of flooding on that roundabout. If you've ever watched traffic coming round that roundabout, when it's dry it's dangerous, but when it's wet they're aquaplaning, they're kind of reacting to this sudden puddle that's probably about 20 feet wide. This isn't a small problem. I'm worried that somebody might actually die because of this. So can we find out what is planned to actually solve the problem?

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/QLFP8V8QS6K3N3se9>

*(footage provided by Nick Bridges)*

GCB:

Very good point. I've been round that roundabout when it's got a huge puddle on it, round in sort of a great arc around the roundabout. Whose responsibility is that? Is that Highways?

James Blockley, GCC:

Gloucestershire Highways. Yeah, I'm not trying to dodge the bullet here. But I think I said at the start, that's something that Richard Gray is involved in. And feel free to drop Richard a line and ask him for an explanation. He should be coming to the next Cirencester partnership meeting.

GCB:

It sounds as if Jan knows something about this.

Jan Bayley:

Yes. Can I just answer that? At the time the Police did close the road, quite wisely, because I mean it was absolute hell. Now Preston Mill Bridge has masses of capacity. Siddington Mill Bridge doesn't have masses of capacity. And of course I'm not saying that situation should pertain on the main road, but it's all linked in. And the more that is taken out and put into the River Churn at that point, we're always heading for this pinch point. And I think you can clearly identify that Siddington Mill Bridge. And as I said earlier, all these things need to be factored in, as to what's actually trying to get through that bridge. And, I'm trying to remember the dates, I certainly have them in my diary, but Siddington Mill Bridge had absolutely, I think about 4 inches capacity after the heavy rain in, what was it, I think it was March wasn't it, and earlier in the year. So it really was just about, I mean once it had reached capacity that would have backed up so we would have been in a hell of a mess. I mean we were walking it at least once if not twice a day in those days of heavy rain, monitoring how high the river got at that point, because as I say we were very close to that actually happening, and once that happened then the backup would have happened very quickly. And also the backup coming out from the drain coming down from Love Lane. So I don't know how it is all managed, but whatever this is based on, and fortunately the picnic site is working very well as a water holding capacity, but after it's left there we have problems.

GCB:

Right. Thank you. Okay. Are we all done?

Juliet, lucky last.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

Thank you. This is to Thames Water really. Just very recently all the water authorities have admitted to putting sewage out into our rivers and seas and have apologised. I would like to know, and whether the answer is, is how clean is the outage from the Shorncote treatment works? Do we have any record of that? And where do you take that reading? Would you take that straight, as soon as it arrives in the Shire Ditch at the point of your discharge? And also how much is this going to cost us as residents, because we're all going to be paying, as we are paying for the big London sewage treatment works, you know all the country's residents are paying up to £25 a year for that, and I was just wondering if you've costs of what our residents are going to be paying. And how quickly are you going to be doing the clear up?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

So, I'm sorry, on the individual bill, you would like to know what exactly?

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

Well I don't expect you to be able to answer this to be honest. But we know that as residents we're paying about £25 a year each for the big London (Tideway Tunnel), and that we're going to, the bill for residents from all the water companies is going to be across the country for the clear up that you've got to do, for the mistakes, and for the, you know, this is not something we're, oh yes, we're fine with you doing. But it's going to be money we're going to have to pay for the mistakes of the water companies. I rather hope Sir Geoffrey that you will be voting. I don't think you have been voting in the sewage debates recently.

GCB:

I have. I certainly have. Not for your Liberal amendments, but for the Government's amendments, yes.

Cllr Juliet Layton, CDC:

If you don't mind, let me, I was going to, well, what I would like to know is how clean, at the moment, is the Shorncote outage into the Shire Ditch? Because this water travels down, as I say, towards Cotswold Water Park, gets into the Thames, the kids are in there playing. And I'm just very interested to know what those figures are.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:

Not something I can answer right now, but more than happy to take the environmental question away to our teams and they'll be happy to answer, in terms of major stuff, I am you know more than happy to share it with you. Just it's been said multiple times and it still remains the fact that it's certainly unacceptable that we have sewage discharges in this day and age. We are putting together a big package to try and limit our discharges. We are setting ambitious targets to reduce it by 70% by 2030 and 80% in the really sensitive catchments for discharges. We are all committed. Anyone who has spoken to our environment group will see they are working very very diligently on trying to solve this problem. There is no magic bullet to this. It involves agencies working together, but it also involves us really sort of putting our heads down and understanding where we need to invest. Over two years we have a programme of works that we're trying to deliver. You should hopefully be able to see some improvement then. But as I said during the price review process we are going for a really ambitious plan to try to solve these discharges. Again I can only apologise.

GCB:

So under the Environment Act you're now going to monitor all these discharges, aren't you?

Jake Morley, Thames Water:  
We have.

GCB:

You have. And the information is publicly available, so we can all see exactly where the discharges are and how much is being discharged, when. So there's a huge step forward.

Jake Morley, Thames Water:  
Yes. Total amounts, not duration.

GCB

Great. Right. So shall we call a halt. We've all got plenty to do I think probably. So, the first question is do you want these meetings to carry on? (Absolutely.) (Yes.) Yes. All right. Second question is what frequency do you want them? Do you want yearly or twice yearly? (Six monthly is good.) (Yes.) (Otherwise things just slip.) (Yes.) Six-monthly. Right. So that is in accord with what they would like in Moreton. So the next meeting will be in Oct/Nov and we will notify, when we've looked at various options, in the minutes when they come out.

Laurence King, CDC:

Sir Geoffrey, just for the room, just to make everyone aware. The representatives from the agencies, we also meet to discuss matters that have been raised and recorded. So it's not, we go away and wait until the next 6 monthly meeting. We do actually have another group meeting to try and progress actions that have been raised and recorded today. So it's not just today. We don't just get together for today.

GCB:

So when will that group meeting be Laurence?

Laurence King, CDC:  
Ask James!

GCB:

That's real buck passing!

James Blockley, GCC:

The last one we had was about 6 weeks ago, just upstairs here wasn't it. We tend to have them about once a quarter, so we haven't set a date yet, thanks for the nudge.

GCB:

So what we're hoping to do is, hopefully Luke's sound recording system is better than it has been, and hopefully we're going to find some software, because we know it exists, to produce some form of a transcript, which Liz will then look at and correct, and that should mean that we can get the whole thing out much quicker than we have in the past. But anyway that's all using new technology.

Yes, David? You have to have the last word!

Cllr David Fowles:

Thank you, Sir Geoffrey. I mentioned to you before the meeting whether or not we could include obviously this debate about flooding and flood alleviation, but I mentioned to you about £10b being announced by Water UK to tackle river pollution. And I know that there are lots of rivers in the Cotswolds

GCB:

So we have, you'll be glad to know we have a parallel meeting such as this on river pollution, and I, do you know, Luke, when it is? (It's on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> of June.) 9<sup>th</sup> of June. So we shall, anybody is cordially invited. (So it runs in parallel with these meetings?) Yes, but it's specifically on river pollution. And it is on the, it's at 10 o'clock, in here, on the 9th of June. So anybody's warmly welcome to that.

So can I thank particularly on your behalf all our people from all the agencies, from the various councils, everybody's busy people, and they've very kindly got these written reports out. I appreciate that hugely. And I look forward to seeing you all in October probably November, before Christmas, to continue all of this discussion. And thank you all very much for bringing it up, because without you we wouldn't keep the agencies held to account. So that's really helpful. So thank you. Have a good weekend everybody.

Meeting closed at 15:44