Wyre Flood Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 March 2013 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Present:
Barbara Mackie Out Rawcliffe Parish Council
Cllr Phil Orme Preesall Parish Council and LALC
Cllr June Jackson Stalmine with Staynall Parish Council
Sue Carrington Stalmine Resident
Steve Houghton Stalmine Resident
Graham Hargreaves Hambleton Parish Council
Katherine Bentley Lancashire County Council
Mr Gudgeon Hambleton Resident
Yvonne Kirkby Hambleton Resident
Nicola Evans Natural England
Richard Smith Local Farmer
Rita Carr Preesall Residents Association
Cllr John Warnock Fleetwood Town Council
Dan Blacow United Utilities
Paul Snape Lancashire County Council
Matthew Connor Environment Agency
Irene Horner Thornton Action Group
Cllr Balmain Wyre Council
John Blundell Wyre Council
Katherine Pye Wyre Council
Paul Long Wyre Council
Carl Green (Chairman) Wyre Council
Roy Saunders Wyre Council

Apologies for Absence:
Cllr Roger Berry (Wyre Council), Cllr Edward Greenwood (Fleetwood Town Council), Cllr May Gandhi, Cllr Ramesh Gandhi and Kevan Williams (United Utilities).

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012 were noted and confirmed as a correct record, subject to the first line of paragraph 3 of any other business (Minute 12) being amended to read “Phil Orme also stated that all but one of the routes out of Preesall (not Pilling) had been impassable”.


Katherine Pye, a Senior Engineer at Wyre Borough Council, but temporarily seconded to Fylde Peninsula Management Scheme, made a presentation to the forum on the work of the scheme.

She said that the strategy for both Blackpool and Wyre had been approved, subject to a directors briefing.
She outlined the work to be undertaken as part of the scheme as a whole and explained, in more detail, the next stage of the project to be undertaken at Rossall. She emphasised that the design of the sea wall improvements at Rossall was the most economic and cost effective option available. She said that some environmental improvements would be included but, the emphasis for this section of the wall was to prevent flooding.

She said that the proposals were about to be presented to the public.

She said that she would be happy to arrange for a presentation to be made at the Fleetwood Town Council meeting on 26 March.

Representatives of the statutory bodies responded to various questions from local residents and Parish Council representatives about measures to provide protection from flooding to the Over Wyre area. They explained the measures taken to clear watercourses and drains and to encourage landowners to minimise run-off from fields.

Matthew Connor asked June Jackson to send him an email about points she had raised about the clearing of gullies in the special protection area on the Pilling marshes and said that he would ensure that a response was sent to her.

3. **What’s Going on in the Region**

(a) **United Utilities**

Dan Blacow reported on work being carried out by United Utilities at Dobson Road, Porters Row and Southfield Drive.

**Dobson Road**
Works on Dobson Road had been expected to be completed in April 2013. However, these works could not yet be completed because of a highway embargo due to an adjacent bridge closure linked to the Network Rail electrification. Works would continue, once the bridge had been reopened, which was currently scheduled for April. The initial works on Normoss Road would be service diversions followed by the final part of the sewer works. The programme was dependent on the progress of the other parties but United Utilities works were likely to restart in June or July.

**Porters Row**
It had been established that ground conditions for this project were significantly worse than had been anticipated. The estimated cost of the scheme had therefore increased and the additional expenditure had to be approved before any work could commence. Funds had been made available to carry out investigations and to provide a more robust estimate. Once that work had been completed a decision would be made on whether the work was cost benefit or not. If funding was approved, the intention was to start work on site in May or June 2013.
Southfield Drive
Modelling work had been completed and a business case would be presented for approval in approximately one month. The modelling had confirmed that there was an interaction with the highway drainage. There was a separate highway drainage system discharging to the ditch at the rear of Southfield Drive. That ditch was blocked, as was the highway drainage. The flooding of the properties had occurred due to overloading of the sewers, but also due to the riparian problems on the ditch. The United Utilities scheme would only resolve the sewer flooding. Properties would continue to flood until the highways and ditch issues were resolved by other agencies.

(b) Environment Agency
Matthew Connor said that money had been approved for the replacement post and panel wall at Knott End. The final design for the scheme would be carried out soon, followed by consultation later in 2013, with construction taking place in 2014.

The study taking place at the Hillylaid, Skippool and Royles Brook areas would be completed by the Spring of 2014 and flood defence works would be completed in 2015, if funding was approved.

He said that meetings had been held and a flood action group had been set up at Sunnyside Terrace, which had previously been badly affected by flooding. The group would enable the local community to be more geared-up to deal with future flooding events.

A similar group had also been set up in Hambleton.

(c) Wyre Council
Carl Green said that work had been continuing on the overall Blackpool & Wyre strategy, referred to by Katherine Pye earlier in the meeting.

Discussions were taking place with the Fleetwood Port Authority about the possibility of using dredged material for beach replacement where needed.

Paul Long referred to minor works taking place to the revetments at Knott End and to a clean-up of the Marine Lake.

Carl Green explained the work currently being undertaken with United Utilities and the Environment Agency to monitor and improve bathing water quality. He said that a number of good outcomes had been achieved recently. A beach management activities report had been produced. There was some continued emergency sewer overload release, when required to avoid flooding but, the short term impact on sea quality was relatively slight. It was clear that the excessively wet weather last year had had an impact on bathing water quality. The underlying water quality was very good but, when there was heavy
rain the sewers overflowed and bacteria was released into the sea water. It was possible that people would have to be told not to swim on those days. It was clearly imperative to inform people if there were potential health risks.

Matthew Connor said that he would provide a copy of a briefing note prepared by the Environment Agency (copy attached).

(d) Lancashire County Council

Paul Snape said that Lancashire County Council was now the lead local flood authority. A flood risk management group had been set up at County Hall and the Council had made arrangements to deal with the administration of consents and enforcement action relating to watercourses. The Council had a duty to investigate any significant flooding events and was required to publish a report. A number of site investigations were currently on going. They also had to ensure that co-ordination took place with other agencies.

He referred to investigations over the last three months into flooding events in Preesall, Thornton Cleveleys, Hambleton and Stalmine.

He also reported that a consultant was currently preparing a surface water management plan.

Paul Snape said that he would follow up a request for information made by Irene Horner concerning New Lane at Thornton and arrange for a reply to be sent.

(c) Natural England

Nicola Evans explained Natural England’s involvement in designated conservation sites at Morecambe Bay and the Wyre Estuary. She said that, if any of the public agencies wanted to carry out work in those areas, Natural England had to be consulted and to give consent before work could start. Natural England also commented on planning applications and consultations.

She referred to the agency’s involvement in water catchment sensitive farming, with efforts currently being made to improve water quality through the provision of information and grant funding.

She also referred to the work carried out by Natural England’s marine team on off-shore issues and beach work.

She stressed that Natural England only had a few staff to carry out the broad remit she had described.
4. **Flooding Events: Updates**

(a) **Preesall**

Paul Snape referred to the various flooding events at Preesall and the action which had been taken to alleviate future problems, particularly the various watercourses and culverts that had been cleared.

Matthew Connor referred to the establishment of a local residents group which had met quarterly and would continue to be updated on developments.

John Blundell reported that Wyre Council was also preparing a flood plan for the area.

Paul Snape said that Lancashire County Council would provide a single point of contact and would keep up the pressure to get work done.

(b) **Hambleton**

A meeting had been held at the Civic Centre earlier in the week where various problems had been identified and a proposed way forward had been discussed.

A defective flap valve had been found and part of the area had been inundated by sea water at high tide as a result. The original failure had been fixed but, there had subsequently been a further malfunction. Action would now be taken to permanently repair the valve.

All the surface water systems in the Hambleton area had been identified and it had been established where the problems were and who would take action.

(c) **Thornton Cleveleys**

Problems at Stanah Road were currently being investigated, because the works so far carried had not been entirely successful.

Paul Long also referred to problems which had occurred at Tarn Road and Northumberland Road.

Paul Snape said that the County Council would pick up responsibility for co-ordinating issues to deal with the flooding in Springfield Drive.

(d) **Other Areas**

June Jackson read a letter from Stalmine Parish Council raising various issues relating to the Stalmine area and requesting a multi-agency meeting similar to the ones held in Hambleton and Preesall.
Sue Carrington, a Stalmine resident, explained her personal experience of the recent flood problems. Paul Snape said that he had understood that the drainage system at the side of her house had been jetted and that the problem had been dealt with. However, as it was apparent that that was not the case, he undertook to take ownership of the problem and to go back and sort it out.

Paul Long reported that the Making Space for Water Technical Group had not met during the last 3 months, so there was nothing further to report to this meeting.

Phil Orme referred to flooding which had occurred in Beechfield Avenue, where problems seemed to have been caused by a neglected and overgrown dyke. Paul Long agreed to discuss it with him after the meeting.

5. Emergency Planning

John Blundell provided an update on current activities. He explained the action which had been taken in response to flooding at Sunnyside Terrace on 29 December 2012.

He said that an on-going review of the Wyre Flood Plan, which was a multi-agency plan for the whole area, was currently being undertaken.

Issues at Hambleton and Preesall had already been discussed, but he pointed out that there were 15 warning areas identified in the Wyre flood plan. Information would be included in the plan on contact details, relationships and the building of resilience to enable residents to do work for themselves. Information to populate the plan was currently being assembled and when completed would be made available to the blue light services. He stressed that information from local communities was needed to make sure the plan was comprehensive and effective and that information previously obtained in 2010 was updated.

Paul Long explained, in response to questions, how the Council’s emergency out of hours service operated. He emphasised that, during working hours, any flood related problems should be reported in the first instance to the Council’s Contact Centre on the main contact number 891000. Out of office hours problems should be reported in the first instance to the Duty Officer on 895116.

Paul Snape said that the County Council was currently looking at communications issues generally relating to flooding. He acknowledged that simpler reporting arrangements and better co-ordinations between the public agencies was needed and suggested that a single contact number might be advantageous. He said he would raise that issue with other agencies so the possibility of a joint communications strategy could be considered.
6. **Future Agenda Items**

Matthew Connor agreed to try to arrange for a member of Lancashire County Council's resilience team to attend a future meeting, to explain how a community flood action group could be established. It was also suggested that a workshop type session might be held on communications issues at a future meeting.

7. **Other Business**

   (1) Carl Green said, in response to comments about “untidiness” of Fleetwood beach, that the area of the beach adjacent to the ferry was a site of special scientific interest. Litter had been removed and there were currently no invasive plant species present. He considered the beach to be in good condition. He acknowledged, however, that it would helpful if an interpretation board could be erected at that location.

   (2) Paul Long said that he was aware that a “sea flap” was missing in the Chatsworth Avenue area and said that it would be sorted soon. Carl Green said that the possibility of using a different sort of valve was being considered.

   (3) Carl Green said, in response to comments about a recent planning approval for a new Sainsbury's store at Thornton, that any proposal to move a watercourse would require permission.

   (4) Carl Green said that any problems relating to fly tipping in watercourses should be reported to John Bettle at Wyre Borough Council.

   (5) Paul Snape said, in response to comments by Phil Orme, that he was aware of a pond adjacent to Pilling Lane being filled and said that he would be writing an enforcement letter to the land owner the following day.

   (6) Paul Snape said, in response to a question, that anyone wishing to empty a pond should contact the Environment Agency or Lancashire County Council for advice prior to commencing any works.

   (7) Carl Green said, in response to a question from a Hambleton resident, that the previously proposed sewer works at Shard Bridge were not being pursued but, a proposal to provide soil tanks in that area had been approved instead. Dan Blacow said that the new scheme would bring about the required improvement to water quality.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the forum would be held at 2pm on Thursday 13 June 2013.

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 4.25pm