

An overview of flooding and sewage egress in Fressingfield

Flooding and sewage are very serious issues in Fressingfield and of great concern to villagers. They affect the quality of life and create health issues, which have been brought to the attention of Public Health England by Suffolk's Director of Public Health. We are concerned that the building of significantly more houses will exacerbate these problems. In this paper I attempt to highlight the issues.

Recently Vincent Pearce, the new Principal Planning Officer, enquired of Jason Skilton (flood and Water Engineer SCC) and his colleagues answers regarding flooding and sewerage issues in Fressingfield, but the response was short and uninformative. In fact I met with Mr. Skilton and Nigel Minter (Anglian Water) in July 2017, when he was made aware of the flooding and sewerage problems. As a result of our meeting Mr. Skilton recognised that there was a problem and commissioned work to be undertaken in 2018/19 to reduce flooding on the road. As I understand it this would improve road drainage into the Beck. The problem is that the Beck (the stream adjacent to Low Road), when full, floods back onto the road. He would not comment on the egress of sewage onto the roadway.

There are so many Agencies dealing with these aspects that are inter-related (such as The Environment Agency, Drainage Board, Public Health, Anglian Water, Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council) that answers cannot be obtained. Crucially, no assessment of the cumulative impact of the various proposed and approved dwellings has been required and none of the authorities seems willing to accept responsibility for doing so. Because of this and after discussion with Anglian Water I requested for a " section 19" in order that the various Agencies could work together. The response from Mr Hullis (Head of Environmental Strategy SCC) was to list the criteria necessary for a Section 19 to be undertaken and he claimed that we did not meet them. I replied on 2 June 2017 " An important feature of this flooding is the egress of raw sewage onto the public highway and into private property, so we meet the criteria that flooding has impacted upon critical infrastructure. ie the sewerage system. Flooding in Low Road has been a long standing and recurrent problem, to the extent that our neighbour is the Flood Warden. -- Sandbags have been necessary to prevent water entering into houses adjacent to Low Road." There was no response to this email.

Flooding is under reported, four times in five months between 22 December 2017 and 24 April 2018 (see SAFE web site- [Breaking News](#)). It is a long standing problem (see lobby paper "[Low Road Historical Flooding](#)") where representative flood pictures are shown at 20 year intervals. This is not only a problem in Winter, but also occurs in Summer (12 July 2016.) Flooding occurs in Low Road as it is at the lowest point of the village, with steep slopes and there is poor infiltration in the mainly clay soil. Water flows strongly down Back Street and Church Hill from the high points in the village and causes problems en route at The Swan in Back Road (video available).

MORE rain water into the foul sewer, will inevitably cause more out flow through the manholes in the road. The three Applications deal with surface water in different ways. All Applications are required to demonstrate that the proposed development does not result in flooding both within the site and off site flooding. Both the Stradbroke Road (1449/17) and the John Shepherd Road (1432/17) Application Forms (Section 5) state that surface water is disposed of through a sustainable

drainage system and main sewer. The Stradbroke Road Application has been revised post consultation. Front gardens have been removed and been replaced with hard standing. This will increase the overall amount of surface water run off and will impact on the calculations for water dispersal within the original drainage strategy. As there are already incidents of flooding in Stradbroke Road adjacent to the Laurels it is difficult to see how the Applicant can state that the development will not increase off site flooding. The outline Planning Application for John Shepherd includes a large catchment pit is adjacent to the grade one listed stables. The surface water from the Post Mill development (1648/17) drains exclusively into drainage ditches. Post Mill is the smallest proposed development, but this alone will create an additional acre of hard standing. The Plandescil Report (consulting Engineers) "Flood Risk Assessment, Surface Water Strategy and Foul Water Drainage Strategy" submitted with the Application states "in the event of an exceedance event, consideration has to be given to route surface water away from vulnerable areas towards drainage features" ie the houses should not flood, but more water will be diverted to the ditches and lower village. This does not conform to the requirement not to cause off site flooding. The Applicant does not own all of the ditches, so he is unable to guarantee good maintenance. In any event more water going into the Beck increases the risk of flooding in Low Road. This flooding has occurred as far up the Harleston Hill as Afton House.

Sewerage

The Fressingfield sewerage system was installed in 1946. The design of the system is well documented. The sewage from the current Post Mill development is pumped uphill to New Street and continues to Church Hill, down to Low Road (150 mm pipe) where it joins, at the War Memorial another similar sized branch coming across the fields from the existing John Shepherd development. The two pipes then join and form a single 150 mm pipe which then runs 200 yards to the pumping station and continues along the Weybread Straight to the treatment plant in One Eyed Lane.

At times of heavy rainfall the sewerage manhole covers in Low Road lift and raw sewage goes over the road and into gardens. (see lobby paper- [Fressingfield sewerage](#)) and also runs back into the Beck to be dissipated further. This is a long standing problem. There was correspondence in 1985 between our then MP, Michael Lord and the then Anglian Water CEO Peter Bray. The Chief Environmental Officer was involved, but it was concluded that correctional works needed were too expensive. It has variously been suggested that pump failure and failure to desludge the sewerage system is the cause. However, sewage egress has occurred following work to correct these problems, indicating that they are not the cause.

I am informed that there is only a foul water sewer in Fressingfield so I do not understand why heavy rain should precipitate egress of sewerage unless there is very significant ingress of rain water into the sewerage system and this would have significant effect on the calculations of capacity.

We have carried out our own assessment of sewerage capacity (lobby Paper- [Fressingfield Sewerage Capacity](#)) and conclude that that it will not accommodate the foul water from the developments that are seeking approval. More flow, even from the John Shepherd development alone could cause back flow and back pressure effects on the sewer pipe in Low Road.

The effect of sewage leakage is unacceptable and very unpleasant. On a recent occasion Anglian Water had to send a "clean up team" after three manholes had lifted. Details of the problem has been sent to the Suffolk Director of Public Health and Protection, who informed Public Health England. Effect on Wildlife may also have occurred. (Dr. James Meyer- Suffolk Wildlife) It is noted that water voles have not been seen recently in the Beck after the latest sewage ingress. We have reported this to the Environment Agency as pollution of a water course.

Questions have recently been raised regarding the Weybread treatment plant and its ability to cope with the potential of 263 homes from Fressingfield and possibly a further 110 from Weybread. Answers are awaited.

The shortcomings of the flooding and sewage assessment are outlined in the lobby paper "[Fressingfield Flood Risk and Drainage](#)" The information used a to make decisions on the capacity of the drainage and sewerage and its ability to accommodate further housing is based on the reported incidents of flooding. Flooding is notoriously under- reported, as Suffolk County Council themselves acknowledge, so our own evidence as residents is particularly important.

Photographs and e mails are available to substantiate the matters raised in this document.

Dr John Castro on Behalf of SAFE

SAFE Members Pam Castro, Dawn Cavilla, Abi Maydon, John Kelsall, Trevor Orchard, Elizabeth Manero

4 July 2018