

Dear Dr. Poulter,

I am writing to you with regard to flooding and sewage egress in Fressingfield. This is a long standing problem, but it is undoubtedly getting significantly worse. To some extent the two problems are inter-related, but In this letter I will focus primarily on the sewage egress. There have been 9 episodes in the last two years and five since 1st October 2019 on each occasion raw sewage and sanitary products have been widely dispersed over Low Road ( IP21 5QL) and adjacent areas. The sanitary material spreads over the roads, pavements and into people's gardens. This is a cause of pollution into the Beck and there have been many reports to the Environment Agency. Clean up teams have been necessary from Anglian Water. The sewage egress is due to the elevation of manhole covers and up to 7 of these have occurred in one episode of contamination.

Attached are some representative pictures which show the seriousness of the situation and how it occurs.

The situation was reviewed by Vincent Pearce, Senior Planning Officer at MSDC when Applications were made in 2017 for over 200 houses in the village, all were refused . The Planning Officer's recommendation states " The proposed development will exacerbate the known flooding and pollution problem-- as a result of the fact that the foul sewer will contain more foul water." " As it becomes increasingly common to experience extreme weather conditions in the UK it seems ridiculous and completely unacceptable to expect local people to endure what at times looks and smells like a medieval living environment"( Vincent Pearce Planning Committee A 21 November 2018.)

Public Health England have been advised of the risks by the Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council. Abdul Razaq the Public Health Director stated " I would agree that the situation relating to sewage leaks is not acceptable and unpleasant."

I have been in contact with MSDC (Environmental Health and Planning), Ofwat, Water Council for England, Suffolk County Council ( Flood and Water Management and Public Health) Suffolk Wildlife, The Department of Communities, Housing and Local Government and the Environment Agency. All agencies accept there is a serious problem and everyone understands the logic of the arguments, but unfortunately I am making no headway in achieving a resolution, hence this letter to you.

There are two aspects to this situation. Firstly, to prevent it getting worse and in this respect the temporary or stopping of further development in Fressingfield would seem to be the only way forward. More houses will undoubtedly generate more sewage and logically increase the egress. The second issue is to correct the pre-existing problems, but this has proved difficult. Fressingfield has only one sewer and that is the foul sewer. Surface water should not enter it , but should be taken away through a series of culverts, conduits and ditches. The cause of the overflow of raw sewage from the foul sewer appears to be surface water entering the foul system, therefore reducing the functional capacity of the sewer to rid the village of foul water. This cause has been known for at least 2 years and no progress has been made in improving the situation. There is currently a combined working party of Anglian Water and the village, but this has made no progress and no new factors have emerged. This group, on which I sit, is being used as a shield by Anglian Water to evade their responsibility to deal with sewage effectively and safely.

Anglian Water continues to advise the Planning authority that the sewer has capacity for extra houses without question or making comment about sewage egress.

Their flawed logic is that the sewerage has dry flow capacity to take more development. They claim that the non foul water is not their problem as it should not be there. This water does however decrease the functional capacity of the sewer which is not fit for purpose and leads to sewage overflow. They widely accept that it is a problem, as evidenced by cooperating with the Working

Group. They also know that surface water from some houses goes into the sewer as they make a financial charge for this surface water going into their system. It is not known how many houses discharge surface water to the foul sewer and there are no funds or accurate techniques to identify them. In any event as these are historical connections there are no powers to remove them. The manhole covers cannot be sealed as the system would then backflow into domestic houses with sewage and sanitary products appearing in bathrooms and kitchens.

We have failed to convince Anglian Water of their flawed logic that they have capacity to accommodate more sewage despite their admitting that there are times when the system is "overwhelmed" in the words of the CEO. (see email above - 14th November 2019). As a result the villagers of Fressingfield have the unhealthy and unsavoury situation of significant amounts of sewage in the public areas, whilst every Agency with supposed responsibility for solving the problem fails to do so. This is a situation that really should not be tolerated in a civilised country like the UK.

I would be very happy to discuss this with you and would certainly value your help in dealing with this serious problem.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

John Castro MB BS.B Sc FRCS( Ed and Eng) PhD MS

( on behalf of SAFE- John Kelsall, Pam Castro, Tim Eastoe, Elizabeth Manero, Abi Maydon, Paul McCann, Michael Miles)

Dr Poulter letter