

Kingsbridge Town Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FLOOD & WINTER RESILIENCE COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2020 IN QUAY HOUSE

Present: Cllr Barrie Fishman (Chairman)
Cllr Anne Balkwill
Cllr Mike Jennings
Cllr Philip Cole
Cllr Chris Povey
Cllr Graham Price

In Attendance: Johnathan Hubbard, Pell Frischmann
Two Members of Public
Martin Johnson (Secretary)

19/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

Public Open Forum

Mr Alexander Fulcher, of Western Backway, stated that his end terraced property was next to the leat and that he had experienced flooding in the past and kept a stock of sandbags and flood board in readiness. He was particularly concerned that the water level adjacent to his home was shallow at circa one foot depth however, it was a much greater depth at either side at circa 2 feet deep. He suggested that the leat required dredging.

Cllr Fishman and Johnathan Hubbard explained that gravel deposits would be flushed downstream from the Norton Brook watercourse. It may be a simple case that an obstacle in the leat had increased the height of deposits and water level at his location over time. Dredging of the leat was earmarked as an option in the Kingsbridge Community Emergency Plan but to date external funding had not been made available to action physical interventions in town. However, Kingsbridge had been fortunate to achieve Defra Pathfinder funding in the recent past. He was advised to contact the Environment Agency to establish management of the watercourse, potential riparian ownership matters and to request dredging of the leat to limit the flood risk to his property; the Town Clerk could assist if required.

19/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

19/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members were in receipt of the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 September 2019 which were approved as a correct record.

19/14

KINGSBRIDGE CATCHMENT STUDY

Pell Frischmann (PF) provided an update on the Kingsbridge Integrated Urban Drainage Management project; the salient matters were:

- PF anticipated its report to be completed by late March for Devon County Council (DCC), Environment Agency (EA) and South West Water (SWW).
- The report would provide a range of options to mitigate flooding in the town.
- All options had been assessed as feasible e.g. a discrete pumping station situated in the Bus Station locale.
- SWW anticipated carrying out some independent drainage and sewage works in 2020. Sewage had been historically overlooked and allowed to discharge into the estuary however, regulations were being tightened. Indeed, further SWW drainage works were anticipated in the next 2 to 3 years.
- Mill Street should not flood with debris if a pump was installed however, it was not cost effective for pumps to have an independent power supply. Such measures should be available within the next 5 years subject to capital projects' funding.
- A solution for Devon Square flooding could be available within the next 12 months which would require a storage area in the locale.
- All partners would be required to communicate going forwards and align funding streams in order to pay for such works.
- Other options included: a flood gate near the former railway line in Westville and improvements for attenuation in the Duncombe and Norton Brook streams.
- New housing developments identified in the Joint Local Plan would be required to evidence flood mitigation schemes in their plans.
- There was likely to be potential environmental concerns if a barrage at the head of the estuary was proposed.
- The removal of vegetation from watercourses would assist the risk of flooding however, there were no immediate concerns with vegetation growing adjacent to the Norton Brook watercourse to the north of the Tesco retail store.
- Ultimately, the future looked positive for Kingsbridge, but it may take 5 to 10 years for all flood mitigation projects to be achieved.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to note Pell Frischmann's update on the Kingsbridge catchment study.

19/15

FLOOD RESILIENCE

15.1 Kingsbridge Community Emergency Plan (last updated June 2019). The plan required minor updates. A redacted version was available on the town council's (KTC) website.

15.2 Recruitment of volunteer Flood Wardens and potential training by the Environment Agency. Members received a draft press release which invited expressions of interest from local residents to become volunteer Flood Wardens. High risk neighbourhoods were identified. It was **Recommended** to release a press release via the website, Facebook and notice boards to recruit Flood Wardens.

Unfortunately, the EA was unable to undertake further Flood Warden training at present due to a lack of resources (see 15.3 below). However, it was noted that Communities Prepared had recently produced 2 worthwhile guides:

- Flood Volunteer Training Part 1 – Understanding flooding and your role as a Community Emergency Volunteer, and
- Flood Volunteer Training Part 2 – Flood risk awareness.

15.3 Town Clerk attendance at the EA's East Cornwall flood warden training 26 March.

The EA had arranged for the Town Clerk to attend the above training event. On completion, the Town Clerk would feedback to Members whether a KTC managed, i.e. in-house, flood warden training event could be worked-up or whether an external agency was required to deliver such training. If an external agency was needed then other local parishes could also be invited to take part.

15.4 Feedback from the Devon Resilience Forum held at Rattery 27 November. Cllrs Cole and Fishman, and the Town Clerk, had attended the event.

15.5 Flood alarm for the town centre? Members recognised that a loud audible alarm was probably not required however, there was a desire to make local residents sit-up and take notice of potential flood incidents by subscribing to receive Met Office weather alerts.

15.6 Flood incidents since the last meeting including tidal surge 13 February and operation of highways flood warning signs. PF reported that the flood incident on 13 February had been the second biggest tidal surge since 2014. Bridge Street, Ilbert Road, Prince of Wales Road and Mill Street were all flooded from circa 0815 to 1000 however, there had been no reports of properties being flooded. The flashing highways flood warning signs had been operated. A roster of Peter Trembath (flood warden), Cllr Jennings and the Town Clerk had covered the period of high tides.

15.7 Spring tides diary (182 in number high tides over 5m in 2020). Members noted a very large number of high tides for 2020 and hence the potential for further tidal surges. The timetable was available on KTC's website and identified a flood risk time window of 45 minutes before/after high tide.

15.8 Community Resilience Store and stock of community resilience equipment. Cllrs Cole, Cope, Fishman, Price and Vann had completed sandbag filling over the Christmas period. Circa 50 sandbags had been handed to residents of Charleton during a recent flood incident given the immediacy of their plight. However, the Town Clerk had replied to a recent request that unfortunately KTC could no longer supply sandbags as they were needed for the Kingsbridge community and Charleton Parish Council had been informed. It was agreed that an absolute minimum ready-use stock of 50 sandbags should be maintained in the new Community Resilience Store located to the rear of the Garage.

A simple system was in place to gain access to all community resilience equipment held including radios, headtorches, hi-viz clothing, highways signage etc. via combination lock

access to the Garage only i.e. an information board behind the Garage door identified locations/keys to equipment supplies.

15.9 Deletion of river and rain gauges. Confirmed with Devon County Council following previous consideration by Members.

15.10 Highways surface water gullies – Devon County Council clearance 2019/20. DCC's annual, and every third year, clearance of drains had taken place simultaneously in late 2019 therefore, the local highways officer had advised that KTC was not required to clear again during the current financial year.

Members noted that water settled over drains in Embankment Road near Estuary View and the Recreation Ground.

15.11 Budget financial year 2020/21 – budget and expenditure. The budget included £750 for salt, grit bins, sand and sandbags; and £2,500 for surface water drains clearance (which would be required in late 2020).

19/16 WINTER RESILIENCE

16.1 Winter weather incidents 2019/20. None to date.

16.2 Winter weather wardens. Circa 20 in number wardens covered almost the whole of the town and had bags of grit stored at their homes ready for use in local neighbourhoods. They were contacted each October to ensure they were content to continue in their role. Members noted that they may also wish to become Flood Wardens.

16.3 Grit bins and potential of extra grit for winter weather situations. KTC managed 10 in number grit bins around town and a pallet of extra grit bags had been recently delivered by DCC free of charge. It was reported that the grit bin in Higher Warren Road had been tipped over and required to be re-secured.

19/17 IMMEDIATE MATTERS

It was agreed to write to Pell Frischmann to thank Johnathan Hubbard for his catchment study updates at committee meetings.

19/18 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed in September 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.34 p.m.