

NOTES of a Meeting held on 9th January 2014 at Crown Chambers, Melksham regarding a flooding problem in Beanacre

Present: Parish Council: Chairman; Cllrs. Alan Baines and Cllr Terry Chivers
Beanacre residents: David Rivers (24A); David Doyle (25) and Ian Maclean (28)
St Barnabas Church, Beanacre: Shirley Allister (Church Warden).

- 1/ **Flooding adjacent to Church land:** Cllr. Chivers reported that on Christmas Eve, Mr Rivers' property had required pumping out by the Fire Engine four times. He had walked the land as the local Flood Warden and felt some ditches required urgent clearance. Water was draining from the Church Field into surrounding land behind it which was a few inches lower. Mr Rivers' property was the lowest property on the left of a small lane, between the church and Westlands Lane.
- It was noted that 21/22 along this lane were occupied and then the next two properties were empty. There were plans to build two more houses in one of the gardens of the houses and this building site was adjacent to the lane and Mr Rivers' garden.

Mr Doyle explained the summerhouse at the bottom of his garden had been flooded and water had come right across his garden and almost into his house. He had been badly flooded. There had originally been a ditch that went to the main road by the bus stop but it had been filled in about 50 years ago, when houses were built and the land was divided for gardens.

Mr Maclean reported that he had discussed the drainage system with Barry Scarlett who was born and used to live in Beanacre. The land behind the church field, now owned by the Masseys, had a ridge and furrow drainage system that flowed towards Westlands Lane and a stone drain. This was prior to building of the new houses and drains under Westlands Lane. The ditch had gone behind Henry's house (26) then to 27 and his own house (28) and through an orchard to the bus stop.

There was a difference of opinion between Mr Doyle and Mr Maclean as to which way the water flowed.

Cllr. Chivers reported the drain went straight across Westlands Lane (next to the Gillings' property) and then ran towards A350 via an open stream behind some cottages. It might be possible to solve David Doyle's problems by digging out the ditch between the church land and the Massey's land.

Mr Maclean further reported that in 1963 No 28 had been owned by Mr Marshall who had also owned land at No 24 Beanacre. He had told a neighbour he wished to build on the land but at least 2 blocks higher. When approval was given, the bungalow was built half a metre lower and so water collected there. No other houses in the area had suffered with flooding problems before this.

- 2/ **Flooding at 24A Beanacre:** Mr David Rivers reported that he had been pumping for several days. There were two problems:-
- a) The flood plain had risen dramatically and excess water was now causing a problem every winter.
 - b) His property was built on land at least one metre below the church cricket field and water drained straight out of the field into his garden.

A surveyor needed to examine the levels as it was difficult to find exactly where the lowest point was due to water flowing over the land all the time. The problem could be fixed in ditches and there urgently needed to be a ditch which could take the water into a land drain and then via a culvert between the houses in the lane and then on to a reservoir.

The Clerk reported that during construction of the present Play Area, an aquifer had been discovered just below the surface of the church land. This had discharged water into the air in a fountain and it took considerable time and effort to stem the flow.

The name "Beanacre" came from old French (Norman Conquest) and meant an acre of springs.

Cllr. Baines asked if the water needed to drain towards the railway line to the west of the Massey's land.

Mr Rivers said no, the water needed to go into a culvert and then flow towards Westlands Lane, on the church side.

Ian McClean (28) further reported there had been a ditch at the side of Mr Earle's house which went into the Massey's land. At the property, originally owned by the Scarlett family, there had been four feet of water which had to be pumped out by the Fire Brigade on Christmas Eve.

Cllr. Baines advised that the County Principal Drainage Engineer, Daniel Everett should be asked to do a Lidar plot of the area. This was agreed. It was further agreed to hold a site meeting the following Saturday morning 19th January 2014 at 11.30 a.m., and to invite the Masseys to attend to shed more light on the flow and direction of old drains.

Recommended: 1. Danny Everett be asked to do a Lidar Plot of the land
2. A site meeting be held the following Saturday morning and the Masseys and any interested residents be invited to attend.

Meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

Chairman, 17th February 2014

Notes of a Site Meeting held on Saturday 18th January 2014 at Beanacre at 10.00 a.m. to examine the drains and areas of potential flooding.

Present: Parish Council: Cllr. Terry Chivers and the Clerk, Mary Jarvis

Residents: David (and Patricia) Rivers; David Doyle; Ian Maclean; William and Cilla Massey. Ruth Gillings participated for a short while during the meeting to explain how flooding occurred at their home on Christmas Eve.

Apologies: Council Chair Richard Wood

The attendees walked each site. It was noted that at the last CATG Meeting the Principal Drainage Engineer had agreed to carry out a camera survey of drains in Westlands Lane

Cilla and William Massey took the party over their meadowlands next to the railway. These undulating fields were waterlogged between the undulating ridges. The Masseys explained that the water in their water meadows rose and subsided in accordance with rain fall and the water could not at present flow away towards A350 to flow under this road and on to the river. They emphasised there were two unconnected and separate problems in this area :-

(a) David Doyle's flooding of his summerhouse next to their field boundary which was very local. They sympathised with why he needed to pump water in a southerly direction across the south field but felt this did not help because the water went round in a circle and back again into the pools behind his garden.

(b) David Rivers' property flooding.

David Rivers explained that his garden being lower than the church field which had been built up, was continually under water. He was pumping regularly. Under his floorboards there was at least 7 inches of standing water. Water could be seen at foundation level of his bungalow and around the edge of his garden next to the church field boundary.

Ruth Gillings reported that flooding had occurred to their properties Nos. 30/31 in Westlands Lane making her very unwell and causing breathing problems. The flooding was shown to be caused by blocked drains in Westlands Lane and these had now been cleared.

Cllr. Chivers referred to the Scarletts' Cottage in Westlands lane which had suffered severe flooding on Christmas Eve and was still uninhabited.

The owner of the paddock joined the Meeting to explain his paddock was continually under water.

It was noted that the large plot of land behind the cottages on the main road that was currently being proposed for development for two extra houses was adjacent to Mr Rivers' bungalow (24A). Any further development here could exacerbate current flooding problems if built upon, unless a complete underground drain linking into Mr Rivers' garden was installed which took water down to the main road.

It was noted that Beanacre was still not on mains drainage and gardens had cesspits which did not improve the situation.

The Clerk reported that the flooding notes together with a map showing areas where water collected would be forwarded to the Principal Drainage Engineer Daniel Everett.

Those who attended the meeting expressed willingness to be part of a Beanacre Flooding Group.

Meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.

Chairman 17th February 2014

Note: Ian McClean later sent the Parish Council notes about the flooding problems – attached for information and also forwarded to Danny Everett

