

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

1. What will the Environment Agency be doing to help with the flooding situation? Is funding available to help?

**Response:** The Environment Agency representatives stated they only had permissive powers to deal with flooding. There was no legal obligation to undertake any flood defence work. There were proposals to create a single agency to deal with flooding but the role of this body was still being clarified. If this went ahead the Environment Agency would have an overview of the problems caused by flooding. Officers from the Environment Agency agreed to gather information at the meeting and to meet with local residents to discuss timing and water flow etc in the area.

There was some landowner responsibility although there were no legal powers to force people to clear their water courses or to carry out general maintenance. Consent must be granted before anyone can carry out dredging work and each application would be judged on its merits.

Work to the Swill Brook was currently graded as a low priority for the Environment Agency. There were no plans to clear the brook and Crudwell was currently considered as a low-risk area. The Environment Agency did not have adequate resources to undertake any work at this time.

2. When would a CCTV camera be used to identify the size of the drain at York House?

**Response:** A meeting would be taking place tomorrow at Wiltshire County Council and Crudwell was at the top of the Agenda. It was hoped that the matter could be discussed at this meeting.

3. Had funding been removed from the Environment Agency budget for flooding?

**Response:** No, the budget for flooding had actually increased this year. However the budget had been reduced by £14 million last year across the whole country.

4. How does the gully emptying process work?

**Response:** The Wiltshire County Council representative explained that, in general terms, gullies on a main road were emptied twice a year, other roads once a year and estate roads once every two years. One gully tanker operated for four days on a scheduled programme of work leaving one day for ad hoc work where particular problems had been identified.

5. Properties in Hankerton had been flooded last year as well and the Environment Agency had stated that such heavy rainfall would only happen once every 40 years. The Swill Brook had not been dredged for many years.

**Response:** The Environment Agency stated that all dredging work was done according to its merits but it was surprising if the Swill Brook had not been dredged for many years.

6. What areas constituted a high priority according to the Environment Agency? Were they all urban areas?

**Response:** The Environment Agency stated that Swindon, Aylesbury, Oxford, Witney and Banbury were all considered to be high risk areas. If these areas were to flood then around 400 properties would be affected. There was not adequate funding to undertake work in all areas and therefore priorities had to be established.

7. When would work be undertaken in low-priority areas?

**Response:** No timescale for low-priority work had been identified. Funding was an issue and not all the work in the high-priority areas had yet been completed.

8. In July/August officers had stated that the Swill Brook would be cleared by Christmas and this had not happened.

**Response:** Wiltshire County Council confirmed that some work had taken place.

9. What proportion of the village needs to be affected for an area to be considered low or high risk?

**Response:** Decisions regarding risk were made on actual numbers affected and not the proportion of an area. In some areas hundreds or even thousands of properties were affected whereas in Crudwell there were only 30 (although it was acknowledged that this was a high proportion of the village).

10. How long does it take to get a response once an area has been flooded?

**Response:** Properties in some areas were flooded each year – it can take a long time to get a response and a resolution.

11. Having said that the community has to take some action on this matter some of the flooding was caused by the culvert under the railway bridge which was owned by Network Rail. Flooding often results from a lack of maintenance. Are they covered under the multi-agency arrangements?

**Response:** Network Rail was aware of the impact of the flooding in the area. North Wiltshire District Council had written to Network Rail regarding this matter but had not yet received a response.

12. The pipe under "Hedgehogs" is inadequate and regularly floods the property. A survey needs to take place to find out exactly what the problem is and nothing has yet been done.

**Response:** Due to the amount of rainfall over the last six months many properties in low lying areas had been flooded. It was important to clear the drains and ditches and to look at the river flows in the area to see if anything could be done about the direction of flow. The local authority was seeking more funding to address these problems and to enable some work to be undertaken.

13. Why has nothing been done in 7 months? A survey could have been undertaken in this time.

**Response:** A programme of work is in place which covers the whole County of Wiltshire. Priorities have to be set as major work has to be undertaken throughout the area. Officers from Wiltshire County Council agreed to survey the drain under Hedgehogs and The Street in the next four weeks.

14. The gully in The Street, Crudwell has not been cleaned for two years and is blocked. Culverts in The Butts, Crudwell also need to be cleared and it has insufficient capacity.

**Response:** Wiltshire County Council will look into this matter.

15. Alderton also has a problem and a number of cars have been damaged in the recent floods. The new drains that have been installed are overwhelmed. The situation appears to have become worse since Wessex Water carried out the work. A meeting to discuss the options available would be helpful.

**Response:** Wiltshire County Council's survey team would look at the drainage system in this area.

16. Is there a possibility of providing a stormwater pumping station?

**Response:** It could be part of a technical solution; however funding was not currently available for this type of scheme.