

## **Flood Defence Record of facts and Shilton Parish Council action plan**

### **History**

#### **2007 Flood:**

On the 20th July 2007 large parts of the South of England were subjected to intensive storms. The scale and speed of the rainfall was unprecedented and took most communities by surprise causing widespread flooding of highways and property.

Shilton was badly affected by the massive storms, which commenced in the morning and subsided in the evening. During the following days further flooding and disruption occurred due to rising levels of the Shill Brook.

At RAF Brize Norton, the records show that over 125 mm (5 inches) of rain fell in 12 hours, and this is a record going back over 100 years. Not only that, but the period from May to July had been the wettest on record since 1903 and meant that the ground was saturated and unable to absorb any more water.

#### **WODC 2007 Flood Report: Shilton Parish**

On the 10th October 2007, the West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet approved a request for additional resources in order that a review of the flood affected areas of the District could be carried out and further reports be prepared for the Council's considerations.

During the first half of 2008, WODC Engineers conducted site surveys of Shilton and the Shill Valley and held an information-gathering meeting with a Shilton resident at their house in Shilton on 13 June 2008.

In July 2008, WODC published the Shilton Parish Flood Report. A copy of this report and associated maps may be referenced online at:

- <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/134902/Shilton-flood-report.pdf>
- <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/134899/Shilton-flood-maps.pdf>

#### **Shilton Flood Defence Group**

On 17 June 2008, the Shilton Flood Defence Group (SFDG) had its inaugural meeting. The membership of the group was comprised of concerned Shilton residents who were affected by the 2007 floods, as well as WODC Councillor Verena Hunt. The remit of the Group was to coordinate flood defence efforts between WODC, Shilton Parish Council and its residents.

On 3 November 2010, WODC issued a News release entitled "*West Oxfordshire continues flood protection work*".

This news release documented flood protection work completed or about to commence in the following WODC communities: Bampton, Broadwell, Brize Norton, Leafield, Fordwells, Ramsden, Witney, Filkins, Madley Brook, Cassington, Minster Lovell, East End and Westwell. Conspicuously absent from this News Release was any mention of Shilton.

As a result of Shilton being omitted from the above News Release, the Shilton Flood Defence Group held a meeting with WODC Principal Engineer Laurence King on 25 November 2010.

In this meeting Laurence King informed the Shilton Flood Defence Group of a new EA & DEFRA flood defence grant that the Parish could apply for.

Part of the stipulation of this grant was that the Shilton Parish community must commit to underwrite a portion of the construction works in the form of community "match funding". It was unclear at this meeting what the amount of the community contribution would be as the final costs of the works was unknown at this point in time.

The Shilton flood Defence Group subsequently canvassed all property owners who were flooded in 2007 and received a commitment from all of these property owners, bar one, to personally underwrite the requisite community match funding requirement of the flood defence grant application.

#### **EA & DEFRA Funding Applications:**

On 1 December 2010 Laurence King, WODC's Principal Engineer, made an application to the EA & DEFRA (Environment Agency & Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), on behalf of Shilton Parish for Flood Protection works.

Mr King & the Shilton Flood Defence Group augmented the application with requested information over the first few months of 2011, and then were informed in May 2011 that the application had been rejected by the EA.

In September 2011 Laurence King from WODC submitted a new application to the EA & DEFRA on behalf of Shilton Parish for Flood Protection works and in February 2012 the funding was approved, and in July 2012 WODC received the funding from EA. The WODC announcement and update on this successful application can be found online at this address:

- <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/135278/Parish-flood-defence-updates.pdf>

### **WODC Land Surveys**

On 7 Nov 2012, WODC Engineers presented to the Shilton Flood Defence Group their Land Survey / Desk Survey / Computer Modelling report which indicated possible upstream of the village locations that would be appropriate for two “flood defence attenuation bunds”.

These bunds are essentially mounds of earth and special clay that would dam / retain severe levels of water back and allow a controlled flow through the Parish byway of a small diameter (approx. 400 mm) pipe inserted into the bunds at the location where the bunds intersect perpendicular with the Shill Brook.

The Shilton Flood Defence Group, WODC Engineers & WODC Councillor Verena Hunt then proceeded to liaise with local land owners and their agents to find two locations for the bunds that were both acceptable to all land owners as well as deemed robust enough to provide the required level of flood protection.

In the spring of 2014, Mr & Mrs Metcalfe at Shilton Downs Farm gave their consent to the building of two attenuation bunds on their land. This permission enabled WODC to proceed with the required tending process to commence.

### **Shilton Parish Community Funding Requirement**

The successful WODC & Environment Agency grant application was based on a ‘matched funding’ basis where the EA have contributed £80,000 to the flood defences works and the Parish needs to match that offer with a “top-up” community payment.

Before the receipt of the final tenders, it was estimated that the Shilton Parish community would have to contribute a “top-up” of £25,000 so that the estimated costs of the work required can be covered. It was understood by all that the agreed works could not commence until the Shilton Parish community provides an irrevocable agreement to pay the full estimate of £25,000.

To date the Parish has raised the sum of £7,638.00 through various means including the Shilton Open Gardens and donations from OCC (Oxfordshire County Council.) As a result, the Shilton Parish community has a shortfall of £17,362 when compared to the WODC required estimate of £25,000 of Shilton Parish Community funding.

### **Shilton Parish Loan suggestion:**

The properties affected by the flooding in 2007 originally agreed to underwrite the community monies required but of course since then heavy rains have affected most of us in the Parish.

Last winter we again experienced heavy and prolonged falls of rain and this time although water levels were high, the volume of water seriously affected the Bradwell Village and Shilton Village sewerage system. The sewage situation was so dire that the Thames Water had to remove tanker loads of waste from the Bradwell Village and Shilton Village sewerage system in order to remove what could have been another disaster.

Given the fact that flooding was now seen as event that effected all residents of the Shilton parish, and given the £17,362 shortfall in Shilton Parish Community funding required for the EA grant funded Shilton flood defence works, the suggestion of taking out a discounted fixed rate loan from WODC repayable though Parish Council Tax Precepts was presented at the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 28 May with no objections.

The suggested loan would be for ten years and the council rates for each property in the Parish would be increased by approximately £9 each year, as this would be a sufficient amount to repay the loan over the agreed 10-year period.

The Parish was advised that because it is a public body it would have to apply for permission to take out the loan from the Whitehall Department for Communities and Local Government, a process that could delay the commencement of the flood defence works even more and possibly even jeopardize the funding made available to the Parish from the EA.

#### **Tender Quotes & New Parish Community Fundraising Plan:**

On Friday 30 May 2014, tender quotes for the flood defence works were submitted to WODC.

These tender quotes been made available to the Shilton Parish and the costs are less than the original estimate.

The Parish now needs to provide WODC £12,457.54 of “match funding”, of which the Parish have already raised £7,638.00, thus leaving a balance of £4,819.54 to fund.

Following special Extraordinary Shilton Parish Council meeting on 5 June 2014, the Shilton Parish Council have revised the original Parish Council Flood Defence works funding proposal and have now created a plan of action for the Parish to implement.

The Parish will revert back to the original commitment made by the most affected (by flooding) property owners in the village and ask for their contributions to raise the £4,819.54 required. The Shilton Parish Council simply requests that the £4,819.54 in funding required be evenly split between the flood prone property owners in the village who will in effect “underwrite” the £4,819.54 evenly between themselves.

In addition, the Shilton Parish Council have now agreed to raise additional flood defence funds by applying an increase in the Annual Parish Council Tax precept of £20.00 per household per annum effective from April 2015 for one year only.

Thus, the potential offer of a loan from WODC will now not be required and this will result in the up stream flood defence works to commence at the end of June 2014 as there will be no delay in waiting for the approval of the loan from central government.

Once the £20.00 per household 2015 Parish precept funds are with the Parish Council, the Shilton Parish Council will meet and review the possibility of paying some monies back to the 'underwriters' and / or applying the funds to additional flood defence works in the centre of the village but the Parish is currently not in a position to guarantee the use of these 2015 Parish precept flood defence funds at this time.

**Shilton Parish Council Plan of Action:**

The plan of action is:

- Report back to the Flood Defence Group the decision made by SPC.
- Obtain written agreement and monies from the original group of properties to under write the £4,819.54 of funding required for the works.
- Confirm to WODC that we have sufficient funds in place for "match-funding"
- Present our decision to Bradwell Village on 18 June and advise all residents in the Parish.
- Commence the flood defence works at the end of June 2014.
- Aim to have the works completed by 30 September 2014.
- Provide a full analysis of costs and contributions for inspection if required.

As an aside, the completed works will have a positive affect on Insurance Premiums and Excess sums for all residents of Shilton Parish as insurance companies look favourably upon Flood Defence works completed by the Environment Agency.

We trust that this information will allow us all to work together to provide a much safer Shilton Parish for us to live in.

Thank you

From the Shilton Parish Councillors:

J Heyworth, B Adams, A Postan, T Cripps, M Linney