



## **Flooding Public Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of the Public Meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February  
at 7.00 pm at Bottesford VC Hall, Belvoir Road, NG13 0BG**

### **In Attendance**

**Bottesford Parish Council** – Cllrs Bob Bayman, Leigh Donger, Matthew Reid, Tony Bennett, Michael Thomas, Anne Ablewhite, Kathy Sparham.

**Bottesford Flood Team** – Paul Day, John Bingham, Mike Brodell, Simon Ashworth, Simon George, George Goodson, Ian Rochester

**Bottesford Flood Warden** – Russell Fisher

**Environment Agency (EA)** – Richard Cooper, George Skinner, Matt Betesta

**Lead Local Flood Agency (LLFA)** – Dan Killer, Rob Ryan Matthews

**Flood Resilience Champions** - Flood Mary and Mike

**County Councillor** – Bryan Lovegrove

**Members of the Public** - 172

The meeting was opened by Cllr Bob Bayman who outlined the plan for the meeting as one of two halves. The first half of the meeting covering the events of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and how we might reduce the amount of water coming into the village. The second half to address how to make the community of Bottesford more resilient to future flood events.

Those in attendance were invited to share their hopes for the meeting. The following issues were raised;

- One resident whose home flooded when water came up through the floor would like to know what measures can be put in place to stop the body of water coming down the High Street.
- A resident whose home had flooded for the first time in 21 years noted that the water peaked differently to previously flood events and would like to know what happened?
- It was asserted that control measures need to be taken further up stream to protect the village.
- One resident would like to know who is responsible for the what happened and for them to act rather than residents being asked to do the work they pay taxes for.
- Another resident wanted to know why there was such a surge of water.
- A lack of maintenance of watercourses was raised and it was asked why those with power are not doing anything and why is the council not solving the problem.
- An Easthorpe resident noted a surge in the river Devon of 5ft, more than he had ever seen before. He asked why no one is doing anything about increased flood events.
- A resident asked for a central repository of information including names/suppliers of flood defense measures.
- A resident asked if they could be told in advance before street cleaning so that parked cars could be moved.

### **How water moves in Bottesford**

**LD - Leigh Donger (Parish Councillor, Farmer and Muston resident)**

**PD - Paul Day (Civil Engineer and Bottesford resident)**

LD took resident through a map showing the path of the Devon from its origin at Eaton, into Knipton reservoir, Belvoir Lakes (these lakes have three sections, separated by a weir and a waterfall, there are no controls), the river then passes to the east of Woolsthorpe and flows through Muston and Bottesford. The river backs up at a small bridge in Muston which, when it occurs, threatens 3 properties.

LD pointed out that the most severe flooding in the village of Bottesford had come from the Winter Beck which overtopped before the bridge on Belvoir Road. From this location the water moved down Belvoir Road, flooding a number of houses on the Road on Silverwood Drive, before turning onto the High Street reaching Albert Street/Barkestone Lane, homes and businesses were flooded in these areas.

LD showed images of the water movement from the Winter Beck and a video which showed water spilling from the canal at Muston Gorse, from here the water flowed down the Winter Beck and into Bottesford

PD noted that, on the 4<sup>th</sup> January there was very heavy rain and sleet which fell onto snow and then melted onto already saturated ground. The volume of water led to a flood warning (Flood expected River Devon at Bottesford incl Easthorpe, Muston, Woolsthorpe. Act now.) being issued at 05.40 on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

PD showed the meeting a map which illustrated the movement of water in the parish on 6<sup>th</sup> January. A few notable points were raised;

- There was a tree trunk lodged under the bridge on Belvoir Road for a number of hours.
- A section of the Winter Beck between the bridge on Belvoir Road and Barkestone Lane has not been maintained for a number of years.
- There is no adopted water drainage on Belvoir Road and the maintenance regime for this area is unknown.
- Gullies in the village were completely silted up.

Having outlined the way water moved PD noted that this is completely different to flood activity predicted by maps produced by the EA. Water is coming from areas not predicted by the EA and there are several river catchment areas involved. The canal, which was abandoned almost 90 years ago, is snarled up with reeds and silt. The canal was cleared close to Grantham giving it open flow to the west from the A1 towards the Winter Beck at which point it reaches this snarled up area.

PD noted that EA maps now have an allowance for climate change which may result on areas previously viewed as at a medium risk of flooding now being considered at a high risk. In this context it should be noted that even were all gullies and the canal cleared the underlying risk of climate change could increase the risk of flooding in our parish in the future.

Residents in attendance raised the following questions/points;

- In the past 20 years what has been done to keep the rivers and canal clear? The issues need to be dealt with upstream.
- The canal is blocked by Lock Cottage at which point water cannot get through. There is an area where the field is regularly flooded by the canal.
- Why is it so difficult to dredge the canal.

Cllr Bayman informed the meeting that it has been very difficult to engage with the Canal and River Trust (CRT), the charity responsible for the canal, and in one response it was asserted that no water left the canal on 6th January. It may be that this issue has to be elevated to the level of the ombudsman as a serious breach of the canal wall could put many houses at risk. One problem is that, as a charity, the focus of the CRT is on navigable canals. As a non-navigable section of the canal the only concern for this area is for it to be safe and secure.

### **The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)**

A representative of the LLFA outlined its role as the management of flood risk from groundwater, surface water and ordinary watercourses. The LLFA does not have any powers with regards to main water courses (of which the river Devon is one), canals (as these are not ordinary watercourses) or reservoirs.

In the event of a flood incident or apparent flood risk the LLFA can get relevant agencies to investigate and identify possible actions. This may occur in an informal manner, however, in some instances the LLFA is required, under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to produce a public statement of the circumstance of a flood event and the relevant parties responsible to manage the risk.

The process of a section 19 report can be lengthy but the LLFA undertakes work to engage with relevant parties as soon as possible. In this case the main parties they are working with are those responsible for maintenance of the Winter Beck. The LLFA will seek to engage with the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) which is responsible for The Winter Beck and the CRT. Although the LLFA has no powers in relation to the canal it has been able to work with the Environment Agency and the CRT in the past. In the first instance the LLFA will look to negotiate necessary action as, even in the instances where it does have enforcement powers, negotiation is much quicker than going down the legal route.

The following questions were raised by those in the room:

- Has there been no attempt at engagement with either the IDB or CRT in the weeks since the 2th January?
- What about the section of the Winter Beck to the west of the bridge on Belvoir Road?
- Although Leicestershire County Council cleared drain quickly afterwards they are not doing this often enough. It was pointed out that this is a matter for the Highways department not the LLFA and Cllr Bayman noted that the Parish Council has already requested that the areas most impacted by flooding in the parish be raised to priority 1 with regards to drain and gully clearing.

- What is the bridge on Belvoir Road needs to be bigger? Again, it was noted that the bridge is a Highways asset.
- Who is responsible for the Rundle (a Victorian drainage system which carries the Rundle Beck east to west through the village from Granary Lane to the West End, rebuilt in 1991/92)? It is thought that the IDB is responsible for the open section. It may be that 7 Trent is responsible for the culvert down the High Street.
- It was pointed out that the piping used for the underground section of the Rundle changes from 4" square pipe to 3" round pipe in the Bowbridge Gardens area. PD noted that he had looked into this and the pipes used both have similar capacity and the Rundle seems to be running well in this area.
- A resident asked why we can't do the work ourselves. Members of the Flood Team confirmed that they have cleared as much of the weeds as possible themselves.

### **The Environment Agency (EA)**

A representative of the EA took those in attendance through the agencies role in flood awareness.

It is important to stay informed of the situation with regards to flood risk in the area. Residents can sign up to **Met Office weather alerts** to ensure they are informed of possible severe weather impacts (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/subscribe-to-email-alerts> ).

You can also sign up for flood warnings (<https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> ). This service provides 3 levels of warning;

1. Flood alert – This means that flooding is possible and you should prepare. At this point flooding of properties is not expected and advice is to be ready and avoid low lying areas and tow paths or river paths.
2. Flood Warning – This means that flooding is expected and action to be taken to protect yourself/loved ones and property/belongs if safe to do so.
3. Severe Flood Warning - This warning is rarely issued and means there is danger to life. Advice at this stage is to stay in a safe place and be ready to evacuate your home.
4. Warning no longer in force – You will be informed by the service when a flood warning has passed.

The EA monitors river gauges 24 hours a day. The closest gauge to our parish is located at Woolsthorpe. The raw data from this gauge can be viewed at <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/2190?tid=576510> . In addition to the information ascertained from gauges the EA is considering a number of other factors including saturation levels, ground conditions and snow melt.

The flood incident in January 2025 resulted in 894 properties being internally flooded across Leicestershire. Cllr Bayman noted that over 40 homes in Bottesford were flooded which is a significant percentage of this total and therefore very important.

A resident asked why the Winter Beck could not be designated as a main watercourse. The representative confirmed that they would look into the process for this.

### **Flood Mary (FM)**

FM began by telling those in the room who had been flooded that she had been flooded 12 times and is aware what a dreadful time they are going through.

FM's experiences have led her to her work as a flood resilience champion and through this work she has learned a great deal including the fact that agencies such as the LLFA and EA are charged with managing flood risk not stopping it. The only person responsible for protecting your property is you.

1. Know your flood **risk**
2. **Plan** and prepare
3. Be aware of **products** to aid flood resistance
4. How can you improve your **recoverability** from a flood incident.

FM has created a book entitled 'Householders guide to property flood resilience'. This is available online at [https://floodmary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/HouseholdersGuidetoFloodResilience2023\\_ONLINE.pdf](https://floodmary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/HouseholdersGuidetoFloodResilience2023_ONLINE.pdf)  
The book contains information that will help you plan for future flood events, including available products and flood insurance.

### **John Bingham (JB)**

JB is a Bottesford resident with some experience in flood preparedness. JB took a number of measures to ensure that he was as prepared as possible for flood events. This included the purchase of a number of products that seek to prevent flood water entering your home. JB became aware that although he was well prepared he also wanted his neighbours to have the benefit of this information and he has created a list of Top Tips that he is happy to make available to all residents. JB is also happy to talk residents through the products and measures he has taken to optimize his own flood preparedness.

Cllr Bayman thanked everyone for coming. He noted that a lot of work was being done to try and stop water entering the village where possible and encouraged residents to take all possible steps to protect their own properties. Residents were asked to share any photos or videos of the flood event with the Parish Council as this helps to ensure we have a full picture of the incident. Residents were also encouraged to sign up if they are in the position to offer any assistance in a future flood event, this type of help can take many forms including, directing traffic, moving sandbags, making tea or providing a safe warm space for someone who has had to leave their home. If you don't have time to sign up today please contact the Clerk on 01949 222478 or email [clerk@bottesford-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bottesford-pc.gov.uk).

The meeting ended at 9pm.