



## MINUTES OF THE HANNEYS FLOOD GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FRIDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024

The Malthouse, East Hanney, 18:30

**Present:** Clive Manvell, Phil Manvell, David Stubbington, Ann Stubbington, Paul Sayers, Kay Sayers, Jane Taylor, Jim Taylor, Ian Green, Dickon Green, Marion Mantle, Mick Mantle, Clive Fewins, Anne Fewins, Keith Chisholm, Meryl Chisholm, Andrew Wastie, Peter Miller-Smith, Helen Smith, Peter Mothersole

**Apologies:** Adam Kozlowski, David Blomley, Richard Paterson, Jude Verdon, Richard Clayton, Adrian Bodimeade, Alastair Johnson, Denis Houldey, Tim Glass, Lamorna Zambellas, James Smith, Owen Meredith, Jason King, Steve McKechnie, Richard Parsons, Adam Brundett.

**Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed the twenty members present at the AGM and outlined the HFG Constitution requires an AGM. Having a Constitution enables the Flood Group to obtain insurance and have a bank account.

### **Matters arising from the 2023 AGM:**

The Chairman commented that no news or updates had been received from the Imperial College team on the progress or otherwise of developing **water level monitors**. However, there may be better news from the Future Flood Resilience Group (FFRG) where discussion on developing water level monitors has recently taken place. Tim Glass is representing the Flood Group in this organisation.

**Mapping project:** Richard Clayton has reviewed the documentation and U-Tube demonstration and understands how it works. Interested parties need to consider how best to use this resource for historical records and to help with future planning.

**Annual maintenance:** This was successfully trialled in July last year and will be tried again in August this year when the longer and warmer days make this task easier. This will be linked with awareness and equipment familiarisation.

**Chairman's Report Highlights and Working Party Photographic Report.** See separate document on the website. The Chairman commented that too many the working party sessions this past year have been spent clearing road gullies and culverts which are the responsibility of OCC Highways and the Parish Councils. This was considered necessary, prompted by the four flooding incidents and the many days the roads in both villages had standing water. The Group were able to dig out vast amounts of silt from neglected gullies and tunnel through compacted silt in associated culverts. Principal areas of concern were Church Street, Headings Pond, Dean's Farm, The Meads and Main Street in West Hanney; Summertown, School Road, The Causeway, Brookside, Main Street, Lower Mill, The Green, Halls Lane Ebbs Lane in East Hanney. A massive thank you to those volunteers who got stuck into this very dirty task and to Ian and Dickon who had the appropriate resources and experience to making road working safe with their signs and cones. There were four significant flooding incidents with the flood defences deployed around the HWMH and Community Shop. Hydrosnakes and sandbags deployed along the Brook banks, Lower Mill Bridge, Halls Lane, Main Street several times. Much the Flood Group work has identified issues which have been followed up with one-way valves fitted to drain outlets beside Lower Mill bridge, a new trench and pipework under Main Street at the end of St James View, OCC camera inspections outside Thorncombe and opposite the Deans Farm

development in Church Street. The footbridge across the Winter Lane ditch was finally repaired after being reported eight times by members of the Flood Group. The WhatsApp communication callout worked well with volunteers rapidly responding to the worsening situation and rising waters in October. Pumps were deployed around Lower Mill long into the night. We have had to spend funds on upgrading and increasing our drain clearing resources, including buying additional tools, cutting tools, drain spades, sandbags and storage bins. More bins are on order. We have also recently received donations of a submersible pump and a set of drain rods. This year we have had thirty-eight different volunteers with an average of fourteen people at each working party. Quietly in the background Denis Houldey and Clive Fewins have been keeping the Olde Housen stream in Main Street clear of excessive plant life. A huge thank you to Hanney News, residents and village organisations who have supported the Flood Group with donations and kind messages; to Helen Smith who has kept us supplied with a steady stream of delicious cakes, including coffee and hot scones on one occasion, and to others who have also provided refreshments during working parties. Also thank you to Helen Cavendish for promoting the Flood Group in with the Community Shop window display this summer which also generated funds from the Community Shop itself, The Michaelmas Fayre, an individual in one of the villages and from a donations tin in the shop. The Flood Group supported the Michaelmas Fayre in 2023 and will support it again this September.

**Letcombe Brook Project:** See separate document on the website. We have welcomed Jude Verdon to two working parties already.

**Website Statistics:** See separate document on the website. There has been the usual consistent 500 – 600 number of visits each month to the website during the year, but in May 2024 a sudden increase with over 1900 visits, with 2,216 pages of all the working party web pages viewed multiple times. The webmaster will see if in future some indication of who is looking at the website can be recorded. The Chairman thanked Adam Kozlowski for looking after the website and the Newsletter site which currently has 159 subscribers.

**Finance Report:** See separate document on the website. The Treasurer commented that the principle outgoings were the Group insurance and the repairs and replacements and purchases of new equipment. Funds from EH and WH PCs were the normal sources of funding but that EHPCs grant had not yet reached the bank account, and that the WHPC donation has fallen below the traditional 50% of that donated by EHPC. The members adopted the accounts present at the meeting. The Chairman thanked Jane Taylor in her role as Hon Treasurer and James Smith for reviewing the finance documentation and reporting all in order. Adoption of the Accounts: Proposer Philippa Manvell: Seconder Peter Miller-Smith.

**Election of Officers:** The Constitution requires four Officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary currently and re-elected for 2024-2025.

Chairman: Clive Manvell

Vice-Chairman: David Stubbington

Treasurer: Jane Taylor

Secretary: David Blomley

**Review of Risk Assessment:** No alterations were tabled for the HFG Risk Assessment which was updated in previous years to take account of the pandemic and presence of Wiel's disease in waterways harbouring rats. Reminders reinforcing not working alone, deep water and heavy silt working were discussed.

For the record, the annual lifejacket inspection and safety checks will be undertaken during the next maintenance session in August. The equipment inventory has been updated with recent additions.

## **AOB:**

**Damaged bank below the Iron Bridge.** The Chairman outlined that the damaged rendered by some dog owners and their pets to the east bank below the Iron Bridge renders the village vulnerable to flooding. The Chairman has raised the matter with EHPC the riparian owner and responsible for this land. Work is needed in conjunction with the EA. This project has not been progressed in the past year and time is of the essence to get this project actioned in the narrow non-breeding water vole period between November and February.

The collapsed retaining wall approaching Lower Mill has been repaired.

The retaining wall supporting the footpath downstream of the newly built bridge joining Halls Lane to Cow Lane has been undermined. This is a footpath used by walkers and again is the responsibility of the riparian owner, Philberds Manor or OCC footpath / highways.

**Ebbs Lane.** The ownership of a ditch at the southern end of Ebbs Lane, on its western side is not clear. The responsibility for clearing and frequently maintaining it has not been discharged. Although the Flood Group has had at least two working parties here it has rapidly become overgrown again.

## **Future.**

**Team Leaders.** More of the volunteers need to be trained up to be able to run working party sessions. This includes identifying tasks and any liaison necessary, knowing what and where the equipment is available, organising people via the website newsletter, safety briefing, undertaking the task safely, returning equipment cleaned and lubricated, sharpened and repaired where necessary and feeding back a successful report via the website newsletter. Having more people with the knowledge and experience necessary should enable a seamless succession plan to be developed.

**Training of Volunteers:** There is a clear need to have volunteers trained in aspects of the Flood Group's activities. Training has periodically taken place with the deployment of flood barriers around the Community Shop and HWMH. There are other areas to be considered in conjunction with the Emergency Team volunteers. The Hanneys Flood Group are integral to the Emergency Plan with specialist flood prevention and response activities, and training should be under the auspices of the Emergency Plan.

**Communication Channels.** Flooding events in March 2023 highlighted a need for a better organised communications system to alert volunteers to incidents and subsequent exchange of information during such incidents. David Stubbington and James Smith set this up with a Flood Group What's App alert group for initial communications and then using the walkie-talkie radios in the field. It worked effectively during the autumn flood incidents.

**Thanks:** On behalf of the HFG the Chairman thanked Jane Taylor for managing the accounts with James Smith overlooking the annual report; Mark Bradfield for his direction and support with working parties wishing him well for the future, we have welcomed Jude Verdon the current Project Officer, Adam Kozlowski for running the HFG website, Phil Manvell for undertaking the phosphate and nitrate sampling and the river fly monitoring project with Stella Brecknell, David Stubbington, Ian and Dickon Green for towing the trailer, EHPC and WHPC for the annual funding and all the 38 volunteers who have turned out this past 12 months.

The formal meeting closed with a thank you to Keith and Meryl Chisholm for hosting the AGM. This was followed by a social evening including a special knot tying session with Andrew Wastie, a cricket game and the wheel rolling challenge. A participant donated finger buffet, and other refreshments were enjoyed with liquid refreshments some generously donated by Phil and Barbara Donovan as well as those attending.

**Clive Manvell, Chairman, The Hanneys Flood Group. 14/08/2024**