

Meeting Notes

Site visit to Letcombe brook between Wantage Sewage Treatment Works and Lower Mill, East Hanney.

22nd April 2008

Present

Keith Lead	Development officer, Environment Agency
John Hiller	Operations manager, Environment Agency
Ian Brown	Oxfordshire County Councillor, Hanneys and Hendered
Alan Miles	East Hanney Parish Council
Nicky Kauert	Land Owner, Weir farm East Hanney
Neil Walker	Land Owner, Manor farm Garford
Stewart Scott	The Hanneys Flood Group

Summary.

1. A 4in plastic pipe crosses the brook near Bradfield Grove Farm and appears to be part of a BT installation. The pipe is at low level and can trap branches and debris flowing down the brook. K Lead agreed to investigate if this installation has been approved.
2. The discharge from the Wantage Sewage Treatment Works into the brook looked to contain a large amount of suspended solids. N Kauert stated that about 2 weeks ago the horses at Weir Farm stopped drinking the stream water. K Lead agreed to obtain some samples and have them analysed. This was seen as a high priority
3. S Scott, I Brown and A Miles stated that they have had conflicting information on the flow discharge regime from the Treatment works. They will continue to press Thames Water for a site visit and clarification of the discharge system.
4. J Hiller stated that maintenance of the brook through weir farm had been done in the last 12 months. It was agreed by everyone that debris removal and tree removal could be effectively done by N Kauert and that the flood group will help if requested by N Kauert. Continued regular maintenance of this stretch of the brook was not seen as essential. S Scott would rather the EA team perform more extensive work on critical areas such as between Lower Mill and Dandridges Mill.
5. A possible flood storage scheme on part of Weir Farm was discussed. N Kauert raised issues such as problems of access over a raised bund by tractor and trailer and possible contamination of prime hay by flood water debris and silt. To pursue any further an extensive survey would need to be performed. S Scott proposed that this work should have low priority.
6. N Kauert stated that the water level in the by-pass stream at the junction to the brook down stream of Dandridges Mill has been very high ever since July.

The culvert under the road had been roded out and seems to be clear. It looked like the water level on the brook was high.

7. The stretch of the brook between lower Mill and Dandridges Mill is noticeably different from the stretch above Dandridges Mill. Some sections are very shallow and there are large masses of thick weed (Duckweed/ Renunculas) growing. J Hiller confirmed that the weed growth did seem excessive and severely restrict flow and that when it flowers later in the year it will restrict the flow even further. A Miles highlighted that the bank near the iron bridge is very low and a small increase in brook height causes the brook to overflow and then flow down to the main street. It was agreed that this is a critical stretch of the brook. K Lead agreed that a programme of weed management was required and that this could be carried out by the Hanney flood group to an agreed procedure. K lead will contact Mr Pedro Collins and arrange a site visit so a programme of weed management can be developed. K Lead and J Hiller also agreed that this section of brook would benefit from silt removal using a mechanical excavator. J Hiller stated that this work could not be programmed for this year but both J Hiller and K Lead will investigate if this work could be carried out by the EA. K Lead requested a level survey of the water level. S Scott agreed to do this and perform some surveys of the bed and bank heights at a number of cross sections along the brook.
8. It was noted that just upstream of the iron bride there is a concrete structure that looks like it forms the outfall of a storm water drain. This is very badly silted up. S Scott agreed to find out what the structure is and if it is still connected to any drainage system.
9. S Scott reported that the owner of Lower Mill (Mr R Hodgson) had requested approval from D Mcknight of the EA to improve the capacity of the bypass stream. K Lead stated that he could give approval for this work and he will liase with D McKnight. K Lead also suggested that instead of large pipes an open ditch could be dug. This could be lined with a mesh material to encourage grass growth and reduce erosion. K lead may be able to provide the material as it only requires small quantity. K Lead and J Hiller agreed that improving the by pass stream was a sensible suggestion.
10. K lead and J Hiller reported to N Walker that the EA perform no maintenance between the A34 and East Hanney. If N Walker wished to carry out maintenance of the brook though his farm land then he can contact K Lead directly to obtain the necessary consent. N Walker was happy to perform maintenance of the watercourses on his land but was frustrated that the work would have limited effect without the watercourses down stream also being maintained.
11. K lead also stated that they have no mechanism to force land owners to carry out maintenance. It was agreed that S Scott would continue to liase with local land owners.