

## Notes on flooding Fri 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

### Letcombe Bassett

Lots of surface water pouring down Gramps Hill flooding road at low point and into brook at Arabellas Cottage via road drain. Lake absolutely filthy and large flood in the road above it. Grips and ditch not working as water just running past. Very dirty run off from horse field on left (heading up hill) which is absolutely poached and has been for some weeks but lots more water coming down from higher up Gramps Hill.

Lake at Delamere also filthy with road run off from Holborn Hill via big road drain. More rain flowing down road and in at Cressbeds but not particularly dirty.

River level Ok at this point.

River Level Gauge shows levels slowly increasing slightly but lower on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March than on 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2023 when no flooding occurred in downstream stretches of the brook.

**Action needed:** Larger grips and water storage areas wherever possible (esp. on Gramps Hill) and regular maintenance of them to get water off the road to both slow the flow and reduce amount of silt going into the brook.

### Letcombe Regis

Water coming down Warborough Rd but some grips working and new storage area opposite Warborough Farm working and much less going into road drain at bottom of hill by allotments – much better than previous years.

Lots surface water on main rd between Mill Paddock and Mill House – probably going into brook via road drain near Mill House.

Rest of village OK, river not particularly high and Millennium Green not flooded.

**Action needed:** Regular maintenance of grips and water storage areas to keep them functioning. Regular checking and reporting of road drains not operating properly to ensure OCC carrying out necessary maintenance. Any other locations for grips or water storage?

### Wantage

River level gauge in Wantage shows big increase between 3 and 4pm with peak of 0.73 at 4pm – but didn't pass "flooding likely" level of 0.8. This gauge impacted by trash screens at Old Mill, (drops quickly when they have been cleaned).

Drain at corner of road to Letcombe/Ickleton Rd spewing out like mini geyser and running down Ickleton Rd and into brook at bottom.

Sewer popped drain at Locks Lane and going into brook, unsure of timings.

Checked Old Mill Saturday morning at 08.00 and no problem with no water on footpath or up towards bypass sluice. Doesn't appear to have topped over here and level in Mill Pool not as high as

past few years. Mill bypass channel all fine with apparently no extra water in it, no problem by Lamb Inn car park or on down bypass channel.

Sluice at Old Mill, Wantage was raised slightly (2 notches) at some point (time unknown) due to concerns of occupants – water entering garage via floor and close to bank height. Water level was reported to drop after this adjustment.

**River level gauge** just upstream of Old Mill indicates sharp increase in flow between 3 and 4pm before levelling off and then slightly decreasing. NB This gauge heavily impacted by any alterations of sluice or trash screens at Old Mill, Wantage.

Willow Walk flooded in places but due to tree in channel backing up flow. Don't think it would have flooded at all otherwise but this area should act as flood storage, one of few places that can!

Flooding at bottom of Harcourt Rd – road drains blocked, or just surface water coming down hill?

Flooding at Charlton Rd on corner north of school – unsure of reason, don't think this usually floods?

Water burst out of A338 bank (east side) between allotments and Mably Way - run off from Crab Hill? Not been a problem in past. Was happening by 2pm and flooded car park at McDermid, then presumably into brook. Surface water solutions not yet finished for this development, still looking for connection into Letcombe Brook. Was this contributing factor?

Surely taking surface water from Kingsgrove Development down into Letcombe Brook will increase peak flows and make it more “flashy” in high rainfall events like this?

**Action needed:** Find out timescales for completion of Suds and surface water offtake measures for Crab Hill development. Do we need to take precautionary measures for next winter? If so what support/funding can be offered for this?

## **Grove**

Mably Way – didn't get to check how much surface water going in here on Friday but would guess it was a lot. Building works at roundabout from Kingsgrove all flooded and probably source of flooding into A338 opposite McDermid mentioned in above section.

Gardens flooded between Wolage Drive development and Grove Bridge – Caldecote very deep – occupant claims more than in 2007. Culvert in cricket bat field just usual flow – must be part blockage or choke in this bypass channel.

Culvert (main river) at Grove Bridge part blocked with logs and litter – maybe why so bad at Caldecote.

Control of sluice gate at Grove Mill unknown at this time – was it altered?

Cane Lane badly flooded Friday evening with surface water flowing across the sports field and down Cane Lane to brook where flooded road just west of bridge over brook. Water also pouring out of drain cover on Cane Lane adding to surface flow. Rugby club still pumping water down to Cane Lane Saturday morning as their fields badly flooded but flood in road cleared.

Plane roundabout completely flooded late Friday afternoon (video from Darrell Payne on Facebook 6.30-7pm)– surface water from airfield development, temporary water storage ponds flooded over top and out into road. Still lots water on road Saturday morning but passable. This is second time this winter the new roundabout has flooded.

No flooding reported in Sharland Road where went out of bank in 2007 (bank raised following that incident?)

Kingfishers – almost up to bridge on Friday evening but no flooding reported.

Grove Green – just about reached capacity at 6.45pm on Friday (video on Facebook, John Ferguson) river went out of bank at Grove Green but the road here did not flood this time.

Checked Persimmon Suds on Saturday early afternoon – very little water in them, nearest one to Crown almost dry – are these functioning properly?

Suds at Letcombe Fields only had very shallow bit of water in it on Monday morning, draining out towards brook from westerly pipe. Apparently these Suds are not lined but also have outfall pipes – are they functioning correctly as don't seem to be storing much or slowing the flow?

**Extract from EA Floods Review July 2007, David McKnight Feb 2008.**

*Developers have been discussing proposals to construct approximately 2000 houses on the west side of Grove on the former airfield site. The site does not lie within a statutory fluvial floodplain, however, the site is prone to surface water flooding after rainfall. We have requested a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to accompany any planning application. The FRA must focus on surface water drainage issues and will provide a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) to ensure that as a minimum, surface water discharges do not exceed the present situation. Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) advocates flood risk reduction through the planning process, this ensures that the current surface water drainage problems can be improved via the re-development of this site. We have raised these issues with the developer and advised that this element of flood risk reduction will be a requirement of the planning application. Specifically, this must focus on addressing the surface water runoff flowing into Grove from the south in the vicinity of Cane Lane and the Caravan Parks.*

This incident seems to indicate that the above intended improvement has not been achieved and has perhaps been made worse?

**Action needed:** Discuss functioning of Suds further with David Bell at VWHDC. Monitor further when heavy rain and collect evidence (photos) to try and ascertain if they are operating properly. Find out timescales for completion of surface water drainage system on aerodrome development. Ensure road drains and outfalls into brook (eg Grove Green) are clear and can operate properly.

## **Hanney**

**East Hanney** - Brookside, Halls Lane and Ebbs Lane all flooded

West Hanney – Denchworth Road badly flooded

Went out of bank at Weir Farm upstream of Mill Bypass at 3 locations. Furrows still with water in on Monday morning. Bypass channel flooded as couldn't fit under road culvert at Brookside causing it to flood Brookside and flow down to Memorial Hall where flood barriers were deployed by HFG Friday evening. Part of this due to water going out of bank at Weir Farm re-entering the bypass channel which then ends up taking lots more water than it can manage, this is a regular problem.

Stayed in channel at Iron Bridge but sandbags were deployed by Hanney Flood Group (HFG) – river rose approx. 40cm, to the 2ft 4 marker on the river level gauge at this location by 18.00 hrs, 2ft 9in by 21.15, peak?.

River couldn't fit under new bridge at Lower Mill/Poughley Farm (end of Halls Lane), this was impounding flows by 17.40 hrs, Halls Lane flooded, possibly as a result of this impounded flow. Some appears to have gone up a drainage pipe from the headwall of the new bridge into Halls Lane (this pipe might benefit from a one-way valve to prevent this?) Sandbags deployed here too.

Footpath alongside Philberds Manor flooded.

Lower Mill Bypass channel flooded out at footbridge into field, gardens at Lower Mill Cottage flooded, small amount came up through floor of house, HFG deployed sandbags and hydrosnake barrier.

Ebbs Lane flooded – might be because water backs up in Gods Ditch, despite it being kept clear.

**West Hanney**-Denchworth Rd badly flooded – from the Childrey Brook, several cars abandoned near Botney Bridge. Church Meadow part flooded, footpath to Lyford and fields in that area flooded.

Winter Lane stayed clear, has flooded in past.

**Action Needed:** Thanks to Hanney Flood Group for their continued regular work and quick response on the day. Continue discussions with OCC re keeping drains clear and possibility of modifying culvert under Brookside. Discuss large scale water storage solutions with riparian owners upstream of the villages. Raise concerns that developments in Grove and Wantage appear to be raising the flood risk to the Hanneys during the development phase – what help can they receive with this?

### **Summary**

Very near miss for Grove and East and West Hanney. No properties flooded but roads badly affected and several cars abandoned, fire and rescue called out at Denchworth Rd by Botney Bridge.

Concerns over surface water flows from Crab Hill and from Grove airfield

Levels in brook seemed Ok **until** between Wantage and Grove. Some flooded gardens at Grove Bridge as usually happens in high flows, maybe increased due to semi blockage of culvert at Grove Bridge. One of few locations, along with Willow Walk, where there is some flood storage.

Was water coming down from Kingsgrove onto A338 an additional problem – appears to have been?

Surface water travelling across from aerodrome estate at Grove seemed to be worse than normal and supplemented by water pouring out of drain manhole adding to problems at Cane Lane with road closed due to flooding and lots extra water into brook at this point. There was concerns raised pre development about surface water flows and these would appear to have been made worse, not better.

As usual Hanney pays the price for anything going wrong upstream.

It was noted that Letcombe Brook dropped again fairly quickly but that Childrey Brook did not.

These notes are made following investigations by the Letcombe Brook Project Officer including site visits and a review of information posted by affected residents on Facebook and following further discussion with affected parties. In future flood events as much evidence (photos and video) of surface water flows, blockages, locations of water going out of bank, flooded areas etc as possible should be collected (safely!) so they can be provided to OCC and VWHDC for further investigation.