

Flood defences - progress and developments

There was a meeting on Friday 30th April between the Parish Council, members of FLAG and the EA which was also attended by County Cllr Roger Jackson and representatives of NCC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress and developments with regard to the villages flood defences. These meetings take place every month. Representatives from the Village Hall Committee have also been able to meet contractors instructed by the EA to discuss the works that are scheduled to take place on the playing fields and which are designed to return the flood defences to their original level of effectiveness. There will, regrettably, be some disruption to our enjoyment of the playing fields as a village amenity but the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee believe that the protection of homes from flooding is of a paramount importance. The EA has already carried out some work on the wall surrounding the playing fields and will also work on the flood embankment down the side of the dual carriageway. The large football pitch and the spillway which allows flood water to leave the beck when it is in spate will be reprofiled. The left bank of the beck between Brookside and Southwell Road will be built up to afford additional protection to those properties. The design has not been finalised, but it is hoped that the works will start this summer. Unfortunately, a small number of trees by the beck will have to be felled to allow for machinery to access the bank and other trees may lose branches. An ecologist will be on site to ensure that no nesting birds are disturbed. Work on the trees will start in the next few weeks.

Work is still progressing on the main flood scheme which is costed at £10m. The preferred option is to construct a single flood storage reservoir upstream of Lowdham village. This will be adjacent to Lambley Road and near to Lowdham Grange. It is hoped that construction will start in spring 2022. This scheme will allow for a significantly higher volume of flood water storage than the existing arrangement at the playing fields. The reservoir will remain dry throughout the most of its operational lifetime, only filling with water when the Cocker Beck rises in flood conditions. Due to the scale and position of the proposed flood storage area, it will be classified as a Category A reservoir under the Reservoirs Act, 1975. Very careful considerations are being made through the design processes and planning for both the construction and the safety of future operation of the flood storage area. The Environment Agency will be the operator of the constructed asset in the future, and the landowners who will be directly affected are being kept up to date with the scheme as it develops.

The EA is currently preparing the Outline Business Case. Once this has been approved the scheme will progress to its detailed design stage and it is hoped that public consultation will take place in the late summer to enable people to review and comment on outline plans.

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