

## **Notes from meeting between Anglian Water and Willingham Parish Council**

**Monday 22 April 2024**

Present representing Anglian Water (AW): Matthew Moore, Emily Lindsell, Gavin Elliott, Lucy Hodge, Colin Rogers

Present representing Willingham Parish Council (PC): Councillor Derek Law, Roger Mason, David Stevenson, Mandy Powell (Clerk)

Following introductions, David asked AW to confirm the total catchment draining to Over WWTW with particular reference to the position re Longstanton and Northstowe. He said that AW had quote a total population served of 13,351 and asked how this figure had been calculated. It was confirmed that existing data, the local plan, and an estimate from the proposed developments made up the population data. AW confirmed that the pumping station near the Co-operative in Longstanton pumped wastewater to the pumping station near Webbs Yard in Station Road, Willingham then to Over WWTW. AW also confirmed that wastewater from the old army camp on Rampton Road also drained into the catchment.

AW agreed to provide the PC with a full sewerage network plan for Over STW.

Action: AW Matthew

AW agreed to forward more detail on how the data on population is gathered.

Action: AW - Gavin

Matthew went on to explain the planning rules around drainage, confirming that documents showed that the flooding risk in Willingham was classified as significant. He went on to confirm that AW are only a consultee and are consulted when a development has more than 10 properties. AW are not allowed to refuse a connection legally and are duty bound to accept a connection to the public sewer if all other hierarchy has been exhausted. Once Schedule 3 comes on board this will remove the automatic right to be connected although the right to be connected will still remain. AW assessments must be based on dry weather flows which does not help when it rains, and the properties then have issues. If all hierarchies have been exhausted, then AW are obligated by the Water Industry Act to provide the developer with the closest most appropriate point of connection. The size of the pipe needed would vary depending on the size of the development for example 100 properties would require a 4-inch pipe, but 1,000 properties would require a 9-inch pipe.

Matthew confirmed that whilst the system does not really make sense they are bound by the regulations as they stand. Whilst moving forward they would still have to give their opinion based on dry weather flow they are intending to also gather wet weather flow information to help with their future modelling for future investment.

The recent flooding incidents were then highlighted. Household in Longstanton were badly affected, the Primary School in Willingham was closed for 3 days due to the sewer being surcharged and houses in Bourneys Manor Close and Covent Garden were also affected. In their case this has been a longstanding problem.

Matthew went on to explain the issues that the school had recently experienced and confirmed that they were working closely with the School and CCC to address the problem. £75,000 had

been allocated to the scheme with AW putting forward £20K, the Education Authority £30K and CCC £25K. It was hoped the scheme would be put in place over the summer holidays and would include bio retention planters and Matthew agreed to forward details of the scheme to the PC.

Action: AW Matthew

Other schemes had been looked at elsewhere, including lining the foul sewer network. Matthew did not feel this was the answer as it just moves the problem further along the system.

David asked if the infiltration reduction plan raised in the 2021 meeting had taken place and AW agreed to check.

Action: AW (Gavin)

It was pointed out that the overflow on the gravity sewer on Fen End fed to the Pond, but the pond silt level was too high for this to be effective. Matthew agreed to investigate this to ascertain ownership and get the pond silt level reduced.

Action: AW (Matthew)

At a previous meeting in April 2021 AW had undertaken to investigate the drainage system including CCTV and flow monitoring. They also undertook an Infiltration Reduction Plan and David asked if this work had been carried out. Gavin agreed to check.

Action: AW (Gavin)

Gavin confirmed that AW would be carrying out assessments/investigations in Willingham over the next couple of months and these would include the village green and Bourneys manor/Covent Garden. Gavin would report to the Council as this progressed.

Action: AW (Gavin)

Matthew confirmed that Willingham is at medium risk of flooding according to Environment Agency maps and as a result some developers would raise the height of a whole development rather than just the house which invariably added flooding pressure to other areas within the parish. Derek confirmed that the PC do raise concerns regarding surface water flooding when development applications come through for consideration.

AW were currently looking at possibly offering a water butt grant scheme which could be run by the PC to help people store their surface water and reduce some of the impact. AW will advise the Council if the scheme goes ahead.

Action: AW (Matthew)

Concerns were raised about the ongoing maintenance of SUDS with developers often not continuing with looking after them properly. Matthew confirmed that once Schedule 3 is enacted then all future development SUDs would be the responsibility of the County Council to maintain.

AW were asked if they could adopt all the pumping stations that are not currently adopted in the Parish. Matthew confirmed that if the pumping station served more than one property then it automatically becomes their responsibility. The PC were asked to forward a list of the unadopted stations, and they would review it and report back.

Action: PC/AW (Gavin)

Matthew confirmed that the issues with surface water really started becoming apparent around 2007 then since 2019 it has become a constant problem. During the flooding problems in 2019 AW carried out pumping but inline with their environmental commitments are reluctant to do that moving forward. This does not solve the issues for residents being unable to flush their toilets but to do that would be at the expense of the environment.

Roger stated that in 1976/7 the water table was around two metres below the surface but now it appears to be only a quarter of that during the winter months.

It was agreed that surface water is a major issue that will not be corrected quickly. AW are holding multi-agency meetings regarding areas of concern in Cambridgeshire of which Willingham is one of them. It is hoped that by bringing all the relevant/affected parties together a more cohesive approach to tackling the problem can be found. AW agreed to include the PC in the invites to these meetings.

Action: AW (Emily)

Matthew also stressed the important of educating residents to help themselves with things such as flood doors and water butts etc and asked the PC to encourage residents to report any flooding that enters their homes to the County Council. This can trigger an investigation into the causes and potentially release funding to the County to help residents (50 internal flooding episodes in the year for Government grant to County). AW agreed to pass up to date reporting details to the PC for distribution to residents.

Action: AW Emily

Roger stated that the geology beneath Willingham is recent in a geological timescale and consists of river terrace deposits overlaying Ampthill Clay. These gravel aquifers run for a significant distance under both major developments to the southwest and gravel extraction workings to the northeast. He wishes to reiterate Matthew's concern over the effect of regrading the landscape in such civil engineering projects for its effect on groundwater flows in these aquifers. Matthew agreed there may be other factors affecting the ground water issues and hoped that the multi-agency meetings would help to both highlight and address these problems.