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| **Multi Agency Group** |

**Minutes: MAG009 Cambridgeshire South SW Challenges**

**Date: 05/09/2024**

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| 1 | Attendees | [**Back to top**](#_top) |

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| Name | Name | Name |
| Jackie Isden (Fen Drayton Parish Council) | Nicola Burdon (Cambridgeshire County Council) | Lee Hillan (South Cambs District Council) |
| Dean Feast (Cambridge City Council) | Cllr Derek Law (Willingham Parish Council) | Linda Elliot (AW) |
| Nigel Blackburn (Orwell Parish Council) | Roger Mason (Willingham Parish) | Gavin Elliot (AW) |
| Andy Skelhorn (AW) | Brian Heffernan (Cambridgeshire County Council) | James Bax (AW) |
| Angela Mullholland (Fowlmere Parish Council) | Will Neale (Horningsea Parish Council) | Lottie McAlister (AECOM) |

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| 2 | Minutes and Actions  | [**Back to top**](#_top) |

Overview & Introduction

* Andy Skelhorn (AS) led introductions and explained that MAG stood for Multi Agency Group and the aim of meeting is to bring different agencies together in order to tackle groundwater problems within the network. He explained that the aim was to work together to help customers and residents.
* AS provided an opportunity for representatives to highlight any key issues.

Key Issues from Parishes

* Jackie Isden (JI) highlighted that she was concerned about the maintenance of the sluice gates on Brownshill Staunch at St Ives.
* AS noted JI’s concern and that whilst there were no EA representatives on the call, he would be happy for the matter to be discussed.
* Nigel Blackburn (NB) noted that Orwell has had long standing issues with raw sewage and groundwater surcharging from a drain during heavy rainfall affecting approximately 6 properties. He noted that when this happens it results in the loss of facilities for a number of residents and there is correspondence dating back to 2001 with Anglian Water explaining that the flooding is the result of groundwater infiltration and a survey has been promised, but this is yet to happen.
* AS acknowledged NB’s comments.
* Cllr Derek Law (DL) highlighted that the main problem that Willingham faces is loss of services during heavy rain exacerbated by groundwater infiltrating the system.
* Roger Mason (RM) explained that the parish council chairman wrote to the EA to support the issues raised by other councils and received a response explaining that the sluices on the Ouse had been downgraded from flood prevention devices to navigation devices meaning that the EA were no longer obligated to maintain them.
* JB noted that the discussion regarding the sluice gates on Brownshill Staunch be followed up with the EA.
* Angela Mullholland (AM) noted she had had great liaison with Emily from AW’s Public Affairs team. She explained that the information provided has been published and well received.
* AM commented that the water levels in the ditches surrounding the centre of the village are either very low or minimal but highlighted concern moving into winter that there wasn’t a repeat flooding event and wanted to check what the latest was with this. She also commented that in the previous meeting it was mentioned that the scheduled surveys had been put on hold and was wondering whether these had been restarted. She explained that she would be happy to go out on site and pinpoint on a map locations where issues frequently occurred.
* AS noted AM’s points and requested that all parishes send areas where problems frequently occur to Lottie McAlister (LM) via email. He explained that it would then be possible to compare these areas with other agencies in order to be able to build up a picture of what is being done, and from that create a document which outlines a plan for addressing the problems. He noted not to include any identifying information about customers.
* Lee Hillam (LH) explained that there were a number of residents who experience regular problems and that these were likely to be attributable to groundwater and that he would provide these details in an email. He highlighted issues at Brownshill Staunch where a pumping station is running on full.
* LH queried whether it would be possible for a representative from AW to attend the council scrutiny meeting on 17th September to provide an update on the MAGs.
* Linda Elliot (LE) noted that AW had received the request to attend and a representative would be there.

Response to Highlighted Issues

* Gavin Elliot (GE) noted that he was attending this meeting in Lucy Hodge’s (LH) absence. In response to AM’s query regarding the restarting of the survey, he explained that the field teams are still due to come out to site at the end of September/start of October. He also commented that he would link in with LH once the date for these surveys has been confirmed so that this can be communicated.
* GE also thanked AM for her feedback on the water levels noting AW believe they have identified some infiltration points. He requested that if that water levels are highlighted to be higher anywhere that she let AW know about this.
* GE noted that there is a team within AW investigating misconnections in an effort to remove surface water from the system and how to improve things for the parishes. He reassured the group that LH was up to date on the key issues.
* AS shared his screen with a document which provided information about catchment rainfall. The document illustrated that rainfall accumulation over the last 6 months had been exceptionally high and as such, groundwater sources are higher than normal.
* GE commented that Red Lodge borehole was 10-11 m higher than normal.
* AS noted that he wanted to put some time in with each of the parishes separately so that they can proactively work together to solve problems. He also noted that the chair of the meetings could be anyone, not just an AW representative.
* NB noted that he would encourage that time is spent with parishes individually to ensure progress is being made.
* GE updated the group on a new piece of work being undertaken which involves the EA working with Atkins to quantify the impact that groundwater has on network capability. He highlighted a number of areas including Fowlmere which are considered priorities for the project.
* AS proposed that the next meeting be on 10th October at 13:00. He noted that any additional contacts be emailed to LM.
* AS noted an action for LH to make contact with Parish chairs to understand exactly who needs to attend from each parish.

AOB

* LH noted that some of the issues discussed will have a direct impact on AW assets and infrastructures and as such it would be very beneficial if parishes could map issues so that the responsibility for addressing those issues can be established.
* AS reiterated the aim to develop one document where all the issues for the area are summarised. LH agreed and noted the importance of gathering local knowledge.
* LE requested that AW’s public affairs team is kept copied in to any correspondence between the parishes and LH.
* LH noted that there were some outstanding questions from this meeting for the EA. JB noted that he would take an action to get representation, either through written representation or attendance, from the EA at the next meeting.

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| **No** | **Action** | **Owner**  |
| **4** | Attendees to email LM (lottie.mcalister@aecom.com) with details of areas which experience frequent problems | All |
| **5** | LH to make contact with parishes to disucss progress and ensure that the right people are attending the MAG meetings | LH |
| **6** | JB to have discussion with Matt Moore about EA attendance | JB |
| **7** | Attendees to pass on any additional contacts to LM  | All  |
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Next Meeting: 10/10/2024 at 13:00