



As a result of SEW pipeline work a lot of water accumulated here during the winter unable to escape via its normal route due to filled ditches and blocked pipes. A large lake formed and together with the blocked ditch running behind the Mulberries was beginning to seriously affect the rear of that property with the garden and paddock becoming completely saturated.

Councillor Grenville Annetts in his role as liaison with SEW managed to get them to cut a channel for water to escape from the lake and partly re-open the ditch where the temporary pipe had become blocked. The level of water in the lake dropped by a few inches but because of the limitations of the location the mechanically cut channel had a high point at the furthest reach of the bucket preventing any further flow.

The full ditch running behind the Mulberries was also still not functioning as the SEW clearance was still above water level. It was also blocked on a right angle turn at the rear corner of the Mulberries.

OGAFCAP volunteers cleared the ditch blockage at the corner and the length of ditch leading to the Pipeline blockage. The clearance at this stretch was then improved but still not sufficient to allow the now flowing water from the Mulberries ditch to progress further. This was due to the temporary pipe still being embedded in the clay, preventing deeper excavation. Both ends of the pipe were cleared and miraculously the partly buried pipe again began to function, now allowing a healthy flow away.

The high point in the channel from the lake was then cleared away by a further 6 inches or so, allowing a veritable torrent to join the flow in the ditch.

The Newt fencing across the ditch now became a problem as the mesh was collecting silt and debris and forming a dam holding back the flow. This was lifted out of the clay bed of the ditch allowing the flow to pass underneath.



The remainder of the ditch route to join the roadside ditch on Fifield Road was then inspected and found to be blocked at the far end before it reaches the road. This blockage is in an area difficult to access being in a gully between the Biffa bank with trees and the field with the pipeline route, with a hedge at the road end and fenced off at the other.

Although some water is seeping away past this blockage it is in effect making the whole system into a huge sump. While this is serving a useful purpose for the moment it clearly needs to be remedied before next winter. It is just possible that a large digger with a very long reach might be able to tackle this from the pipeline route and we will try to add this request to several others for when completion works begin on the pipeline. Failing this it looks feasible for a volunteer to climb under the fencing across the ditch to tackle this manually. If necessary this will be done if SEW cannot oblige.

There are obviously other things going on at the Fifield Road end as shown in the photo of the Biffa site entrance (bottom right). At the moment it is not clear why this is happening or where the water is coming from to cause it. Clearly the Fifield Road ditch is not coping with it and this issue will need to be analysed "next time round".

As a result of work by volunteers the level of water in the lake dropped by a further 6 inches or so and the flow from the ditch at the rear of the Mulberries was re-instated.

More recently water levels have started to drop dramatically and the immediate threat has receded for the moment.