

OGAFCA drainage - summary - 14.01.2014

In 2008 a survey of 400 households was carried out as a step towards the development of a Community Action Plan.

Unsurprisingly a large number of returns reflected a concern about drainage and flooding.

As part of progressing towards an Action Plan the Environment Work Group (one of the 8 OGAFCA work groups) produced a detailed report titled "9 wet spots" on where there were known problems in our area. RBWM Streetcare were very helpful during this process and provided surveys and charts of known drainage routes that had been last surveyed in 2001.

This report is still easily available on the web site and was part of the Environment Work Groups submission towards the Community Action Plan in 2009. This document is also available on the web site.

OGAFCA Environment has remained in contact with RBWM Streetcare ever since in an attempt to work through the 9 "wet spots" numbered from the easiest to the most difficult at 9. The history of this over the last 4 years can be followed in detail via the ENVIRONMENT page of the web site which gives access to 15 Drainage update reports and also the Newsletter archive, every issue of which contains an update on drainage.

In summary -

1 - Cricket Ground on Oakley Green Road saw some early improvement although the road does still flood in circumstances of extreme rainfall.

2 - Fifield Road at the speed bump near Longlea Nursing Home has been a protracted Saga with many official delays and inertia and the deployment of our volunteers with spades and pick axes on two occasions. During 2012 a short term Streetcare consultant (Mr Hanif Baksh) decided to recommend Capital Funding, and this was approved in January 2013. We have been pressing for this work to be carried out ever since ... and we still cannot get any scheduled date for the work.

3 - Braywood Lodge on Oakley Green Road - Volunteers cleared the ditches and Streetcare arranged jetting of underground pipes. As far as we know this is now improved.

4 - Coningsby Lane east - this has actually been going on since 2001 at the time of the previous bad flooding in Fifield. This has been held up so long by a local resident constantly objecting and Streetcare being reluctant to agree that a ditch historically existed and functioned which has now become defunct resulting from a drive to a new house being installed without a pipe. Some small work has been done due to the generosity of the local farmer (Paul Rinder, Stroud Farm). But sadly this has proved not to be particularly effective in the great scheme of things, although the repair of roadside parking was a beneficial spin-off. Although the limited ditching work possibly delays the familiar overflow onto the road this was the location of severe flooding yet again on Saturday 4 January 2014.

5 - A field entrance on Oakley Green Road near Forest Farm that used to cause the road east of this point to flood. Streetcare carried out a reduced version of our recommendations and installed an extra 2 gullies in the gate entrance. This appears to have improved the situation.

6 - Ledger Farm and the Junction of Coningsby Lane east and Forest Green Road. Water coming down off the Drift Road collects on either side of an entrance on the south side of the road and can only proceed by spilling out onto Forest Green Road and down Coningsby Lane. We have been unable as yet to get any action.

7 - The Fifield Inn and Fifield Road northwards. This was the site of flooding in 2001, 2003-2004, and again on Saturday 4 January 2014. We are now gearing up to shift our priorities as this location now threatens the most residents and their properties. We are about to start a consultation process with those particular residents to try and work towards suggestions for practical solutions that we can present to and discuss with Streetcare and nearby landowners. The particular location in the area of Pond Cottage may need to be added to our "wet spot" list as number 10.

8 - Fifield Road near Coningsby Lane where a culvert passes under the road between Willow Creek and what used to be the old Chapel. Most of the water moving up from the south trying to get to the Thames arrives at this point. Consequently it causes major flooding and as yet we have managed to achieve absolutely nothing.

9 - Greene Oak pub, Cardinal Clinic. This is the most difficult to deal with and will require a major detailed survey and technical propositions to try and hold the water back to delay the arrival of large amounts of water. The only other option would seem to be major storm drain works under the roads to take the water more efficiently towards and under the A308 and to the Thames. We have been able to achieve absolutely nothing here, and it is very disheartening to hear that a Streetcare officer (Mr Horton) said only the other day that he was not aware of any flooding in this area. Really ?

Once rainfall abates water levels generally fall quite speedily - much more quickly than in the past. This would suggest that some continuing maintenance work by Streetcare has been beneficial. But it also suggests that there is probably little we can do to improve onward flow after it leaves us.

So we will be looking more closely at the possibility of delaying the arrival of all this water and spreading the flow over a longer period of time at a slower pace. This of course will in time require discussions with various landowners and we can hardly expect them to be keen on the idea of donating land to become a sump. We will need to investigate how we might be able to raise funding for this sort of work as it looks increasingly unlikely to be provided by local government.