

## **Upper Lambourn and Lambourn Thames Water Follow Up Meeting**

The meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 was attended by Thames Water (TW) representatives - Karen Nelson, Shelly Hartnoll, Andrew Taylor as well as Councillors Howard Woollaston, Chris Harris and Vicky Rieunier also attending as our local representative - Rachel Carden.

The meeting opened with a roundup of works undertaken in Lambourn and Upper Lambourn since April:

- TW undertook a tanker operation at Goose Green which eased the problems in that area
- Repairs to a broken sewage pipe in the Baydon Road were escalated and have now been completed
- TW have jet cleaned 1 kilometre of downstream sewer pipes in Lambourn – following these works, the sewage fountain by the Fire Station on Newbury Road and the overflowing manhole in Oxford Street stopped, despite continued high groundwater levels.
- TW have confirmed that their IT department are scheduled to update their system in June 2024. This should ensure that auto generated responses for work completion should no longer happen for circumstances relating to areas affected by high groundwater and infiltration.
- TW apologised for any offence taken from the letter sent to all residents in the parish. However were asking for help due to the volume of un-flushables within the area. TW have since sent a similar letter to other areas but with an amended wording as the letters were sent to areas which have not witnessed such high levels or issues caused by un-flushables.
- TW also thanked Lambourn's efforts to follow proper disposal guidelines, following the sending of this letter. It was confirmed that they had seen a reduction in non-flushable items in the system.
- West Berkshire Council (WBC) have confirmed that gullies in Lambourn are scheduled to be cleared between October and December this year.
- WBC have also undertaken grip clearing in the Lambourn area, including the Wantage and Baydon road.
- Minor ditch clearance along the Wantage Road and Upper Lambourn Road has also been undertaken to improve drainage.

We then discussed the four main problem areas in Lambourn and Upper Lambourn, starting at the head of the valley.

### **Upper Lambourn**

TW have been undertaking investigation work in Upper Lambourn. Engineering/Modelling team are out and about now.

- Records of historical investigations are being reviewed to help work out what has happened in the past, to review this in relation to work that then needs undertaking.
- Two key areas of private infiltration have been identified one of which is of significance. The affected properties have been approached and the residents have been made aware and TW will be writing to these customers in the next 2 weeks.
- TW will be looking to install Flood plates to stop water ingress into the covers from water sitting or running over the covers at a few points along the High Street.
- At the mid-point of Fulke Walwyn Way, the Environment Agency has requested that the bank be rebuilt where there is overflow into the culvert. The chamber at that point is also being sealed. The work to restore the bank is being planned.
- Manholes have been sealed by Maltshovel Lane.
- The possibility of adapting Uplands Lane to an area of bridleway to allow the ditch system to be increased at the second pump station is to be investigated, in conjunction with Jockey Club Estates and WBC.
- TW confirm that they are a couple of weeks away from a conclusion about what additional work needs to be completed in Upper Lambourn.
- It is envisaged that works undertaken in Upper Lambourn should have a positive effect further along the system in to Lambourn, unless it just creates capacity for flow in through other sources.

### **Goose Green**

- It was highlighted that in 2022, 40 metres of sewer were lined in this area, chamber sealing was undertaken and private infiltration investigated. A sewer depth monitor was also put in place.
- However, this area was the first place where the sewer system was inundated in Lambourn last year.

- Further investigation is needed as it is unclear why this was the case, given the extensive works in this area. Once further camera work is completed an analysis will be undertaken to ascertain where the issue might lie.

### **Oxford Street**

- There is a small pump station connecting to the sewer in Oxford Street (or close to the river). This system has a sump chamber which is not watertight with the result that the sump pump is also discharging ground water into the sewer. The chamber will be sealed and then monitored.
- It was discussed whether it would be possible to site a filter unit in this area but TW indicated that there is not enough space. One solution could be a sieve system, TW will undertake an investigation.

### **Newbury Street**

- TW confirmed that they are not aware of an “engineering solution” to alleviate the overflow at this point, but that is also why the engineering/modelling team have been in the area to review.
- Any work undertaken in Upper Lambourn should help to reduce flows which then pass forward to Lambourn and therefore alleviate the problems in Lambourn, unless the capacity is then taken up by flows from other sources.
- Work is ongoing in trying to increase the sewer flow in this area, this will be worked on throughout the summer.
- It was agreed that the siting of the filtration system would be reviewed.
- The turning off, to cease use of, the filtration system is currently being trialled.

### **General Points**

- TW will be providing all residents with an update letter in new few weeks
- TW will have a roadshow in September for residents which will provide information about sewer flooding and answer any questions. Members of TW’s Waste Networks Team will be on site at The Memorial Hall to answer questions, provide information about local sewer improvement projects, and give out useful literature about sewer flooding.
- TW have requested, via Howard Woollaston that West Berks consider clearing gullies earlier than the mentioned October to December as levels are likely to rise early again this year.

**Additional points from meeting:**

TW have asked that the attendees liaise with WBC about previous plans for moving surface water at Drain Lane which had been discussed in the past.

TW to manage resident expectations with communication ahead of next winter with what they have planned for key locations. TW have proactively done this with filter units but had missed other key locations e.g. Oxford Street and Fulke Walwyn Way, which are not a problem every year but could pre-emptively mention them.