

Appendix 2 – Matters Arising update – Flooding in the Whitstable Road area

The Chair of Eastern Area Committee has provided the following progress report dated 25 May 2022:

I have been dealing with Kent County Council (KCC) Earl Bourner and Swale Borough Council (SBC) Martyn Cassell. Cllr Saunders has been dealing with Southern Water (SW) Sue Cobb. We have both worked very hard on this.

For over 6 years the residents have been lobbying Councillors to sort out the flooding of Whitstable Road in heavy down pours.

On 4 March 2022 Helen Whately MP called a virtual meeting and in attendance was

Helen Whately MP

James Somerville-Meikle

Cllr Denise Knights SBC

Cllr Julian Saunders SBC

Cllr Antony Hook KCC

Earl Bourner - Asset Manager Drainage and Structure KCC

Sub Cobb - Stakeholder Management Team SW

Michael Cook - Network Manager SW

Lionel Hutchins - Investigation Technician SW

John Penicud - Head of Waste Water SW

Scott Pring - Operational Manager East SW

During that meeting I asked for a site meeting with KCC, SW, Lesley Seager Cooksditch clearance volunteer team leader and myself.

This happened on 9th March 2022 where I showed them where all the problems were.

Earl Bourner KCC asked Lesley Seager and her volunteers to clear the culvert at Cooksditch, so that he could get the CCTV machine into the drain for a full survey.

This was completed and on 6 May 2022 myself, LesleySeager, Earl Bourner and KCC contractors attended and found that the pipe was half filled with silt and debris but clear enough to put the robotic camera in. They found no blockage and the camera went into the drain for approximately 31 metres from the St Mary's School end. They then put the camera into the Whitstable Road end and found it completely blocked with leaves, silt and sticks 3 metres in. Obviously, a build-up of many years debris from the road. Bigger machinery was needed.

On 16 May 2022 KCC contractors returned and I attended the site again, they cleared out the culvert in Cooksditch so that it was free flowing .

The Whitstable Road end was cleared but it was believed there may have been a buried chamber, so further investigation was needed. The photographic evidence

showed that the drain in Whitstable Road was now clear and free flowing with no other issues.

There have been two recent heavy rainfall periods where the drain cleared away the water. But there is still danger that the water and debris from the Recreation Ground may cause issues until dealt with.

I cannot thank Earl Bourner and his team enough for being so quick to deal with this issue and listen to residents' concerns. He and his team have been brilliant.

Sue Cobb SW has been keeping Cllr Saunders and myself updated. SW completed main works at Cypress Road WPS for repairs and planted 2 trees in Cooksditch to replace the ones they had to remove. The flap valves have been replaced CSO has been inspected and a CCTV is to be installed to see what happens during heavy rainfall.

A blockage upstream of the CSO was found and cleared and a maintenance schedule is in place. Recently Whitstable Road scheduled cleaning took place to remove the build-up of fat in the drains. The man-hole lifting eyes were broken so a request has been put in to replace them. I have been informed that it was a successful clean but works are continuing.

The Head of Environment and Leisure provided the update below:

- The runoff from Faversham Recreation Ground is nothing new, the whole site runs downhill from the top to the bottom right corner at Whitstable Rd and that over many years rain has left the site onto the road.
- Our understanding is that both KCC and SW understand that the Recreation Ground issue is not the major contributor to the flooding.
- Officers took the opportunity to show the Chair additional drainage measures that we have installed in the last 3 years as part of the HLF bid, which means we have already taken action to reduce the flow.
- That said, we acknowledged that, should suitable budget and resource be available, then we could look at some additional measures to try and slow down the flow of water from the pathway running parallel with Park Road.
- Unfortunately, we do not have resource in the team ahead of the next Area committee to work up the schemes fully due to a vacancy in the team and focus on the other priorities.
- The measures we have endeavoured to look at include;
 1. Regular clearance of debris from the drains next to the gate on the corner or Park Road and Whitstable Road (already happening)
 2. A type of speed bump across the gate area to slow run off down.
 3. Along the pathway there were some natural areas of pooling. We will look at the possibility of digging these out further to create small flooding catchment areas.
 4. Potentially using some channelling where each of the benches are to create a barrier.

Further updates to follow.