

West Wolds Slow the Flow

www.WestWoldsSlowTheFlow.org.uk

April Update

February-March was an interesting time for WWSTF. We heard reports of surface and sewer flooding at Newbald and met with a Newbald PC rep to see what the problem was. Newbald villagers said that they have never seen so much water passing through the village and overwhelming the sewers. The issue caught the attention of Radio Humberside and then BBC Look North, with Bill appearing alongside affected villagers to put the WWSTF point of view as regards the effects of climate change. We will put a link on the WWSTF website.

The weather in February (heavy rain followed by snow) was bad - but was it exceptional enough to cause the worst flooding seen in Newbald in living memory?

At the same time, we heard about a study done by the Living With Water Partnership around Hull, which suggested that soil organic content has a major effect upon how much water it can hold. So we speculate that reduced water carrying capacity in soil, as a result of modern farming practices, may have resulted in a faster throughput of rain and snowmelt into ground-water above Newbald.

Now, if you are farmer reading this and think this sounds like rubbish - get in touch and tell us why. Or maybe you can see some sense in this - some farmers think that good soil husbandry is essential to sustainable farming practice. Perhaps increasingly poor soil structure has contributed to the exceptional flooding seen in Newbald over the last 2 months.

Incidentally, we are hoping to bring a technical team together to look at this issue, which affects not just Newbald, but every village which has spring-fed streams - including Hotham, North Cave, South Cave and Ellerker. The team should include Yorkshire Water, East Riding, Environment Agency, Hull University, local people and others.

Separately, we had a meeting with Ellerker Parish Council to talk about their issues. All went well, but we had a robust challenge from one of the Councillors, asking what is the legal status of WWSTF? She was concerned about the description 'partnership' and whether it committed the partners to any form of joint liability, the way it would in a business partnership. We subsequently approached both Living With Water and the HEYwoods Partnership and asked them. They were clear that they are *"not a legal entity, rather a voluntary coming together of like-minded organisations and individuals based around the shared principles and objectives conveyed in the Terms of Reference"*. Which is exactly what WWSTF is, so we are in good company! That still leaves some issues as to how we organise, fund raise, hold funds etc, but we are collectively working on those.

In March we held a joint meeting of the Newbald, North Cave, South Cave, Ellerker and Brantingham Parish Councils and asked, bluntly, should we carry on? The answer was an emphatic yes, with strong statements of support also coming from the agencies (ERYC/EA/YW).

Subsequently it was agreed that all PCs should let us know what they consider their flooding problems to be, prior to us potentially seeking wider public opinion. There is a possibility that we will be getting some funding this year to allow us to crack on with project planning and wider engagement across the catchment, and maybe develop ideas to help resolve specific issues like the flooding experienced at Newbald and elsewhere. If you think this sounds interesting and you want to know more, you know what to do...

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