

Ide Parish Council

Report from Flood Prevention SubGroup

To IPC meeting 20 March 2024

1. Following the damaging flood of 2 November 2023, on 23 January 2024 we held a site meeting to walk Easterbrook's Field and Shooting Range Field, either side of the railway embankment. Present were: Tom Dauben and Daniel Halford from the EA; Jessica Bishop from Devon CC; Paula Burton-Perrett and Nick Bradley from Ide Parish Council; and Ian Campbell, Gill Orme, Pete Voysey and Chris and Chris Jeans affected Fore Street residents. Victoria Leeming of Strutt and Parker representing the Church Commissioners - the landowners - was unable to attend at the last minute. We then met inside round a table to discuss options.
2. We learned that the EA is responsible for overall strategy. Devon CC is responsible for surface water and rivers. Natural England are responsible for land management in an advisory capacity. To make flood prevention plan for Ide all three bodies will need to work together.
3. The EA advise against engineering solutions at this stage and against throttling the culvert orifice under the embankment - engineering may be too complex for the size of the problem as means treating the embankment as a dam. Would hinge on hydrology studies.
4. EA favours nature based solutions - eg planting willow above the embankment.
5. Daniel Halford of the EA produced a Flood Risk Catchment on 2 February report - see attached. One recommendation is to seek a further, professional report on the hydrology of the catchment. We spoke again with consultant Nigel Smith who knows Ide and has quoted us £2,535.
6. We have written to the landowners of the catchment [Church Commissioners and Devon CC] to ask them if they would be prepared to share in the cost of commissioning a further assessment.
7. We have confirmed that there is no tenant in place on Shooting Range Field (owned by the CCs).
8. On 15 Feb we received a demand from Richard Parr, tenant farmer on Easterbrook's Field, for £2,160 inc VAT in compensation for alleged damage to crops caused by Bob Lowton's digger on 3 November 2023, the day after the flood. Bob Lowton attended as an emergency to see to the trash screen and debris. Peter Skinner, land agent and agricultural consultant, has assessed that the damage amounts to considerably less. We are in correspondence with Strutt and Parker for more information, and will respond to Mr Parr in due course, having taken further advice.

9. On 26 February Ian and Nick met with Victoria Leeming online to discuss the recommendations of the EA report.

We asked the Church Commissioners to:

- contribute to funding the additional report recommended by EA, sharing the cost with Devon CC and Ide Parish Council;
- for details about the arrangements agreed with the EA over access to clear the trash screen;
- and to amend the conditions of the tenancy, given the risk and history of flood which they must now take into account, to exclude the planting of high risk crops such as maize.

10. Ian is in correspondence with Devon CC's land agent, Dan Meek, who manages the Devon County Farm at Markham.

11. The heavy winter rain also caused episodes of flooding in the High Street from run off from fields, and due to blocked drains on the highway. Paula has been in correspondence with Devon Highways, calling out engine crews to unblock drains at critical times.

On 14 March Paula hosted a subgroup meeting with affected High Street residents to plan further measures for the coming autumn.

Nick Bradley

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