

Flooding report for Rutland Extra meeting 18th January 2024

Flooding in Whissendine

Whissendine has experienced 9 road closures due to flooding since Storm Babet on 20 October this year.

One house and business floods regularly and most others have so far managed to avoid serious flooding due to their own flood defences and pumps.

At its peak, a 33 ft wide river rushes through the bottom banks and out into Cow Lane, inundating the Nook, the village green and both sides of the bridge at the White Lion. Estimates put the depth at over 30" in places.

Our water comes via 2 streams emanating near Cold Overton and at Holbeck farm, dropping steeply [one at 12.5 meters per kilometre, the other at 15.5 metres per kilometre] to the village centre, where they meet at the bridge.

There is minimal fall beyond this point, only 5.77 meters per kilometre to the floodplain to the north, below Whissendine station and into Stapleford Park.

Two more streams from Somerby /Cold Overton skirt the village, to the east via Langham and Ashwell, to the West via Leesthorpe, flooding as they go, to join the Whissendine water in the same floodplain, along with water draining from Wymondham. There are also many underground streams in the area, one of which surfaces near Whissendine Lodge, flowing northeast crossing the Melton and Stapleford Road and into the very same floodplain

This floodplain drains slowly, as the rivers Eye and Wreake into which it drains, are controlled by the Melton Mowbray flood defences. Our water then eventually goes on to flood areas of the river Soare and on into the river Trent.

Thoughts on how RCC might help.

A. Strategic planning of water disposal.....reducing surface water runoff to streams and already overloaded combined sewer systems and encouraging neighbouring authorities to do the same.

B Investigate the possibility of leaky dams and encourage / incentivise farmers and landowners to set aside marginal land upstream for floodwater retention, including Leicestershire.

C. Each July/August walk strategically important water courses like Whissendine, Langham and unnamed brooks, assessing persistent blockages on streams in order to require riparian owners to keep streams free flowing. This is particularly important downstream of the road bridge at the White Lion.

D. Better training for planning staff and Councillors around flooding to avoid poor planning decisions.

E.g. 1. RCC granted planning for a dwelling in Whissendine, bordering the stream, against recommendations of WPC and Environment Agency who both explained it was in a flood plain.

Then when the owner constrained the stream with gabions, RCC granted retrospective planning permission despite warnings of downstream impact.

A near neighbour raised the soil levels on his side of the stream in response. RCC investigated but did not enforce removal of the soil bank.

The combined effect threatens a dwelling downstream and the force of the water, exiting this constrained reach, has demolished the bridge parapet above the culvert, on the Nook during storm Henk.

E.g.2 The ridge and furrow high pasture at the western side of the village was identified as a significant water holding site. Planning permission was recently granted for 66 dwellings.

Between the grant of outline planning and the full planning in December 23 the developers bulldozed the site flat. During storm Henk the water cascaded eastwards from the site through gardens and Sherard's close onto Stapleford rd where it entered a business premises, the first time this has happened, and also threatened a house, then it followed the slope down into Main Street and on towards the green, inundating a business and associated accommodation and threatening other houses.

D. Please take us seriously when we try to highlight flooding issues in planning applications. We are trying to help planners, not undermine them, but we are the ones who live here and have studied the area. And please, consult contour maps to check all the slopes and level changes as part of planning decisions.

Since the village sits in a basin, only slightly above the floodplain, any building on the high land encircling the village, or involving more water entering the drains and streams, will most definitely result in increased flooding.

E. Use the Anglian [Northern]Regional Flood and coastal committee more effectively. RCC has 2 seats on this group, but the minutes do not seem to reflect effort expended in meaningful problem solving that would benefit Rutland settlements.

Cynthia Moss

WPC and Chair of WNP Group.