

Croscombe Parish Council

Report of the flood of 4th January 2024

There were 28 households involved in Croscombe: There were 20 homes flooded 6 were caused by high river levels and 14 were caused by water overflowing from the culvert. There were also 8 households who succeeded in taking action that prevented the flood water entering their homes and gardens.

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Summary of recommendations

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Summary of recommendations for Croscombe - all are urgent

- Check culvert to see if there is any blockage or damage and repair as necessary. Assess flow capacity of culvert and address any deficiency. Calm Ref. RM.C.13
- Undertake maintenance of the river bed. Calm Ref. RM.C.11 and RM.C.12
- Improve the approach and exit at Jacks bridge
- Transfer water from the upper areas along from Old Street Lane to discharge at the end of village. Where possible using ditches and natural flow paths or pipes.
- Review and repair all walls that carry the River Sheppey from the start of the village to the end of the village. Of concern is the wall at the bottom of Dinder Estates Field.
- Investigate increase in water flow from waterfall opposite STW.
- Ensure all drain systems are fully operational. Calm p79
- Shepton STW. Enquire if storm water discharge can be controlled to avoid peak flows and consider opportunities on site to minimise run off from hard standing.
- Explore option to attenuate flood water at Kilver Court Lake.
- Check route of stream flow in Ham Woods and clear sink area.
- Enlarge drain that discharges into the River Sheppey at the bottom of Fayreway.
- Consider use of retention ponds upstream of Croscombe. Calm RM.C.1
- Consider Farm practices: land management, stores and adapting land forms

Section 1: Introduction

On Thursday the 4th of January and again Sunday the 17th of February, Crocombe village and parts of Dinder village were flooded. There were 20 houses that flooded. In several cases the flood was severe and the residence was uninhabitable for several days. In at least 3 cases, residents will need to find alternative accommodation for up to 6 months to allow repairs to be made.

What was significant about this flood is that it was more far reaching than ever before. Approximately half the properties that flooded, did so for the first time in living memory.

Section 2: Flooding event – Jan 4th (What happened. Please note, the flooding event on Feb 17th had a similar impact).

2.1 Timeline

Those who were flooded were asked to give a timeline as best they could remember.

1. In the afternoon the rain was very heavy and driving to and from Wells and Shepton was becoming hazardous.
2. 6pm rain was very heavy and river was high. No Sheppey flood warnings received.
3. 6:30 gardens were flooding and residents in highest risk residences were starting to put defences in place. residents started to receive flood warnings
4. 7:00 a significant surge of water described as a river running through Crocombe ran through the village.
5. Water level peaked at 8.30 pm
6. Midnight: Residents started to notice the water subsiding.

2.2 A description of the event

There was storm runoff from the rainfall on the Crocombe catchment this was combined with the flood flows from Shepton Mallet. In Crocombe the high river level and the runoff from Jacks Lane and Old Street Lane caused flooding of houses adjacent to Jacks Bridge (5 houses).

The culvert in Long Street soon reached its maximum capacity and overtopped the river channel. This had a number of consequences. It increased the level of water at Jacks Bridge, it also mixed with groundwater seeping into the floors of properties and also flooded some due to the volume of water travelling down the main road into doorways, air brick and through walls (11 properties).

The consequence for householders:

“The whole of the downstairs of our house needs to be gutted”

“We felt completely helpless”

“I felt all over the place since the flood I just can’t think straight”

Section 3: Recommendations

3.1 Recommended Urgent Priorities for Crocombe Issues

1. Culvert surcharge and overflow

The culvert needs to be checked to ensure that there are no blockages and any damage found must be repaired. If all is found to be good then the capacity is inadequate and consideration needs to be given to replacing the culvert or an alternative solution such as laying a pipeline to supplement the culvert carrying capacity. Calm Ref. RM.C.13

2. River Bed Maintenance.

There is a substantial quantity of stones in the river bed. This reduces the capacity of the channel and possibly the culvert and leads to a turbulent flowing river with a higher operating level. This may be one cause of flooding. Calm Ref. RM.C.11 and RM.C.12

3. Improve the approach and exit of the river channel at Jacks Bridge

The current layout is based the needs of Mills where ponds were used to store river flows. Improving the approach and exit at the bridge will help to smooth the flow of water and reduce the level of the river. When this is combined with the maintenance of the stream bed then this would reduce the river level and the incidence of flooding in the area.

4. Divert local run off from roads and drains to bypass the village

The 2012 report from SCC recommended a pipeline from the upper area of Old Street Lane to discharge at the end of the village. This could possibly be a pipe or an open channel which would be made even more effective by linking in Duncart Lane, Jacks Lane along with Old Street Lane. While piping is an option there may be more environmentally friendly options available. This work would reduce the volume of water passing through Jacks Bridge and the culvert.

5. Investigate source of water from waterfall opposite the Sewage Treatment Works (STW)

There seems to be an increased flow down the waterfall this needs to be investigated.

6. Reduce or attenuate Storm Water Discharges from STW.

This would minimise the peak flow of the river. Consideration could also be given to minimising run off from any hardstanding on the site.

7. Ensure all drains are fully operational.

The Calm report identified many that required repair to make them fully operational especially drains in Jacks Lane

8. River Bank/Walls in need of urgent attention.

From the top of Croscombe to the bottom there is damage to the channel walls. In places at the lower end of Croscombe adjacent to fields the walls are damaged in many places and a temporary repair has resulted in a standing wave and turbulence that is affecting the downstream bank. There are several sections of the wall that need to be repaired or consider removal of wall and regrade bank where possible.

9. Consider all options to attenuate flood flows

One option is to approach Kilver Court to request that the operation is revised so that the sluices are opened before the arrival of flood. This would reduce the level in the lake to take a volume of flood water. There may also be other opportunities between Doultling and Croscombe to attenuate the flood peak flow.

10. Ham Wood Swallets and Sinks

There is evidence that the streams in Ham Wood flowed down the valley into the road and into the river. Some simple natural solutions may available. Further investigation is needed to determine if the stream sink flows to St Andrews Well.

11. Enlarge the drain pipe that discharges water into the River Sheppy at the bottom of Fayreway

Due to the small size of pipe the water backs up and ponds at the bottom of Fayreway. This then floods a nearby property.

12. Repair wall at the side of the bridge near the School Bus Stop

It appears that a small part of the wall has been damaged and should be repaired.

13. Reduce the road flooding on the approach from Wells to Croscombe

The wall near Croscombe is currently damaged and surface water ponds in the area. It is suggested that proper drainage provision is made along with holes in the wall in case drains are blocked.

14. Consider all options to reduce Flood Flows.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) are able to advise on many possibilities available to Farmers and landowners. Also consider utilising upstream ponds to attenuate flood flows.

3.2 Recommendations for the local management of flood events.

The Flood Plan is to be revised to include the following:

1. **A revised list of Flood Wardens** where priority is given to those available to help. A Senior Warden is to be named along with a Flood Coordinator and deputy. A list is now available. The Flood Coordinator will contact the Flood Wardens following an alert and liaise with the authorities as directed by the Senior Warden or deputy.
2. **Establish a list of Flood Friends** who are willing to help clear up after homes have been flooded. List started.
3. **Set up a Flood Whats App group.**
4. **Progress the availability of a local alarm system** – very close to being available.
5. **Encourage all residents at risk to have flood plans** and flood boards, sandbags and gel bags. Ensure that residents at risk are given a **Local Personal Flood Plan supplement** which will list all the items and help available. A local front page to be provided to list local urgent contact numbers
6. **All residents to be visited after a flood event** to ensure that they are o.k. and then subsequently visit to see if anything can be done to minimise the flooding
7. **Ensure that Flood Wardens and Coordinators receive appropriate training.**
8. **Ensure that suitable training is given for a Warden to be qualified to close the road**

Jacks Bridge

Culvert overflowing

