



Dauntsey Parish Council

Drainage Board

Flooding Update

Here We Go Again: December 12th/13th - the rain came, waters rose and a few were again flooded. There are several hundred miles of ditches, drains and other watercourses around Dauntsey – as it is primarily John Histed and me walking them, there is a limit to what we can cover during any potential flooding situation. If you are willing to help us then I would be pleased to hear from you.

We drove around the parish on the 13th to get a quick overview and then carried out a more detailed investigation of the worst area. The following is based on that plus a late night check. As far as I know this covers most of the problems, but if you have other and/or contradictory information then please let me know.

Church Lane - Good Mondays Farm to St James: This was the worst area with water flooding into at least three houses. As in some ways it was even worse than July '07, John and I walked the canal, its spill-way and through the fields to St James. Almost all the water that flows down Lyneham Banks and into the canal then goes down the spill-way, under the railway (where it collects even more water from the railway embankment) and heads in a straight line almost directly towards Willowgates and Lilac Cottage. The water should flow around the field by Fairmeadow Farm and to the west of St James before joining Dauntsey Brook via the Bourne. Unfortunately, the ditch was blocked in the above field so the water goes in the opposite direction to cause the problems along the area from the Old Chapel to Good Mondays Farm. This water couldn't all get away through the normal ditches and so flowed towards St James... flooding some drives and gardens in the process. The primary cause for these problems was the severely blocked ditch – I will identify the responsible landowner and ask them to keep this clear in future. As this blockage is by a public footpath, I would suggest that those affected this time should understand how this water flows and keep an eye on the ditch state to help ensure that it doesn't happen in the future. If in doubt, ask me and I will show you where to look.

The Green – Church Lane to Old Sodom Lane: This has had no maintenance since my last report. The work downstream (Union Farm etc.) showed great benefits and, as far as I know, there was no flooding.

The Green – Old Sodom Lane towards the M4: The absence of maintenance in the section downstream described above, means that water doesn't get away correctly beyond the bridge. The silt in the downstream section effectively raises the level of Dauntsey Brook upstream by probably 18" – which is what I predicted in the last Pump. I know that many people are concerned about the Old Sodom Lane bridge, but if the water cannot get away downstream then the levels are forced to rise.

I checked the water level at the upstream side of the bridge at both 10:00 am and 10:00 pm on the 13th and there was clearance at both times. I gather however that it was higher at other times but haven't heard if it actually ran over Old Sodom Lane.

Some residents had significant problems with rising water levels and are attributing them to the Great Middle Green Farm development. This is discharging water above rather than below the bridge. The Parish Council and residents have repeatedly tried to get NWDC to force the developer to fix this, but there is talk but no action. The time may have come for residents to

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raise a formal complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk) as NWDC will soon vanish.

While I agree that the water enters the Brook at the wrong point, if the downstream section isn't cleared then there will still be flooding. Both problems need to be fixed.

Olivemead Lane: This had a lot of water coming across the fields and down the lane from the direction of Olivemead Farm. The water was about to go over my boots so I couldn't find if it came from the motorway ditch of the fields. As some of you will remember from the last Pump, the lake has been drained – to help reduce flooding, its owners opened sluice gates to reduce the flow down Olivemead Drain... and they will have to pump it out at their own expense. I would like to thank Scott and Sarah for this consideration.

Idover Lane: While this often floods and has standing water, this time the water seemed to take even longer to get away. If you farm the land between Idover Lane and the Avon, could you please check that your ditches are clear?

Brinkworth Brook/Grittenham: Brinkworth Brook needs a lot of work downstream from by Ivy Lakes through to School Hill (Brinkworth). This was starting to spill out over the fields – if worse, it could have come through Grittenham and into Dauntsey Brook. We've enough water of our own without Brinkworth's!

Other: I know that there were problems elsewhere but there is a limit to what the two of us can achieve.

I've recently seen a new culvert that someone has installed... and it is far too high above the ditch bottom. I will talk to the owner, but if you are thinking of doing any work and would like any advice/help from us, then please contact me.

Scott Wealthall is currently having a lot of work done at Olivemead Lakes – as part of this, the machine operator has indicated that he could offer competitive rates for digging other local ditches if there is an interest. This would work best if a few people were interested so there would be full use of the machine for a day or weekend. Let me know if you want to hear more.

Andrew Chapman

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