

## Flooding

*Andrew Chapman*

Its official - the M4 makes Dauntsey's flooding worse. In February I took part in a meeting with a flooding specialist employed by HM Treasury to investigate Dauntsey's flooding (primarily south of the M4) in connection with various compensation claims made against the Highways Agency. With help from our MP James Gray (this is written before the election), we managed to persuade those involved to release the report. The report identifies multiple causes of flooding:

- Characteristics of the catchment - the shape of Dauntsey Vale, soil type, etc.
- Inadequate culverts along farm ditches with lack of regular ditch & culvert maintenance.
- Barn Farm / Field 6970.
- The construction of the M4.

Regarding the M4, the problems identified include alteration of the original flow routes, construction of inadequately sized culverts and lack of regular ditch and culvert maintenance. The report agrees with all of the problems that I have been reporting via this column for the last 2 ½ years (for the area south of the M4) other than it seems to have missed the impact of the regular Brinkworth Brook overtopping... which is also due in part to the inadequate culvert.

The report recommends several measures to be taken by the Highways Agency to reduce Dauntsey's flood risk, so we will have to see if they actually take any notice.

Currently there are three compensation claims lodged against Highways Agency but by my count, there have been a total of 46 homes and businesses flooded in the last few years. For several of these properties it is clear that the M4 played no part in their flooding but for others it could be argued that the motorway at least shares some of the blame and if that was the extra 6" that came into your house... Claims may be lodged with the Claims Management Team, Highways Agency, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham B1 1RN. If you think that you may have a case then I would suggest that you talk to me (and probably your insurance company) before proceeding.

## Help Put Dauntsey on the Map

*Andrew Chapman*

There are a couple of projects where more complete and up to date information about Dauntsey would be helpful. Most involve walks through our community and, if summer arrives, could be quite pleasant.

The first project is OpenStreetMap ([www.openstreetmap.org](http://www.openstreetmap.org)). This is an international project to produce free maps of the whole world, and they want your help to put Dauntsey on the map. I've done some updates for Dauntsey but we lag

behind the Somerfords where there has been lots of information provided on footpaths. Have a look on their website and/or talk to me.

For the second project, I am trying to produce complete and accurate maps of our area relating to drainage and flooding. This will tend to be something of a nature walk - I'm trying to identify all ditches and culverts in the area including their size, condition and the amount of water that they carry. Mostly this will just involve a gentle stroll around the countryside with a digital camera and a notepad.

If you are interested in either, give me a call on 01249 890379.

May 2010.