

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF HUGHENDEN VALLEY DIG

Hughenden Village Hall (Small), Coombe Lane, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe Bucks HP14 4NX

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

### Attendees:

David & Debbie White (DW/DAW)  
Matt Hopkins (MHo)  
Debs Lemon (DL)  
Steve Kirkpatrick (SK), National Trust  
Sarah Mustapha (SM)  
James Perkins (JP), Hughenden Parish Council & Hughenden Valley Residents Association  
Angus Idle (AI) Hughenden Valley Residents Association  
John Gladwin (JG), Chiltern District Councillor & Chiltern Society  
Martin Hall (MH)  
Dave Carroll (DC), Bucks County Councillor  
Alex Back (AB), Bucks County Council Flood Management Officer  
Helen Page (HP) Environment Agency, Environment Management Team Leader  
Victorian Marckaness (VM), Caseworker for the Rt. Hon. David Liddington MP for Aylesbury  
Huw Thomas (HT), Thames Water Local and Regional Government Liaison Officer  
Andrew Hagger (AH), Thames Water Waste Modelling Manager  
Mark Taylor (MT), Thames Water Field Operations Specialist  
Donna Jackson (DJ) Thames Water Sewer Flooding Compliance Manager  
Nicholas Votta (NV) Customer Liaison Representative  
Alex Saunders, (AS), Thames Water Repair and Maintenance - Contractor Performance Manager  
Denise Kinsella (DK), Thames Water Customer Liaison Representative  
Jason Major (JM), Thames Water Repair and Maintenance - Contractor Performance Manager

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*Apologies: Simon Cook (SC), Paul Woodford (PW), Helen and Aaron Keats (HK/AK), Steve Smith (SS), Elizabeth Carless (EC)*

### Agenda:

- Introductions
- Questions for agencies
- A.O.B

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	DW began the meeting by outlining the aims and objectives of the Hughenden Valley DIG (HVDIG) and what we hoped to achieve from the meeting in terms of answers to the questions sent out to Thames Water, The Environment Agency and Bucks County Council. Introductions were made by all in attendance.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Bucks County Council</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>How does Bucks CC propose to manage the potential conflict of interest of “policing” the Riparian duties of the Hughenden Stream when the main culverting of it has been done by Bucks CC?</b>	
	AB said that the Riparian duty lies with whoever the land belongs. If the land belongs to BCC the Flood team can enforce against BCC as landowner and how this would be done is to be followed up. AB and DC to investigate this discrepancy with BCC in terms of policy over Riparian duties.	<b>AB/DC</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>What are the results of surveys of the the culverted sections of the Hughenden Valley Stream in Boss Lane and Valley Road from The Harrow to Deeters and have any works been carried out or planned as a result?</b>	
	Culverts from the Harrow to Deeters have been inspected and were generally in good condition with just some slight misalignments. Cleaning was only necessary in the chambers. The section from Deeters to behind Friars Gardens needs further investigation and Alex will report progress. The Boss Lane section required cleaning and has been surveyed. More work is required in levelling out the ditch and completing the clearing of the pipes that feed into it. Alex is to put in a work request to Transport for Bucks to dig out the ditch and complete the jetting of the pipes. The pipe under the bungalow was bigger than records previously show and is 375mm rather than 300mm but is still much smaller than the two pipes in Boss Lane and this needs further assessment.	<b>AB</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Are there plans to survey the culverted section of the Hughenden Stream in Warrendene Road?</b>	
	After clarifying which section of Warrendene Road was being referred to AB stated that this section needs to be properly surveyed and put into the asset register as well as cleaned. As all the culverts to this point have been surveyed and there is no flood risk here this survey work will be considered as non-urgent and assessed alongside all the other competing needs within the Flood Management budget which is not large.	

2.4	<p><b>The flash flooding in Hughenden Valley, in particular on Valley Road from the Coombe Lane roundabout down to Buildbase on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014 indicates that there are issues with potential capacity/blockages with the gully and pipe system installed in 2002. When were the pipes and gully system last inspected and cleared and what is the maintenance schedule given the area's high risk surface flooding status? What is the status of resident's correspondence with BCC regarding this event?</b></p>	
	<p>Alex confirmed that the complaints are logged on the Transport for Bucks system and agreed to talk to the technicians from Transport for Bucks to arrange an inspection of the pipe system and to ask for a maintenance schedule that addresses this being a surface water flooding hot spot. Subsequent to the meeting on Friday 10th October 2014 Transport for Bucks started the process of jetting out the pipe system. Further work needs to be done to dig out the ditch on the West side of Valley Road and to check the gullies are clear after completion of the road resurfacing in Valley Road and Coombe Lane. There was a discussion on the legal situation for directing surface water from roads into an ordinary water course such as the Hughenden Stream and the consensus was that with adequate pollution filters this was legal. Supplementary – HVDIG to formulate a question for Bucks CC on the status of discharging surface water onto private property and send to AB. DL noted that she still hadn't had a response to her letter regarding the flash flooding – AB to respond.</p>	<p><b>HVDIG</b> <b>AB</b></p>
2.5	<p><b>What is the current status of the Hughenden Valley Flooding Procedure document? Where should residents with no access to the Hughenden Stream pump surcharged sewer discharges if their neighbours don't allow them access?</b></p>	
	<p>The document is still being developed and should be completed before January 2015. AB asked how many properties did not have direct access and it was confirmed that there are five. AB agreed to continue discussions with the Environment Agency with a view to making the document complete in this regard.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p>
2.6	<p><b>Why have residents north of Boss Lane not received a letter regarding their Riparian responsibility to keep their part of the Hughenden Stream clear? Have BCC a definitive list of who has repairing and clearing duties in the Hughenden Valley?</b></p>	
	<p>AB explained that the Valley Road residents had received advisory notices as he had surveyed that area and could see that there might be issues. It was pointed out by the HVDIG that in the other upstream winterbourne sections future issues may arise and that all affected property owners should be notified. AB agreed to compile a complete list of properties, re-examine Bucks CC's current policy and report back.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p>

2.7	<b>When do BCC plan to complete their Asset Register in Hughenden Valley and have it online?</b>	
	<p>DC explained that the length of time this was taking to complete was a reflection on the resources allocated to it. AB explained that Bucks CC is currently in the collecting of data phase of the project and he doesn't know at this stage when it will complete. He expects that the whole project for the county will take three or four years to complete. HVDIG agreed to consider at the next internal meeting whether a letter should be sent to Martin Tett (CEO) and Lesley Clarke (Environment Cabinet member) at Bucks CC asking for more resource to be added to this important area to help the sterling work that AB is doing.</p> <p>VM also told the HVDIG that David Lidington remains concerned by the sewage problems Hughenden Valley has had, will stay informed of any developments and lend his support wherever possible.</p>	HVDIG
2.8	<b>Can BCC share with the HVDIG any known future planning developments which will connect with the main sewer which is fed from Valley Rd and present the modelling and impact assessment of these additional developments?</b>	
	<p>AB explained that this was an issue for Wycombe District Council. HVDIG agreed to consider at its next internal meeting inviting Wycombe DC to join the Agencies. DC also asked that the HVDIG consider having an input into some forums on flooding.</p>	HVDIG
3.0	<p><b>Environment Agency</b></p> <p>The EA had already sent answers to the questions for agencies and these are attached as Appendix 1. Additional answers given at the meeting to some of these questions are set out below. In addition TW contributed answers to some of these questions at the meeting.</p>	
3.1	<b>What is the status of the Thames Water Infiltration Reduction Plan for Hughenden Valley?</b>	
	<p>AH explained that Thames Water has produced a Strategy document covering not just groundwater infiltration but also surface water discharge and long term planned developments in the catchment areas. The list of areas needed to be included in Infiltration Reduction Plans has been extended following the events of last winter and Hughenden Valley is expected to be covered before the end of this year as they recognise that overpumping fits with the problems here. Thames Water have set up a small team and have applied to the regulator (OFWAT) for funding and are also preparing internal documents required to be approved by Thames Water's Board.</p>	

3.2	<b>Has any more research been done with Thames Water for solutions involving storing and treating the sewage and pumping this into the Hughenden Stream in future events?</b>	
	Thames Water have purchased some units used by Southern Water that treat sewage diluted with groundwater for onward release and plan to trial them with a view to test their effectiveness. They may be used as a “contingency” in Hughenden Valley but Thames Water’s main priority is to reduce groundwater infiltration on their network to avoid having to overpump or use such contingencies.	
3.3	<b>What is the EA going to do to ensure that the stream in Hughenden never has to be used as a sewage dump again? In particular, in terms of the Water Framework Directive, how do the EA intend to meet the 2027 targets?</b>	
	HP agreed to link in her ecologist colleagues at the Environmental Agency with the National Trust, the Chalk Stream Project and the Chiltern Society.	<b>HP</b>
3.4	<b>Are there plans to use borehole groundwater readings – particularly North Dean House – as part of an early warning system for future events?</b>	
	<p>HP showed the meeting a graph of the latest groundwater levels at the Piddington borehole which showed the levels as being high but falling and they are unlikely to get back to “exceptional” level this winter unless we get many more months of double the average rainfall. This graph is attached to the minutes as Appendix 2.</p> <p>HP offered to share updated ground water graphs for Piddington with the HVDIG and explained that Environment Agency water situation reports that detail effective rainfall are available on the gov.uk website</p> <p>JG to send his spreadsheet of groundwater readings to DW.</p>	<b>HP</b>  <b>JG</b>
3.5	<b>Why did the EA not notify Hughenden Park resident landowners downstream about Thames Water pumping into the stream and pollution from March this year?/Why did the EA not put signs up around the park to inform users of pollution to the stream?</b>	
	<p>Thames Water (MT) said that they should have notified the National Trust and landowners downstream about their pumping and will do so in any future overpumping event.</p> <p>HVDIG agreed to put together a proposal for implementing a procedure of notification of the pollution levels to the public for Wycombe District Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water to develop and then include this in the Hughenden Valley Flooding Procedure document being produced by Bucks CC.</p>	<b>HVDIG</b>

<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Thames Water</b></p> <p>Following the meeting, Thames Water provided HVDIG with a document of their responses to the questions that were raised ahead of the meeting and this is attached as Appendix 2.</p>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Is the sewer network in Hughenden Valley a foul water only system or a combined system?</b></p>	
	<p>TW advised that this was a foul water only system system but there are problems with misconnections and rain/surface water entering the system. . AB thought that the sewer dated back to the late 50s/early 60s whilst MH thought the date more likely to be around 1953.</p>	
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>What is the status of the proposed CCTV surveys of the sewers in Hughenden Valley?</b></p>	
	<p>These are still ongoing and whilst is there no end date set, MT thought that these would be completed by the end of the year. Approximately 1km has now been surveyed.</p>	
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b>What are the results of the CCTV and other survey work carried out to date?</b></p>	
	<p>Again the work is ongoing but to date, nothing more serious than some tree root blockages and extra cleaning has been required and the replacement of some (approximately 20) manhole covers.</p>	
<b>4.4</b>	<p><b>What remedial work has been carried out as a result to date and what future remedial work is planned?</b></p>	
	<p>TW said that a number of manholes in the road had been replaced by leak proof ones. Where issues are found they will be repaired as required. An Internal Funding Request has been submitted for the Thames Area and lining of some sewers may be considered.</p> <p>Since the meeting, Thames Water have informed HVDIG that the sewer cleaning planned in the Hughenden Valley area has now been completed. MT has begun reviewing the closed circuit television (CCTV) survey footage that is available to them to ascertain whether or not further action, such as additional sewer cleaning, is required and to identify points of infiltration that would benefit from investment. The sewer cleaning that they have completed to date will help to ensure that their sewers are able to operate at an optimum capacity in the event of another storm event. Similarly, patch lining will help reduce infiltration into their sewer network.</p>	

<b>4.5</b>	<b>Are there plans to survey the lateral connections?</b>	
	<p>Not for those on private land. Where TW has responsibility for lateral connections and CCTV shows potential issues then they will investigate. MT agreed to provide a map of the sewer loop from Boss Lane showing which connections TW have responsibility for.</p> <p>Since the meeting MT has provided HVDIG with a map and this is attached as Appendix 3 - Section 105a, shown in bold red, refers to sewers that have been transferred to Thames Water after the change in legislation with effect from October 2011.</p>	<b>MT</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Will TW share with residents and the HVDIG the overall report that WERM will produce for them from their September surveys?</b>	
	TW does not think that an overall report will be produced by WERM just individual property reports. Individual reports will be sent to property owners – DJ to check the overall strategy for reporting and then send out to the HVDIG.	<b>DJ</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>What are TW's contingency plans for over-pumping in the event of another occurrence as in 2001 and 2014?</b>	
	<p>TW said that there are no contingency plans as such. Their focus is to prevent groundwater infiltration in their network and the normal reporting system of events via the customer care line as in 2014 will operate. MT and JM will review the need to use any overpumping options. AS said that some of the innovative solutions to clearing sewage from the pumping discharge could possibly be used in Hughenden. TW agreed to look into setting up a special reference code for Hughenden Valley to use when reporting such incidents.</p> <p>Since the meeting, Thames Water have informed HVDIG that as they now know the mechanism of flooding, under similar conditions, they would not use tankers as these were unsuccessful at stemming the flooding. Taking this into account, Thames Water are in the process of reviewing the way that they can highlight the Hughenden Valley area to their 24-hour Customer Helpline so that their Network Engineers and Operational Specialists can be alerted at the earliest opportunity to attend the area, investigate and revert to the use of consented over-pumping at the earliest opportunity, where required. Thames Water will be in contact with HVDIG again about this once a process has been established and formalised.</p>	<b>DK/NB</b>
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Is TW aware of the ongoing sewage discharge issues at Church Lodge and Aylesbury Lodge in Valley Road?</b>	
	This is a pinch point which TW were not aware of. MT agreed to go to the location with SK after the meeting to review the set up there. MT to map.	<b>MT</b>

<b>4.9</b>	<b>Will TW provide details of the maintenance records for the sewer system North of Hughenden Manor and on through Hughenden Valley since the 2001 flooding?</b>	
	MT stated that maintenance was only carried out when there was a problem with the sewer system. TW pointed out that the areas have changed within their organisation and are unsure as to what maintenance records are available.	
<b>4.10</b>	<b>Is TW of the view that the capacity and performance of the sewer network from Valley Road into High Wycombe and on to the Little Marlow treatment works are satisfactory now and in future years? What is being done regarding the new housing builds (Hughenden Quarter) to ensure sufficient capacity?</b>	
	<p>AH pointed out that for most of the year, the sewer system works efficiently. It is a self-cleansing network and requires a 'flow' to ensure that detritus does not build up and flushes through – TW estimated that the system is utilised at between 30-40%. They regard the system to be of optimum size for a self cleaning system – a larger capacity system would lead to problems in treating the sewage. TW's focus is on stopping groundwater, surface water and rainwater from entering their network and with proper policing of Building Regulations for new housing builds capacity would be adequate. AB pointed out that new builds do have to consider the demands they will place on the existing sewage system and put forward models/proposals to BCC before being allowed to connect to the system.</p> <p>DW is keen to use the HVDIG to highlight the issues around building patios and publish literature to inform residents on the proposed HVDIG website.</p>	
<b>4.11</b>	<b>Are there any plans for any long term sewer infrastructure upgrades in the Hughenden Valley area?</b>	
	No – TW are concentrating on stopping water ingress into the system via the use of CCTV and finding the points of infiltration and then lining them.	
<b>4.12</b>	<b>Why did TW not notify Hughenden Park resident landowners downstream about TW pumping into the stream and pollution from March this year. What plans have TW go to deal with future events?</b>	
	See minutes from EA (Minutes Section 3)	
<b>4.13</b>	<b>Why did TW lift the manhole cover at Hughenden Park Lodge entrance thus allowing for the stream to be polluted.</b>	
	Thames Water apologised and said that should not have happened.	
<b>4.14</b>	<b>Why did TW not put signs up around the park to inform users of pollution to the stream.</b>	
	See minutes from EA (Minutes Section 3)	

4.15	<b>What is TW going to do to ensure that the stream in Hughenden never has to be used as a sewage dump again? In particular, in terms of the Water Framework Directive, how do TW intend to meet the 2027 targets?</b>	
	See minutes from EA (Minutes Section 3)	
5.0	<b>Conclusion and Next Steps</b>	
	DW thanked everyone for their time and contribution to a constructive first Agency meeting. HVDIG would send a draft of the meeting minutes to the Agencies for them to amend/sign off and then the minutes would be circulated. Actions from this Agency meeting will be progressed via e-mail/telephone between HVDIG and the Agencies. The next Agency meeting would be arranged in Spring 2015.	