

Flood Working Party meeting

Monday 12th January 2026 at 2pm in the Ellendune Community Centre

Invitees:

Cllr John Hewer	Chair, WWPC	Confirmed
Cllr Holly Woodward	Chair Planning & Highways Committee, WWPC	Apologies
Cllr Matthew Smith	Vice Chair of Planning & Highways Committee, WWPC	Apologies
Cllr Mark Trigg	WWPC	Confirmed
Cllr Gayle Cook	WWPC and SBC Ward Cllr	Confirmed
Emma Freemantle	Clerk, WWPC	Confirmed
Cllr Chris Watts	Cabinet Member Transport & the Environment, SBC	Confirmed
Cris Butler	Interim Head of Highways & Transport, SBC	Apologies
Jay Judge	Interim Asset & Highways Manager, SBC	Confirmed
Emma Chilton – Burdock	Flood Risk Engineer, Lead Local Flood Authority, SBC	Confirmed
Danny Kruger	MP	Apologies
Ed Smith	MPs Office, Assistant	Confirmed
Nikki Hines	Thames Water	Apologies
Alice Keeping	Thames Water	Apologies
Saffron Dziuban	Thames Water	Confirmed
Nick Buttery	Thames Water	Confirmed
Mathew Lloyd	Environment Agency, Flood Resilience Engagement Advisor	Confirmed
Ella Fennemore	Environment Agency	Apologies
Connor Stapleton-Goddard	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Apologies
Neil Pullen	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Confirmed
Jennifer Butler	Science Museum, Wroughton	Confirmed
Matt Moore	Science Museum, Wroughton	Apologies
Matt DiVittori	Resident	Apologies
Angie Searle	Resident	Confirmed
Chris Flemming	Resident	Confirmed
Gary Fuller	Resident	Apologies

NOTES

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Introductions were carried out by the Chair Cllr J Hewer, in attendance listed above and note apologies of those unable to attend.

Note – correspondence attached received from Thames Water from Nikki Hines and Alice Keeping.

2. Introduction from SBC – New Interim Asset and Highways Manager Jay Judge and Emma Chilton – Burdock.

A summary from JJ and ECB was given over the summary of latest Section 19 report, Flood Incident: 17th -18th September 2023, 13th & 20th October 2023 . The relevant pages are B.4. Mannington and Western page 29.

This document is a public document and can be found on the Swindon Borough Council webpage at

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/11399/section_19_flood_investigation_report.

Highways

Discussions focused on remit for all assets within Highway, an update was provided giving an introduction and overview of the Section 19 report, covering what has actually happened to date. All noted that the officer has now been three months in post.

Section 19 Report & Responsibilities

ECB highlighted that the Section 19 report is a *public document* outlining actions recommended for progression by multiple agencies. These actions do not constitute a statutory duty — they are recommendations only.

Because they cannot be enforced, actions are focused on long-term progression rather than immediate compliance.

Strategy & Asset Considerations

Discussion included strategic work on culverts.

SBC has identified ongoing work, with a holistic review in progress.

It was noted that:

- Conducting this work independently would be difficult.
- All rivers and culverts require a holistic, system-wide approach, rather than being reviewed in isolation.

3. Update of Swindon Borough Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy and the draft Local Plan (EMMA)

Updates Requested via SBC regarding any changes to the Flood Risk Management Strategy.

ECB The asset review list is scheduled for this year and next financial year, funding is available to progress the work. However, due to the imminent organisational restructure at SBC, no confirmed timescales can be provided. SBC's action plan is updated annually, with new actions added each cycle and an overarching review will continue to be monitored.

Weather & Operational Performance

SBCs CW reported on the significant storm event in September 2024, noting:

- Rainfall exceeded previous levels experienced during 2024.
- Performance across key areas was better than expected.
- No incidents of waste backing up through residents' WCs.
- The reservoir is functioning effectively as an attenuation pond.
- Improvements at Peregrine Close confirmed, with lowered levels helping to manage water flow.
- Overall, results have been positive for Swindon.

Reservoir Management

W&WPCs MT shared that Thames Water has lowered the reservoir level. CW advised that this was planned for the end of November.

Whether completed or imminent, it is expected to be good news operationally. Thames Waters SD advised that there is a meeting with the manual (operations) team soon of which further detail to follow.

4. Introduction from the Environment Agency - Mathew Lloyd, Flood Resilience Engagement Advisor

All received an Introduction from Mathew Lloyd and the EAs work with parish councils and Swindon Borough Council. Update regarding "FloodWise" initiative. A copy of the introduction letter is attached and previously circulated to the group.

Environment Agency (EA) Input

ML provided an introduction, he is not involved directly in asset management however he does work with communities and partners to understand and respond to flood risk. The main focus is to cover prevention and preparedness, helping communities develop flood plans.

Key points emphasized:

- Communities should acknowledge flooding risk and prepare accordingly.
- Residents can take proactive measures rather than relying solely on SBC, WPC, Thames Water, etc.
- Areas needing flood risk reduction were reviewed (list referenced by ML).

Community-Level Interventions

Strategies to slow water flow in villages with extensive hard surfaces (concrete) were discussed:

- Utilising green spaces and natural drainage features.
- Implementing small-scale measures to reduce local flood impact.

Larger infrastructure projects exist, but funding and expertise are limited.

- Some financial support is available to assist community-led initiatives.

ML invited anyone interested to follow up outside today's meeting to discuss further. Wiltshire Wildlife Trusts NP highlighted the need for small measures to complement larger flood mitigation strategies.

5. Update from Thames Water – Nikki Hines / Alice Keeping

Apologies from NH and AK, reference the attached email however the working party were joined by Thames Waters SD and NB.

Thames Water (TW) Staffing

- Both contacts unable to attend; TW staffing limited to reactive measures only. Follow-up to be provided via email.

Reservoir Update

- SD, there is a site visit now scheduled for 29th January and residents / councillors are invited to attend two at a time. If anyone would like to take part then inform EF parish clerk to co ordinate with contact details.
- Wroughton Reservoir is naturally fed; there is no manual operation or operational weir.
- Dry conditions currently are favourable for site inspections.
- MT reported: stream levels are stable and flowing well.
- Previous site visit not possible; the upcoming visit will provide better understanding of reservoir behaviour.

Pitchens Sewage Works

- GF : There ongoing work at the Pitches.
- Heavy rainfall previously caused foul sewage overflow into the road.
- Patch liner installed 08th January, expected to reduce leakage.
- Thames Water to revisit Wednesday to inspect (not Devises Road).

6. Questions arising from previous notes:

Thames Water (TW)

Q1: TW supposed to be a bypass pipe on the reservoir. How does this impact the village during heavy rain?

A1: Concern that water overflows into the village; clarification requested.

Q2: What feeds into the reservoir, and does it feed into the stream? Is this the pipe from Overtown Reservoir?

A2: Further detail needed on inflows and connectivity to local streams.

Q3: What mitigation exists during heavy rain if the reservoir cannot cope?

A3: Current mitigation relies on weir operation and reservoir capacity; more detail required.

Q4: Does the weir still work?

A4: Yes – it can be opened and closed during heavy rainfall.

Q5: Is it operated during heavy rain or only during specific rainfall events?

A5: Weir operates during periods of heavy rainfall.

Q6: Could the reservoir be lowered in dry conditions to increase capacity for heavy rainfall?

A6: Potential mitigation measure under consideration.

Q7: Reservoir was originally a header for the canal system. Is there still an outlet for the canal?

A7: Further clarification required.

Q8: Can TW provide resilience/emergency planning contacts to WWPC?

A8: TW to provide contact details.

Swindon Borough Council (SBC)

Q1: SBC's Flood Risk Management Strategy (2014–2019) – can the council provide an update?

A1: Strategy currently being actioned; awaiting information from Cris Butler's team.

Q2: When will the update be complete, and how do recent Section 19 consultations feed into it?

A2: Timeline not confirmed; Section 19 consultations expected to inform review.

Q3: How will works be funded?

A3: Funding mechanism to be clarified.

Q4: The Local Flood Risk Strategy is over 6 years out of date – what mitigation exists for new flooding issues, including culverts in Wroughton?

A4: SBC updating asset maps; work pending budget approval; ongoing engagement with communities.

Riparian Responsibilities

Q1: How can riparian responsibilities be conveyed to residents?

A1: Via guidance leaflets, online links (EA & SBC), and parish council engagement.

Q2: Is there a clear map showing who is responsible for what?

A2: SBC is updating asset maps; LLFA system holds limited data; full mapping is costly.

Q3: Have letters been sent to residents? By which organisation?

A3: Letters can be sent jointly by SBC and EA; SBC has no enforcement powers.

Q4: Who are the authoritative contacts for riparian responsibilities?

A4: EA – Matthew Lloyd; EF / Jay Judge – can share links/leaflets; SBC maintains asset maps.

Q5: How do parish councils fit in?

A5: SBC may obtain land registry data if parish councils manage their own riparian responsibilities.

Perrys Lane Culvert

Q1: What measures were implemented following the 2020 flooding?

A1: Review of previous interventions ongoing; some worked well, others require improvement.

Q2: How can flooding risk be mitigated this coming Autumn/Winter/Spring?

A2: Low-flow period work planned; diver survey scheduled for summer; monitoring water levels.

Devizes Road Culverts & Pedestrian Crossing

Q1: Is any work still required for culverts and drains?

A1: Similar assessment to Perrys Lane completed; further detail pending.

The Pitches

Q1: Work downstream (Perrys Lane Culvert and others) required before The Pitches Culvert action – can a timetable be provided for residents?

A1: Timetable for actions and events requested to improve resident awareness.

Q2: Was The Pitches Culvert constructed with planning permission, and who is responsible for its maintenance?

A2: Culvert built in 1991, adopted by Highways in 1992; maintenance responsibility unclear; no recorded maintenance since adoption.

Flooding / Stream Maintenance / Water Storage

Q1: Perrys Lane / KEmbry Park – what works are planned?

A1: Diver surveys in summer; low-flow periods targeted; water levels currently low, favorable for inspection.

Q2: How should water be stored for drought periods?

A2: Chris Watts suggests storing water now; Coate Water levels have been lowered to prepare.

Q3: Can residents reduce flood risk from roof water?

A3: Matthew Lloyd proposes water butts for rainwater collection; reduce discharge into streams.

Q4: Haydon Wick roof connections to TW foul sewers – any solutions?

A4: Recognised issue; Thames Water exploring innovative solutions.

7. **AOB**

Bridge over The Pitchens

What is the proposal for the bridge over The Pitchens?

Discussion around removal or replacement; residents' feedback must be sought first before any action. Legal issues could arise if SBC removes or closes the bridge without consultation.

Could a metal bridge be installed instead?

Considered by CW potential options include a ramp for residents. ECB advised that it is too narrow, so raising the bridge is not feasible.

What is the ownership issue?

ECB highlighted that part of the land may belong to Sanctuary House, complicating ownership responsibilities. Are there engineering solutions to retain the bridge?

CF (Previously Halcrow Group) suggested:

- Keep the bridge in place.
- Dredge upstream and downstream of the stream.
- Model the solution ideally using 1D modelling rather than 2D/3D for better planning.

Next steps for proposals?

Proposals to be documented on paper, then councillors will engage residents to gather feedback.

Reservoir Visit is planned for Thursday 29th January – EF parish clerk is to arrange directly with members and Thames Water.

8. **Next meeting date and time**

1st June 2026 @ 14.00