

In partnership with:



Irwell Vale, Strongstry & Chatterton Flooding Update Newsletter

December 2020

Dear Resident

Since the virtual drop in, in September we wanted to provide you with a further multi-agency update on the work ongoing in the area

Coronavirus (Covid-19) update

As you are aware, we are currently in unprecedented times with the coronavirus pandemic. Following government advice we are clear that the safety of everyone is our priority. We are also clear that much of our work has been identified as essential by the government and they are keen for us to continue to do much of this, where it remains safe to do so.

Our key priorities are to protect the health, safety and well-being of our own staff, the public and the businesses and partners we work with; to prevent loss of life and serious harm to the environment; and to keep our critical operations running.

Please continue to report flooding through to the relevant agencies, numbers to report flooding are included in the footer of this newsletter. All agencies have specific controls in place to keep customers and staff safe should a flood happen.

We wish to reassure you that work is continuing in Irwell Vale to further protect the communities from future flood events. We hope that you are all staying safe and well during this time.

Lancashire County Council update

A further survey of the culverted watercourses that flow under Bowker St and Milne St is hoped to take place during the 2020/21 financial year but this may have to be delayed until the 21/22 financial year dependent on coronavirus working restrictions and reduced dates for works programming due to the lockdown. The works will include excavating down to the culverts in suitable locations on the carriageway to allow access to clean them of silt/debris so that the camera survey can take place. The purpose of the surveys is to determine the routes and the condition of the culverts that take surface water from Bowker St, Milne St and upstream, to the main river. Residents will be informed prior to the commencement of the survey so that access can be made for works vehicles.

Lancashire County Council met with their Operations Manager for this area. At the meeting it was agreed we are going to dig down onto the culvert and attempt to desilt the pipe and we will construct an access manhole adjacent 11 Aitken Street.

We also agreed that we will upgrade the 2 Gullies on Bowker Street outside No's 9 and 21 and also the gully at the Church gate this will allow surface water to get away quicker.

When we have access on the culvert we will try to complete a CCTV survey of the system.

At Strongstry we have asked our operations team to jet clean and trace all the drainage system in North Street, we want them to replace the existing access in the car park and construct an inspection chamber at the other end of North Street.

Irwell Vale Surface Water Pump

Since the installation of the pumps near to Lumb Bridge at Irwell Vale, LCC have carried out a number of inspections during and after the flood events that occurred to observe and monitor their performance. We are satisfied that the pumps are operating as designed and providing flood protection to property in Irwell Vale from surface water.

The 2 pumps within the chamber operate alternatively and are triggered when water reaches a certain level. The outfalls to the river have non-return valves (also called 'flap valves') on them so that the chamber does not backfill with water from the River Irwell and only fills with surface water from the system running into the pumping chamber. Water from the pumps is able to continue discharging when the outlets are submerged, and the pumps will continue to operate, which is why the flap valves are seen to be open even when under the level of water in the river. The pressure of the surface water being pumped through these valves means that the river water cannot enter up the pipes.

The pumps continue to operate under these extreme conditions until the chamber becomes overwhelmed with water that has come out-of-bank from the River Irwell. There is a trigger within the chamber that automatically turns the pumps off when this level is reached.

In that situation, the pumps stop working until the water level subsides as they cannot deal with the continuous amount of water reaching the chamber from the river via the lane. The pumps are not designed to deal with river flooding and will only take away surface water. Properties are still at risk of flooding from the river even when the pumps are working effectively and removing surface water.

The pumps have a relatively long design life and require minimum maintenance as they are essentially sealed items. They operate intermittently and alternatively which also increases their serviceability as we don't have one pump carrying all the load whilst the other stands unused for a lengthy time. LCC will continue to inspect and monitor the performance of the pumps and any works required will be undertaken when necessary.

If residents are concerned that the pumps are not operating as expected, they can contact LCC customer call centre on 0345 123 6780. This contact number is also displayed on the side of the cabinet where the electric switches and control panels are housed (at the side of the footpath just downstream from Lumb Bridge).

Rossendale Borough Council update

Following the February 2020 flooding event Rossendale BC administered the flood hardship grants for forty six properties within the Irwell Vale / Strongstry area paying out £25,000. These grants are now closed

Rossendale BC are committed to work along with its partners in finding a long term solution for the flooding problems in the Irwell Vale / Strongstry area

https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/info/210193/emergency_planning_and_flooding/10736/flooding

Environment Agency update

We are continuing to work with our Consultants, Jacobs, to develop the flood defence solution for the communities. As we communicated in our last update, the preferred option from an economic perspective is linear (wall and embankment) defences in Irwell Vale, Strongstry and Chatterton. This is the solution that is likely to attract the most government funding. However, there are other aspects that need to be taken into consideration such as the environmental impact and buildability assessment. We are organising surveys to support the option development including a levels survey and an ecology walk-over survey. We will be able to report on the outcomes of this in our next update. The funding available to the project remains a significant constraint for the project delivery and we continue to work with partners to secure the private contributions to ensure a full funding.

Repairs to wall on Meadow park, The Environment Agency issues Flood Risk Activity Permits (FRAP's) for work carried out either in or adjacent to main rivers. The Environment Agency has had discussions with residents regarding the advisability of repairing the wall at Meadow park but has not had an application for a FRAP to carry out any work at Meadow park and therefore has not refused permission. A FRAP only covers the flood risk element of any work. There may be other legal requirements and permissions (e.g. compliance with H&S regulations, land owner permission, planning permission etc.) which are needed but are outside of the EA's remit. Anyone wishing to carry out work would be responsible for obtaining these permissions. If the works do not require a FRAP then this does not constitute the EA's approval or endorsement of the work. The above responsibilities still apply. Any discussions or conversations with the EA do not constitute approval or refusal of permission. The EA does also not hold any liability for and does not accept any consequences of any occurrence that may happen as a result of such work being undertaken, including but not limited to flooding, failure to function, damage to private property. Any action by private individuals as a consequence of any such circumstances will be carried out against the persons who have undertaken the work.

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

Since our last update we have appointed AquaUoS, University of Salford, to investigate upstream of Irwell Vale and identify a list of suitable locations for possible NFM measures which may be effective at reducing flood risk impacts in the communities. We are expecting a report following their assessment shortly. We will then contact land owners to facilitate and establish support for measures on their land. It is our aspiration to start something on the ground in at least one location in 2021, using funds currently available. However this relies on successful landowner agreements.

As part of the NFM work, the joint moorland restoration project is underway with Moors for the Future at Holcombe

Moor. Below is a link to the Moors for the Future web page for more info and also some photos from site

<https://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/moor-carbon/restoring-holcombe-moor>



Topic for future editions of this newsletter

If you there are any flood-related issues that you would like exploring or explaining, please pass your requests to your Councillors Janice Johnson

JaniceJohnson@rossendalebc.gov.uk and Anne Cheetham Anne.Cheetham@lancashire.gov.uk, for them to forward to our local teams who will provide the next updates.

Advice on flooding incident

To report flooding or a blockage please contact the Environment Agency 24hrs incident hotline on **0800 807060**

Further information and help is available at the **FloodHub** <https://thefloodhub.co.uk/>

For help and information during a flood call Floodline on **0345 988 1188** Advice on preparing for a flood, what to do during flooding conditions and what to do after a flood subsides, can be found on Lancashire County Council's website: www.lancashire.gov.uk/flooding