

Common Lane, Leigh

Flood Risk Newsletter

January 2023

Dear Resident,

We would like to tell you about the work Wigan Council, The Environment Agency and Lancashire Wildlife Trust have done to reduce flood risk and improve the environment in your area.

Between Plank Lane and the Bridgewater Canal Common Lane Brook runs in a pipe underground beneath Common Lane. After heavy rain there may be too much water to go down the pipe, or it is possible for the pipe to become blocked. In both cases the water that can't flow down the pipe then flows over land, creating a risk of flooding.

We have done some work to reduce the possibility of this happening. We have installed a metal screen at the entrance to the pipe to stop things entering that could get stuck and block the pipe. We have also created a lot more storage for water upstream of the pipe, which has created some great new wildlife habitat in Bickershaw Nature Reserve.

Flood Storage

Works to improve the flood storage began in 2020 and the final phase was completed in December 2022. The works were designed to not only store flood water but also improve the habitats in the area for local wildlife.

We have created new meandering channels, put in some weirs made of boulders, dug new ponds, and improved the existing reedbeds and other wetlands. The meandering channels mean that rain landing in the area takes more time to reach the pipe, so it is less likely to be overwhelmed and flood.



Some of the ponds are also designed so that when the Brook reaches a certain height it spills into the ponds and so can be stored there until the level in the Brook falls, and it can be released back into the Brook. This reduces the amount of water that needs to go through the pipe at any one time, so it is less likely to get overwhelmed.



The large reedbed known as Nevison's Reedbed has also been improved. There is now an earth bank that runs across it. This will keep the reedbed wetter, which is great for reeds and the birds and insects that live there. It is also higher than needed in normal times so that after a storm, water will fill up behind it and be gradually released after the storm to help reduce the risk of flooding.



The new and improved habitats have already seen an increase in wildlife with good numbers of rare and declining birds breeding in the area, passing through on migration, or spending the winter here. This included a Wite-tailed Lapwing, a very rare bird from the Middle East, which has only appeared 7 times before in the UK, which spent a couple of days here in August 2022.



These more natural ways of managing flood risk are known as natural flood management. If you would like to find out further information about natural flood management, please visit www.TheFloodHub.co.uk/NFM

The Metal Trash Screen

We have also erected a new metal trash screen that will stop anything that might block the pipe from getting into the pipe. It has been built so that it can be easily cleared by Environment Agency staff when leaves and other items build up on it. It also includes water level monitors that allow us to see if the screen is beginning to get blocked. The new metal screen was built in September 2022.



Why Not See for Yourself?

As a result of these works the risk of the area around Common Lane getting flooded has been reduced, and we have created some valuable new wildlife habitat at the same time. So, if you have not walked around Bickershaw Wetlands recently, please take a stroll, enjoy the wonderful new habitats and see how we have been working with nature to help reduce flood risk.

If you would like further information, please email floodresiliencemmc@environment-agency.gov.uk

Spotted a Potential Flooding Problem?

To reduce the risk of flooding the Environment Agency maintains Common Lane Brook and will remove blockages that could give rise to flooding. If you see anything that might be blocking the Brook, or polluting it, report this to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline 0800 807060 (24hrs).

Check if you are at risk of flooding

For further information on your property's flood risk, visit:

Long term flood risk website: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>

Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

The Flood Hub – www.TheFloodHub.co.uk

The website is a one-stop-shop for providing flood resilience advice and information for householders, businesses and communities. Using our online digital capability, we keep users up to date with the latest flood news, events and information resources available in order to stay flood aware and increase their own resilience.

The Flood Hub website is a joint initiative by Newground, the Environment Agency, United Utilities, and the Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Strategic Flood Partnerships. It is funded by the Northwest Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), and it launched on 5th November 2018.

