

## **Record of Meeting Re: Sewage & Flooding**

**11am on 23 February 2024, hosted by Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins  
at The Hall, Stourton**

Nazim Zahawi MP, apologies

Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins, Stratford DC

Councillor Philip Townsend, Chair Parish Council

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell

Barbara Babbage, Parish Councillor

Luke McCusker, Senior River Ranger. STW, Rivers Initiative

James Webb, STW Networks Manager

James Fitch, STW, Regional Business Lead – Finance and Strategy

Attendees:

The meeting was attended by approximately 50 local people, including 41 by invitation.

The purpose of the meeting was to address the repeated problem of raw sewage flowing through the village during and following severe rainfall. It follows correspondence and a meeting between Nadhim Zahawi and Barbara Babbage and was initiated and led by Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins at his request.

The meeting was addressed by Sarah Whalley-Hoggins and STW representatives were asked to introduce themselves and identify their contribution to solving the problem.

James Webb is commissioned to build a Risk Profile in order to prioritise network improvement. Present works comprise

1. A tanking service to take away surplus volume in emergency.
2. Investigation of water infiltration into the main sewer(s), which displaces sewage. This is with a view to turbo-based injection to seal leaky pipework and prevent infiltration.

James Fitch invited residents to supply information, photos etc such that leakage points could be identified and sealed following investigation by camera. It was noted that sometimes Highways were responsible for resolving the leaks, not STW

Barbara Babbage made reference to a copy of an email she had received which was sent to Nadhim Zahawi MP from the Director of Customer Services, STW, confirming that longer term “we need to size up the local treatment works”. Also the Freedom of Information figures supplied for 2021 showed the system was already 78.4% full, and this was before additional demand from business premises, including the Golf Club and Hotel, the Distillery, Airbnbs/B&Bs/Holiday lets and new housing.

Questions and observations from residents made reference to the following:-

- Currently, sewage and water flooding risks both pollution to the River Stour and disease and infection carried from raw sewage on the public road. The road is used

daily by residents, animals, vehicles, who then may take raw sewage into their homes.

- What is the volume of surface water that enters the sewage over the 3 miles between Brailes and Cherington? (Surface water contains chemical contaminants that must be treated before entering rivers).
- The programme currently being followed is most unlikely to resolve the issue within the timescale required due to the increased frequency of heavy rain and storms.
- The locations of concern are well-known to residents and have been communicated to SWT many times without result. Many examples were given.
- Sealing leaky pipes only diverts the excess water elsewhere: this approach is not helpful.
- There was considerable support for a new and larger sewage tank to be built immediately.
- There was a general view that the representation from STW, while well-intentioned and very helpful, was not at a level able to recognise the scale of the problem and resolve it. Any future meeting to invite the CEO.

The general conclusion of residents, summarised by Councillor Sarah Whall-Hoggins, was that rather than the maintenance and repair system identified by STW representatives in the meeting, to be resolved the problem requires a strategic approach. This approach needs to use more advanced technology to identify problem locations, it needs a fixed timeline and it needs to demonstrate joined-up planning with Highways, Rivers and other relevant Agencies. This was confirmed by the County Councillor. Tackling the pipe network will help provide the evidence but is not going to resolve the problem when the sewage works and attenuation tank itself is too small, resulting in the regular dumping of sewage in the River Stour.

Acknowledging the major resident turnout for the meeting, and on a work day, Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins brought the meeting to a close with the following proposal:

1. A **three** month update from SWT be provided to Councillor Sarah-Whalley-Hoggins and Barbara Babbage.
3. SWT be given **six** months to resolve the issue, with a further meeting to be set.

STW representatives were thanked for their contributions.

This proposal was agreed by all present.

List of Resident Attendees attached.

Please note, if your name is missing from this list, please email Barbara Babbage at [barbara@cheringtonmill.com](mailto:barbara@cheringtonmill.com) so that your interest can be noted and you can be invited to the follow-up meetings.

Barbara Babbage  
29 Feb 2024