



- **St Asaph City Council Flood & Community Emergency Working Group Meeting 4th December 2020 10.00 am with Remote Attendance via Zoom**

**Present:** Cllrs Scott (Mayor), Hardie, Rust, Ellison, Groves; John Liston-Smith and Steve Morris of the Flood Wardens Group

1. **Election of Chairman**

Resolved to elect John Liston-Smith as Chairman of the Working Group.

2. **Apologies**

- None.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

- None. Most of those present had been flooded, but these were deemed to be personal interests.

4. **Open Discussion**

There was a discussion amongst the members where issues, observations and concerns were raised:

- What statutory obligations do Denbighshire (DCC) or NRW have towards our plight?
- Following the 2012 floods, NRW acted, with Welsh Government money and DCC money to provide flood defences. The job is not entirely complete as there are three places where the defences have issues.
- Where would the budget come from for work which needs to be completed? There was a suggestion that we go back to the Welsh Government for funding.
- Either there was a miscalculation or the river levels have increased.
- Cllr Scott read an extract from the DCC report which stated that the storms in February 2020 were a 1 in 200 year rainfall event. The flood defences were designed to protect St Asaph from a 1 in 100 year rainfall event.
- DCC have a legal duty to investigate flooding. NRW are due to report in February 2021.
- A lot of the problems in February 2020 arose from surface water flooding, which must fall within DCC's remit.
- The three issues identified were:
  - a) The culvert on Lower Denbigh Road (DCC responsibility);
  - b) Overtopping at Spring Gardens (NRW responsibility);
  - c) The flood defence wall behind Roe Parc should be longer (NRW responsibility).

- The storms in February 2020 were a true test of the protection which was in place. NRW are aware there are a handful of places where this hasn't worked. There was a budget of £7 million; £5 million was spent. Do we need to involve Ann Jones AM and James Davies (MP).

**Agreed to send them minutes of this meeting**

- Suspect that NRW are the key people we need to put pressure on. Cllr Scott has met with Keith Ivens (NRW) and James Davies a couple of months ago. The meeting with Ann Jones is to be re-arranged. He has kept both Ann and James up to date.
- There must be additional emergency measures which can be installed quickly. NRW close the flood gates – could they also instal temporary defences at the pinch points? There was an observation that NRW probably prioritise other locations where there are no flood defences in place.
- We should concentrate on pinch point repairs, rather than sandbags.
- Plans of Lower Denbigh Road show there should be a pump to pump water into the flood defences. The culvert was blocked by a tree in February.
- There is also an issue with routine maintenance not being carried out by NRW or DCC. Some of the street gullies have not been cleaned. NRW no longer remove debris from the river. Cllr Scott has reported the gullies to DCC.
- Gaps in the river bank are a weakness.
- Information going out to residents needs improvement. The new application is not as effective as the old one – it does not show the levels and is too sensitive. A new gauge has been installed. Steve uses the Facebook page to keep residents informed. NRW have a working group to improve flood warnings. Steve has been invited to join and he will feedback to them from this group and the Facebook group.
- Last time, the flood alert was raised at 1.65 metres, rather than 2 metres. Why has this changed as it was causing alarm? Need to include reasons in the flood alert. John observed the modelling was spot on.
- Steve raised issues with the bund tank in Lower Street car park. Surface water issues caused manholes to blow and there were fountains of water. It was suggested that a pump may be required here. The water normally discharges into the river and onto the field just before Llys y Felin, but this flooding had an impact on the Llys y Felin properties.
- There are some design problems. The fire brigade may need to pump this out over the bund and into the river. Water fed from local surface water from upper town onto the High Street. A pump needs to be installed and this should be addressed before it is full. A tanker is not a bad start. However, after flooding, the tank could be up to a third full of silt and may not have sufficient capacity. This is a Welsh Water responsibility – their tank caused flooding to properties.
- The bank at Spring Gardens is not high enough.
- The snagging list from the flood defence work was never addressed as the contractor is no longer trading. Were the works signed off?
- Who did the cosmetic work on the culvert – the work was commissioned – by whom?
- We need to write to the relevant bodies.

- Steve will ask Gwyn Moseley for contact details and the avenues we should go along to alleviate these problems.
- There is a Community Scrutiny meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December which Peter is attending. We will await the outcome of this meeting and see what has been reported.
- Joanne has a contact at NRW Community Liaison and Flood Risk who she will ask for contact details to address concerns to.
- If the group struggles to get results, there will at least be clear evidence we have tried.
- Steve will put an article on the Facebook Group (which has 2000+) members and forward to the clerk for inclusion on the website. The clerk is to put a link to the Facebook group on the website.

## 5. Community Emergency Plan

A proforma community plan was sent to the City Council for completion. There was a discussion about providing contact details to residents and advice.

Action: all members to read the plan so that this can be collated at the next meeting.

Clerk to ascertain whether this plan can be uploaded onto the website.

## 6. Sources of Information

Joanne and Steve will acquire contact details for the clerk to add useful links and information sources to the City Council website.

Cllr Scott mentioned the update to TAN 15.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am.

**Next Meeting Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 6.30 pm via Zoom**

Signed .....

**Chairman Flood & Community Working Group 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020**