

Brief update on progress since Storm Babet – speaking notes

1. It's been 19 months (yesterday) or 579 days since Storm Babet brought misery to at least 12 homes in our village. I won't go over the heartbreak and statistics of it – I'm sure we can all remember it only too well.
2. Instead, I'll briefly go over what we have done in that time. – As you know we had a village meeting (2 actually) within a week or so of the storm – we managed to get the Head of EA for East Anglia & Head of Environmental strategy for SCC to attend - these -Aaron & Matt have turned out to be our new best friends – they have been so helpful. At the meeting we asked to pool the Property Flood Resilience grants to look at an engineered solution – rather than just buying lots of flood boards & sandbags. We were told the scheme did not allow that – so we lobbied the Sec State for Environment to change the rules – and they did. DEFRA now encourages such community schemes.
3. **The engineered solution was & is our goal**, but we knew it would not be quick – so using Paul's digger we started doing what we could. If you were at the first meeting, you may remember we said then that we saw the answer as a smorgasbord of changes that add up to greater result than the sum of its parts. That is still the case.
4. We have lost count of how many blockages we have removed from the river. Numerous trees, some ancient old trunks that have been in the river channel probably for decades, some new ash dieback – some fallen garden hedges. We removed a bank slip downstream of the Lodge Rd bridge & cleared vegetation for a further ½ mile downstream. We removed a stretch of hedge on an earthen bank between 18" & 2' high -and reinstated the ditch behind it – this bank acted as a dam in Babet, increasing the height of floodwater. We cleared Eric's reeds for him. Got SCC to finally clear drains – and we persuaded Cranworth estate to clear blockages up to Boot Street.
5. At the same time, we were wading through the *metaphorical mire also* – that's needed to engage all the relevant professionals to try and get anything done to the road. We commissioned a topographical survey of all the houses BOTH sides of lodge road bridge – we then commissioned modellers to run hydrological models to see the difference what we had done, and wanted to do, would make. Meeting with Aaron - EA supplied

loads of data and help to both crop the required modelling & help scope it for us – this saved many thousands of pounds.

6. It is accepted that Babet was slightly worse than a 1% or 100 yr storm – 1% storms are a “norm for modelling” - We got the final report back this week — with some surprising and **very good news**. **What we have already done would reduce a 1% storm by an average of 15cms** across the previously flooded houses. If we had a 1% 100yr event tonight – only ONE house would now flood (FFL below flood – assuming no other remedies & by only 25mm) – **That is still one too many!**
7. We modelled Scenario 1 – 10 x 800mm drainage pipes under lodge road. this reduced the flood plain in a 1% storm by up to an **ADDITIONAL 12cm** – this would mean that NONE of the houses would then flood in a 1% storm.
8. We modelled Scenario 2 – as above but also lowering the road height by just 15cm (the height of the kerb) – this showed a **further ADDITIONAL drop of 4cm. A combined total of 31cm**
9. On Monday we had civil engineers in to look at how we can implement **Scenarios 1 AND 2** it is both for us – not one or the other.
10. We can then go to the Highways design team to work out how we can best get the culverts in and lower the road – hopefully by more than 15cm. The design drawings will cost about £10k – Matt at SCC will cover this. When we have the final design installed, we will again run the model and use that to get EA to redraw the flood map – hopefully helping restore house values. It should be noted that **only the residents who are contributing** to the costs will have their homes modelled regarding being removed from the flood plain map. The cost are considerable!
11. We want to stress – all works are done with EA & SCC permissions, permits and approval, the report is currently being verified by EA and then goes to SCC for sign off – both have told us verbally that it is OK – but needs their tech teams to formally sign off.
12. **Future** – look at Bunds near Boot Street, a holding pond above Big Kiln Field – EA now check the river annually and enforce clearing (Riparian responsibility)

13. We have not done this alone - Help along the way –

Mr Nigel Rolfe – farmer – permission to work on his land – removing the hedge makes a huge difference just on its own.

Cllr Bryce & Cllr Hedgley for grants from their enabling budgets

Matt Hullis at SCC for support, guidance and a £10k grant towards design

Aaron Dixie at EA support, guidance, data & a grant towards the works.

Matt & Aaron's teams for their patience

Sue and the PC for support & acting as our holding bank.

14. And finally - My Parting thought –

- ***“It should be noted that Storm Babet was a significant event, with a low probability of recurrence.”*** source SCC Sec 19 investigation into Storm Babet.