Flooding Buckden 2020/21 – updated March 2024

Flooding December 23rd

Properties and areas affected

High Street The Old Chapel and houses 93 The Old Apple Yard.91.89. 87.85.83.81.79 & 77 were affected, houses were flooded up to a depth of half a metre nearly all residents had to move out or live upstairs.

Taylors Lane houses 1.3.5.7.9 11.6 and 15 were affected and evacuated, others such as number 13 were affected but residents live on the first floor. The residents were again very concerned on 14th January when heavy rain resulted in the ditch/culvert becoming dangerously high. Picture provided. Altogether a total of 19 properties affected by flooding

Perry Road a large amount of water flowed down Perry Road on evening of 23rd December and although no houses were flooded properties 24, 25, 26 and 27 had water in garages and out buildings, it is likely that more properties were affected but we currently have no further information

St Hugh's Road Following the flooding in December a number of houses in St Hugh's Road had problems with their foul water drains repeatedly filling up and restricting use of washing machine, dishwasher and toilets in the houses. Residents report that AWA have been out a number of times, the problem affects at least 6 houses in the road. AWA believe that the sewage system in the village is not able to cope with the number of properties that are being added to it. They believe that the pipe work does not have enough capacity for the flow of foul water and the sewage plant will require a second pump. This is significant in relation to the proposal for a further 270 houses in Silver Street .

Church Street 33 or 35 had water coming up through the drains, half their kitchen was flooded

Manor Gardens There was significant water flow in Manor Gardens, into Glebe Road following the heavy rains in December.

It took until the first week in April for the issue to be dealt with. CCC reported the following information on 6th April 21

The Local Highways Officer (LoHo) has advised that the tanker diver advised that they jetted / cleared the surface water sewer and left it running well. All the gullies were sucked out and cleared as well as all those in the vicinity.

The LoHo also advised they will continue to monitor and if there is a recurrence, they will arrange for a CCTV survey to see if they can identify a problem but the most likely cause may well have been tree roots.

Mill Road and the Marina the whole of the Marina was flooded to 3-4 feet. These properties are built to withstand some flood risk. However, car park and road also flooded cutting off all access.

The following is a time line from a resident at the marina

FLOOD1 23rd December 2020

The Marina started flooding the evening of 23rd December 2020 around 21.30 at this point no flood alert had been issued by the Environment Agency.

The flood alert came through at 4.45am the morning of the 24th December, at this point the Marina was already in a flood situation.

A further flood alert was received 25th December 21.53, Marina was still flooded.

Received another flood alert 26th December 12.23 again Marina was still flooded.

The Flood Warning No Longer in Force received 29th December.

FLOOD 2 January 14th 2021

Flood Alert issued 14th January 13.57, residents noticed the river was rising however there was not a flood situation at that point.

Flood Alert update 19th January 17.06.

No notice received that Flood Warning was No Longer in Force for Flood 2.

FLOOD 3 27th January 2021

Flood Alert received 27th January 17.06, Marina still flooded 6th February, this has lasted 10 days.

Millside Marina Buckden has been cut off a number of times by flood water.
The road between Buckden and the Offords -Mill Road into Station Lane- has been impassable at least three times since Christmas Eve. Residents report having contacted representatives from the Environment Agency but getting no response. Offord Weir is blocked on one side completely by tree

Although not part of the 23rd December flood event the following information is important to note in relation to Buckden.

Lucks Lane new development residents of the Osiers and Springfield are very concerned about the high level of water in the attenuation pond at the rear of their properties. On 20th January 2021 a group of officials were noted examining the water level and area around the pond; and on 21 Jan 2021 a water bowser/tanker pumped water from the culvert area of the pond. A large number of trips were made, residents reported that the tanker was emptying the water into the drainage system. See attached separate report

Businesses affected by flooding

There was no report of business buildings being flooded.

Warnings of floods and responses

There is a difference between River and Surface Water flooding. Flood alerts are river related. It is difficult to predict surface/drainage related flooding.

In the case of the December floods there was warning of river flooding but not surface water flooding. The flooding was a great shock to the residents .

Those affected tried to contact HDC and CCC and received automated responses. HDC when they were contacted disclaimed any responsibility, CCC noted contact details. Help came mainly from concerned and proactive residents

Proportion of properties suffered flooding which have not been flooded before

We believe that a number of the properties in the High Street had flooded in 1998 but the flooding did not extend to as many houses as in the December event.

On August 16th 2020 there was a flood in the same area, this resulted in one house having to be evacuated. The residents had only just moved back in when they were flooded out again this December.

One of the issues we need to consider is how the history of flooding is recorded and accessible for the future.

Any other impacts from flooding/weather not involving properties

The flooding of the Northern underpass partially because of the failure of the pumping system.

Road flooded between Buckden Marina and the level crossing cutting off that exit from the village.

A1 experienced significant flooding and was impassable for some hours.

Floods in Church Street, High Street, Hunts End, Manor Gardens, Park Road.

In March 2021 the southern underpass flooded, this was due to the failure of the pump. Initially Highways England said they were not responsible but subsequently took remedial action.

Community response

The Village Hall were contacted by the Fire Brigade at 9pm, but the hall was not heated because of closure due to Covid so could not be used as a refuge. As Parish Councillors we were not notified of impending floods or given any information about those affected or what provision was made for them. Most people made their own private arrangements Our information came via local networks not from any central source. This caused considerable problems in supporting people. The PC was subsequently informed that HDC had opened the Leisure centres as refuges but no one informed the Councillors or it seems the fire brigade

Concerns of residents

Responsibility for drains and culverts

Surface water flooding caused by Buckden being at the bottom of a hill to the West of the village. To avoid flooding of the A1 culverts are built under the road which bring water rapidly into the village. Exacerbated by blocked drains and insufficient capacity in culverts and ditches. There is much concern, reinforced by the comments of several insurance companies, that the A14 and new developments have made flooding far worse.

The ditch/drain along Taylors Lane simply could not cope with the volume of water, The pipes underneath entrances to the houses are simply too small to take such a deluge and therefore need urgent attention. There is a view that larger pipes underground throughout Taylors Lane are urgently needed. Otherwise some of the properties in the Lane and round the corner in the High Street will simply not be safe to live in.

The Parish Council and residents need to know who is responsible for the maintenance of the ditch/drain. it is badly silted up in parts. One resident who has lived in Taylors Lane for 35 years reports no maintenance has ever been undertaken.

Information re responsibility for Taylor's Lane culvert.

The problem is different officers of HDC and CCC give differing responses as to where responsibility lies. See information below However please note that a letter written in 1999 attached at the end of this document shows that HDC took responsibility for the water course and agreed it had been awarded to them. CCC have subsequently confirmed that it is HDC's responsibility

Information from Findlay Flett HDC Operations Manager (People) Community Services November 2020

Because this watercourse does not run on land which is owned by the Council, the Awarded status means that we would "police" the watercourse but the maintenance duty falls to the landowners who have riparian rights/responsibilities. Our input to sites like this would only be to inspect and check that it is working reasonably well and, if not, to inform the appropriate landowners of the need to maintain properly. I have attached a file with an old Council meeting minute which sets this position out in a bit more detail.

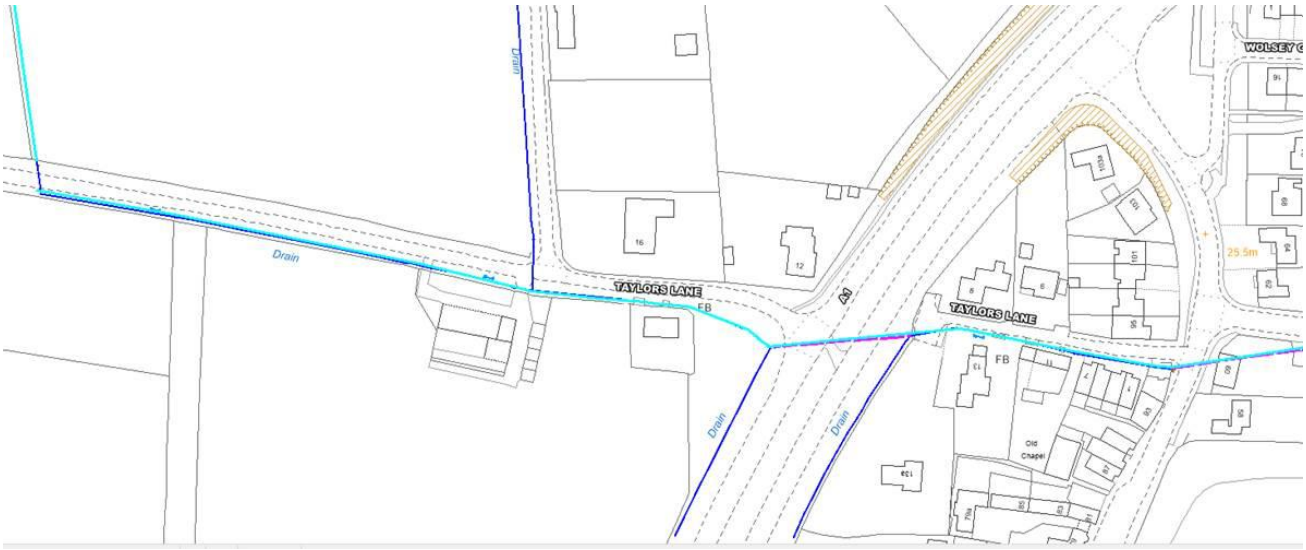


Information received from Brian Hefferenan CCC Principal Officer Flood Risk

1st March 2021

The information below has been ascertained. As per their comments (in italics), they too were wondering if the relevant section of watercourse is HDC's to maintain and if it is indeed awarded to them, or simply to the relevant riparian landowners. In any event, I have asked of Hunts DC clarification in respect of its (the watercourses) ownership, responsibility and as to who is Findlay Flett and their role in respect of this matter.

The drain runs along the southern extent of the c/way marked in light blue which indicates that, ***according to the latest GIS dataset received from the HDC shared service dept.,*** *that it is an awarded watercourse. Unfortunately the metadata behind the map does not state who it is awarded to".*



Following the flooding in August some drain clearance was undertaken, at that time it was noted that the drains were severely blocked with tree roots; those undertaking the work were not able to unblock the drains as a vehicle was needed that had cutting equipment to unblock the pipes but this was not actioned until after the more severe flooding in December - too late for many residents unfortunately.

Actions as a result of flooding

BPC to ensure emergency numbers are widely publicised.

BPC to put in place an Emergency Response Plan .

In January CCC promised to put in place a Local Flood group, no further information has been received.

The Parish Council is trying to ensure that Householders are aware that it is their responsibility to provide their own sand bags. We have since the flood provided a small number of bags for residents but the logistics of having some ready when they are needed are difficult.

April 2021

- We have had communication that a CCC representative will visit in May to review the Taylors Lane culvert.
- Jon Illingworth the HDC Emergency Planning Adviser has offered us the opportunity to create our own flood plan and establish a flood group, He has been working with the Environment Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council to set up and support flood groups

locally. He anticipates that the first introductory session would be in Late May or early June, followed closely by training sessions in June/July.

Summary of Floods and Parish Council Action

Flood 1 23rd December 2020

Large areas of the village affected. 19 properties had significant flooding. residents had to leave

Action

Collected together information from a number of affected residents. Met with the flood Authority, County and District Councillors to report on key issues and press for action. Met with lead flood officer on site. Action promised. Posters put up round village with emergency numbers to contact and website update to include the information. Lobbied County Councillor and MP for action.

Flood 2 January 14th 2021

Further steady rain led to rise in water in Taylors Lane culvert and potential flooding at northern end of High Street

Action

No specific action taken but full report put together on the issues for distribution to County and District Council. Emergency plan drafted.

Flood 3 January 27th 2021

Heavy rain led to serios concerns about houses at northern end of High Street flooding again.

Action

Council made up sand bags for use of residents and continued to report to the Flood Authority and press for action.

Flood 4 18th June 2021

Steady heavy rain all day led to flooding at the northern end of the High Street. Residents lifted drains syphoned out water and, in some cases, broke up hard surfaces to allow water to disperse.

Action

Council reported to flood authority yet again and called for action. Informed County Councillor Ken Billington and asked him to press for action. Informed MP Jonathan Djanogly and pressed for action

Flood 5 2nd January 2024

There was considerable rainfall in December 2023 which culminated in a number of days of heavy rainfall. The persistent rain on 2nd January led to one house on Taylors Lane being flooded.

The village was better equipped to handle such situations than in the past, with pumps, and other equipment readily available. The work on the drainage of the High Street stopped a repetition of the situation in December 2020 where several houses were flooded on the High Street, and residents had to evacuate for extended periods. However there still seems to an issue on Taylors Lane and Hardwick Lane area. The Parish Council continue to work with the District Council the County Council the Local Flood Authority and National Highways to deal with the issues caused by heavy rainfall.

Relevant photographs 2020/21

The blocked drains



Flooding on 23.12.20



The flooding in August 2020



The flooding on 14th January 2021



Flooding 18th June 2021



January 2nd 2024





HISTORY

1998 Floods
Attached photo from the Buckden Local History Society, Robin Gibson Memorial Photo Archives. The photos were taken by Robin, David Thomas and Barry Jobling at Easter 1998, showing the High St., St. Hughs Rd., Mill Rd. and the northern subway. Robin noted at the time, " Taylors Lane ditch backs up again 'as usual'! ".

There is evidence that HDC took responsibility for the Taylors Lane water course on 1998/9 see copy of letter below.

FYG on the 1813 Buckden Enclosure Map, the Taylors Lane drain was recorded as the 'Seventh Public Drain', indicating that it was in public (not private) ownership maintained by the parish, not adjacent land owners, at that time. Likewise, the Bloor land and spring under their Main Attenuation pond at the corner of The Osiers and Springfield was drained by the 'Third Public Drain' into 'The Valley'



Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE18 6TN

Mr G Coe
11 Taylors Lane
Buckden
HUNTINGDON
Cambs
OE18 9TD

Our Ref: DOS/E/IRL/JAB/W1/7

15 February 1999

Dear Mr Coe

Flood Area – Taylors Lane, Buckden

I would confirm that the watercourse outside your property is 'awarded' to the District Council the purpose of maintenance which is generally carried out on five yearly basis or when deem necessary.

The Council has, this year, undertaken extensive clearance work on the watercour downstream of your property and furthermore has requested Lafarge Aggregates to cleanse t section crossing their quarry. These works will ensure that the watercourse is operating in satisfactory manner.

I hope the foregoing is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

I R Lack
Senior Technician (Engineering)
Engineering & Architectural Services Division

☎ **01480 388384**
Fax 01480 388383

cc Anne Marie O'Connor – Planning

Olive
Born



Qu

General Enquiries Tel 01480 388388 Fax 01