

BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL

FLOOD ADVISORY GROUP

Notes of meeting held at Buckden Village Hall on 7th May 2026

1. Present: Aidan Joy (chair) Martin Hassall, Gordon Wyatt, Liz Olding, Dave Sinclair, Natalie Bartlett, Lou O'Connor, Brendan Henry

2. Apologies: Anne Howell-Jones, Scott Kitson, Claire Ayto

3. Notes of last meeting:

The notes of the last meeting were agreed without amendment.

4. Flood Events

None since last meeting.

5. Meeting Updates

CCC Flood Management Workshop

AJ updated meeting on recent CCC/LLFA workshops including Flood Plan Exercise workshop

LLFA Meeting Debrief

LLFA meeting held earlier today.

Full review of MH action tracker.

Atkins report has been issued. To be distributed to Flood Group members

(Action AJ)

Potential locations for Taylors Lane attenuation basin(s) to be investigated.

Lou to raise informally with land owner and neighbours. **(Action LO'C)**

Grips – CCC (Jason) has chased Highways to do this. It is on their list to be completed. Lou is concerned that the entrances to the grips will become damaged by the large lorries which use the lane.

Ditches and culverts – Flood Group to investigate a survey of local watercourses – see later in minutes

Grants – Flood Group have utilised EA and CCC grants for equipment purchases. Grants for watercourse improvement projects are also available. Ideas for potential improvements to be considered **(Action All)**.

Gordon to investigate solution for potential improvements to flow at Taylors Lane/High Street culvert. **(Action GW)**

Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) (See Attachment 2 MH meeting notes)

Debrief from MH who is now a member. £12.1m budget (underspent by £4.4m last year).

AW will be using a 3 year averaging technique for reporting. MH raised concerns this will mask issues.

Developers “right to connect” will be made more challenging by connecting to the most sustainable source.

6. Summer Time Preparations

Watercourse Surveys

It was agreed that a survey of watercourses would be undertaken to identify and allow prioritisation of issues which might impact flooding events later in the year.

Taylors Lane (West): Lou and Gordon

Taylors Lane (East) - A1 to High Street: Brendan and Gordon

Taylors Lane (East) - High Street to Silver Street: Brendan and Gordon

Taylors Lane (East) – East from Silver Street: Brendan and Gordon

Towers Fishpond to Valley area, including Weir Close infeed: Natalie and Martin

Valley Area to Water Treatment Centre

Key Surface Drainage Locations – Silver Street, Church Street, Mill Road
(Brendan to investigate potential options to complete)

Target to complete surveys: End June

Once completed a review of key issues to be completed with recommended remedial actions eg leaflet drop to along St Hughs Road.

7. Flood Kit

No additional kit requirements identified.

MH to raise potential for services to be included (surveys, mapping, hydrological advice etc).

8. Water Quality Testing (see Attachment 2)

March – full 12 sites completed, 2 weeks after last discharge from Buckden Water Treatment Plant. Nitrates and phosphate results were better than previous results (not known why).

Last discharge from Buckden Water Treatment Plant: mid February.

Testing below Treatment works shows high ammonia levels.

9. AOB

AW Activities

No progress on surveys to identify source of surface water infiltration into foul water system. Raised with LLFA to progress with AW.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 23rd July 2026

Great Ouse Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Meeting Notes – April 26

Overall Position

The committee reviewed the 2025–2026 financial and delivery performance and noted **significant underspending, slippage on key projects, and gaps in local performance data**. These issues raise concerns about programme management, delivery confidence, and the region's ability to meet future statutory and strategic objectives.

Key Points for Flood Groups

1. Major Underspend Across Capital Programmes

- The Environment Agency underspent by **£4.4m** against a **£12.1m** budget.
- Local authorities and IDBs underspent by a further **£2m**.
- Causes included shifting priorities, scope changes, and contractor delays — but the scale suggests deeper structural issues.

2. Slippage on Important Local Schemes

Projects experiencing delays or budget reductions included:

- Old Bedford River Sluice
- Great Ouse Catchment Options
- Castle Mills Sluice
- Essex Rain Gauge Network

These delays reduce resilience and slow progress on long-standing flood-risk concerns.

3. Missed Outcome Targets

- Only **219 properties** were better protected, against a target of **237**.
- National performance was used to offset the local shortfall, masking the impact on Great Ouse communities.

4. No Efficiency Savings Delivered

- A required **10% efficiency saving** (~£1.6m) was not achieved.
- Future rules will remove the need to report efficiencies, reducing transparency.

5. Lack of Local Asset Condition Data

- Asset condition was reported only at **East Anglia level**, not for the **Great Ouse** area.
- This prevents meaningful scrutiny of local flood-risk assets.

6. Programme Management Transition Risks

- Responsibility for EA delivery was transferring to the **Projects and Programme Delivery** team during a period of financial underperformance, creating continuity risks.

Funding and Future Prioritisation

7. 2026–2027 Allocation

- The Great Ouse region received **£15.3m** for 2026–2027.

8. Anglian Water New Prioritisation Framework (from 2027)

Future schemes will be ranked based on:

- Legal compliance
- Existing construction commitments
- Return on government investment
- Strategic objectives (e.g., natural flood management)

Concern: Heavy weighting toward **return on investment** and **third-party contributions** may disadvantage rural or smaller communities unable to attract external funding.

Critical Issue for Flood Groups: The 3-Year Wet Weather Averaging Rule

Anglian Water confirmed that **domestic water recycling capacity** is assessed using a:

→ **3-year Dry Weather Flow (Q90) average + known growth**

Why this matters:

- Wet years and dry years are averaged together.
- In practice, this means **higher wet-weather flows can be absorbed into the average**, allowing **more pollution to be discharged in wet years** without breaching the model.
- This has direct implications for:
 - **Surface water infiltration**
 - **Sewer capacity**
 - **Flood-related pollution events**
 - **Planning decisions for new development**

Flood groups should be aware that this averaging method **masks peak-year stress on the system** and may understate the true risk to communities.

Anglian Water – Development and Capacity Constraints

- **20 m³/day cap** on non-domestic water supply continues to restrict commercial growth.
- The **right to connect** is being tightened: developers may be required to connect at a *sustainable* point, not the nearest one.
- Strategic sites of **500+ homes** would trigger immediate objection unless phased.

- Ofwat is **not requiring developers to fund upgrades** to recycling centres, increasing pressure on existing assets.

Other Key Updates

Government White Paper

- Proposes an **Integrated Water Regulator**, stronger enforcement, an Independent Ombudsman, and statutory water-resilience standards (including potential mandatory smart meters).

Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- Must now be considered in Local Plans and should be referenced at HDC and in Neighbourhood Plans.

Fens Reservoir Project

- Aimed at long-term water resilience; further consultation expected.
- Traffic and transport remain major concerns.

Water Smart Growth Board

- Focus on water efficiency, sustainable drainage, and **grey-water reuse** (e.g., toilet flushing).

Attachment 2
Latest Water Quality Test Results (NB)

Sample Label	Location Detail	Date & time		Temp (°C)	Flow rate/color	Depth (cm)	Date & time tested	Nitrate (mg/L)	Ammonia (mg/L)	Phosphorus (mg/L)	Free chlorine (mg/L)	Total chlorine (mg/L)	Dissolved oxygen (mg/L)	Last reported		Days since last
		sampled												discharge	discharge	
2	Final Effluent Sampling Point	08/03/26 10:15	11 Grey, bubbly, sme			30	08/03/26 17:30	5	2.0	0.12	0	0.0	1	7.8	23/02/26 12:36	12.9Amxc
7	Buckden Drain	08/03/26 13:10	11 Flowing – typical			30	08/03/26 17:30	9	2.0	0.08	0	0.1	8	8.0	23/02/26 12:36	13.0Amxc
8	Diddington Brook Upstream	08/03/26 13:15	10 Looks greyer than*			60	08/03/26 17:30	8	0.0	0.02	0	0.0	12	8.4	23/02/26 12:36	13.0
9	Buckden & Diddington Confluence*	08/03/26 13:20	10 Flowing – typical			40	08/03/26 17:30	9	0.9	0.06	0	0.1		8.3	23/02/26 12:36	13.0
11	Bridge by "Private" Gate	08/03/26 13:45	11 Flowing – typical, *			50	08/03/26 17:30	9	0.4	0.08	0	0.1		8.0	23/02/26 12:36	13.0
12	Flour Mills Footbridge	08/03/26 14:00	11 Flowing well, no c*			50	08/03/26 17:30	9	0.3	0.08	0	0.1		8.0	23/02/26 12:36	13.1
5	Home (Marina)	08/03/26 10:55	10 Still			250	08/03/26 17:30	7	0.0	0.02	0	0.1	11	8.4	23/02/26 12:36	12.9
3	SK Lake	08/03/26 10:30	11 Still, dyed blue			30	08/03/26 17:30	3	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	7	8.5	23/02/26 12:36	12.9
6	Big Lake	08/03/26 13:00	11 Still, clear, orange*			70	08/03/26 17:30	2	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	10	8.6	23/02/26 12:36	13.0
10	Small Lake	08/03/26 13:35	11 Crystal clear, calm			80	08/03/26 17:30	2	0.0	0.00	0	0.0		8.8	23/02/26 12:36	13.0
1	White Bridge (River Upstream)	08/03/26 09:53	10 Typical strong flow			100	08/03/26 17:30	7	0.2	0.00	0	0.1	4	8.2	23/02/26 12:36	12.9
4	Paddle Point (River Downstream)	08/03/26 10:40	11 Typical steady flow			150	08/03/26 17:30	9	0.1	0.00	0	0.1	10	8.4	23/02/26 12:36	12.9
1	Further Upstream Diddington Bro	08/03/26 10:25	11 Grey, steady stre*			50	08/03/26 17:30	4	0.0	0.02	0	0.0	9	8.3	23/02/26 12:36	13.9
3	Paxton Pits Lake 1	09/03/26 11:25	11 Calm and clear			60	08/03/26 17:30	1	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	8	8.6	23/02/26 12:36	14.0
4	Footpath Bridge over Diddington*	09/03/26 11:55	10 Running nicely, sl*			20	08/03/26 17:30	4	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	7	8.3	23/02/26 12:36	14.0
0	Buckden Drain	18/04/26 12:00	14 Slowly flowing, qu*			30	18/04/26 18:00	9	2.0	0.08	0.0	0.0	8	7.3	14/04/26 11:23	4.0