



SEAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Flooding – What Have the Parish Council Been Up To?

Well, after all the hot, dry weather we've been having recently, it might seem slightly strange to be talking about flooding!

But, as we all know, the British weather can change rather quickly. A few weeks of sunshine and dry ground doesn't mean the risk has gone away – particularly after the amount of rain Seavington experienced last year. So, while things may feel rather different at the moment, the Parish Council hasn't forgotten about flooding and the work to understand and reduce the risks is continuing.

It's fair to say that Seavington has had rather more water than anyone ordered over the past year or so.

Following the great deluge of January 2025 – when an astonishing 559mm of rain fell during the storm – the Parish Council has been trying to get to grips with the flooding issue. And, as anyone who has ever tried to work out who owns a particular hedge, ditch or bit of stream will know, it's not always quite as straightforward as it might appear!

There have been meetings, phone calls, emails, experts, flood sacks, muddy bits of paper and quite a lot of head-scratching along the way.

So, what have we actually been doing?

We started with a village flood meeting at the Millennium Hall, which was packed to the rafters. Bel Deering from Somerset Rivers Authority came along to support the Parish Council and help answer questions. There were plenty of questions!

It was quickly apparent that flooding is a complicated business. There isn't a single tap somewhere that can simply be turned off, and responsibility for the various watercourses, ditches and land isn't necessarily where you might expect it to be.

The Parish Council has therefore spent quite a bit of time finding out who owns what and who is responsible for what – not the most exciting job in

the world, perhaps, but rather important when you're trying to get something cleared or repaired.

A few flood sacks – just in case

We also purchased some flood sacks. A few were requested for individual residents, and we decided it would be sensible to have some available for the Village Hall and/or the shop should they ever be needed.

Some have since gone to residents who wanted their own supply. Hopefully they will spend most of their lives sitting quietly in a cupboard gathering dust rather than actually being needed!

Looking for solutions

The Parish Council has also been talking to the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) about what might be done around the village to slow down or manage the water.

And this hasn't all been a case of sitting around a table talking about streams – Parish Councillors have actually been out walking the watercourse and looking at the problem on the ground.

In fact, some have gone rather further than planned and have ended up falling into the stream!

It may not have been the most dignified method of flood investigation, but it certainly demonstrates that the Parish Council is prepared to get its feet wet – quite literally – when trying to understand what is happening and where improvements might be possible.

We have had discussions with landowners and other organisations and looked at the flood alleviation scheme in more detail.

One particularly useful discovery was learning more about riparian ownership. In simple terms, if you own land next to a watercourse, you may also have responsibilities for that watercourse.

This prompted the Parish Council to contact the relevant landowners and remind them of their responsibilities.

And, happily, this has produced some action. Some property owners have since cleared sections of the flood alleviation stream, which is a very practical outcome from what might otherwise have been a rather dry conversation about land ownership!

More meetings than you can shake a wellie at

There have been several opportunities to hear from organisations involved in flood management and resilience.

We held another village meeting, with representatives from FWAG, Somerset Rivers Authority and other relevant organisations attending, along with residents. Trudy also spoke on behalf of the Parish Council.

There have also been wider community flood meetings, including one organised by Lopen Parish Council. Representatives from neighbouring villages and Parish Councils attended, along with FWAG and Somerset Rivers Authority.

Seavington was represented too – although, on that particular occasion, The Clerk was the only person from our village there. Clearly everyone else had heard enough about flooding already or was hiding somewhere warm and dry!

What can we all do?

While the Parish Council continues to work on the bigger picture, there are some very simple things we can all do to help.

When heavy rain is forecast, have a quick look at the drain cover outside your house. If it's covered with leaves, mud or other debris, clear it if you safely can. And don't just stop at the one outside your own front door – if you spot a blocked drain cover a little further down the road, give that one a sweep too.

A few minutes with a broom can make a real difference when the rain starts coming down, particularly if a drain is already struggling to cope.

Obviously, please don't put yourself at risk or try to lift anything heavy – and report anything that needs more than a quick clear-out.

It may not feel like much, but if everyone keeps an eye on the drains around them, it means the water has a fighting chance of getting where it is supposed to go.

Is there a magic solution?

Sadly, no.

It would be lovely if there were a simple answer involving one meeting, one cheque and one very large digger. Unfortunately, the reality is considerably more complicated.

There are questions about land ownership, farming, existing land use, drainage, the flood alleviation scheme and what is actually practical and affordable. Some suggestions would involve landowners giving up part of their fields for bunds or other measures, which obviously isn't a straightforward proposition.

FWAG and the other organisations involved continue to look at what might be possible, but there is no silver bullet.

So, where does that leave us?

The Parish Council can't control the weather – and if anyone knows how to stop 559mm of rain falling on Seavington, we're all ears!

What we can do is keep asking questions, find out who is responsible for what, bring the right people together, share information and keep the issue on the agenda.

And we're not just doing that from behind a desk. Parish Councillors have been out walking the stream, inspecting the watercourses and, in at least one case, getting rather more closely acquainted with the water than intended!

That's what we've been doing.

We've learnt more about the flood alleviation scheme, contacted landowners, worked with FWAG and Somerset Rivers Authority, attended flood resilience events, provided flood sacks and helped get parts of the watercourse cleared.

There is still more to do, and flooding remains very much on the Parish Council's radar.

In the meantime, please keep an eye on those drain covers – yours, and perhaps the one a few doors down too!

Because while we may not be able to stop the rain, we can at least try to make sure the water has somewhere sensible to go.