

KEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Griffin, Winterwood, Whelford, Fairford, Glos. GL7 4EB

Tel:01285 713691 email: Clerk@kempsfordparishcouncil.net

Thames Water

16 February 2021

Dear Sir

Re: Repeated Waste water problems in Kempsford Parish.

After the recent issues within the Parish I would like to register these concerns and comments on behalf of Kempsford Parish Council and the parishioners.

The Parish of Kempsford has, like many towns and villages in the Cotswold, experienced some considerable effects as a result of the rains over this winter. Roads have been flooded because of a lack of maintenance (Gloucestershire Highways) and blocked drains. The drains have not been cleaned for over a year and as a result leaf and tree debris have blocked them. This is prevalent outside the Parsonage on the High Street. This area is very close to the Thames Water pumping station which now fills with water every time it rains. The pumping station, as I'm sure are aware, contains a pump which is nowhere near strong enough to pump out the waste water from houses as well as rain water from the drains. The result is standing water on the road and residents unable to use their downstairs toilets because they are full and not flushing away waste water, nor are they able to use their washing machines. Many residents, many more than usual this winter, particularly in the Ham Lane and Holford Crescent area of the village have called Thames water on a number of occasions in the last few weeks but the pumping has not completely solved the problem. This is not the first time that residents have had issues with sewage water but is much more prevalent in more households over the last few weeks. In short, the sewage pipes are not substantial enough to carry the water and waste sewage and the pump at the pumping station is not strong enough to remove the required amount of water.

Who is responsible for the cleaning of drains? Is it Gloucestershire Highways? Is it Cotswold District Council? Is it Thames Water? There does seem to be a "pass the buck" issue here with a discussion as to whether it is wet leaves or is dry leaves. The "Role of Drain Cleaning" seeming to be passed around and then forgotten and therefore does not get done. There used to be an annual cleaning but this has not been the case.

There are gravel extractions taking place downstream of the Parish. The extractions have left large areas of deep quarries which are now lakes. Without them the area would be flooded fields and to a certain extent have saved the Parish from further flooding problems. This therefore, is even more reason why Thames Water and The Environmental Agency need to address the issues now, before these quarries are infilled and returned to farm land.

Any suggested remedy or plan to address these issues should not just be made just to the towns such as Cirencester and Fairford but should also include the communities further down the water flow line. Water from these towns travels towards Kempsford on its way towards the Thames and therefore works needs to be done here too.

Councillors

Mrs. K Saunders, Ockwell, Whelford. 01285 712979

Mr. M Strange, 4 Wakefield Close, Kempsford 01285 810635

Mr. J Stokes, Leafield, Chapel Rd, Kempsford 01285 810293

Mr. T. Williams, 10 John of Gaunt Rd., Kempsford. 01285 810628

Mr. P Nickson, Paradise Farm, High St, Kempsford 01285 810099

Mrs. C. Nugent, 9 Lancaster Rd., Kempsford, 01285 810306

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The drainage ditches around the Parish have existed for over 100 years and were engineering feats of their time. However we are now in a new climate phase and without the annual dredging of the Thames a new system for waste water and flood water needs to be addressed.

With Global warming and more substantial rainfall, the Council feels strongly that it is imperative that Thames Water address these issues as a matter of urgency. It is accepted that this may not be cheap as other Parishes and Towns such as Fairford and Cirencester also have similar issues. However if we in this part of the Cotswolds, close to the Thames, are to be a "flood area" to protect the Towns like Oxford and Reading further down the Thames then surely we need some "protection" as well.

Please accept these comment and questions to which I would very much appreciate your comments and answer in return. Should you require any clarification, please get back to me. I am more than happy to discuss these points with Thames Water and assist in planning a way forward for the benefit of all concerned in the area.

Kind Regards,

Tony Williams

Chair Kempford Parish Council

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