

Coun Liz Eyre speaks at RFDC meeting

Worcestershire County Councillor Liz Eyre was invited to speak to the Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) at their quarterly meeting in October. The meeting, at the Environment Agency's regional headquarters in Solihull, was attended by a group representing all the interests in Charlton. Coun Eyre pointed out that everyone supported the scheme and that she, together with Wychavon DC councillor Tom McDonald, Charlton PC chairman Brian Browne, a Charlton farmer and a member of the Flood Committee were all there to show their support.

Charlton, she said, had a history of flooding events causing damage to property and disruption to local services. "The problem is that as soon as there is heavy rain in the area the flood water can rise rapidly with very little warning". Financial support for the scheme was already promised by WCC, WDC, and Charlton PC, and the scheme was 'ready to go' as soon as full funding was made available.

£62,000 'in kind' from Wychavon

Following the Easter 98 floods Wychavon DC (who were at that time the land drainage authority) prepared a flood defence scheme for Charlton. However, funds could not be found for its construction and the scheme was shelved. After the July 2007 floods the Environment Agency, who were now responsible for the Merry Brook through Charlton, based their scheme on the work originally carried out by Wychavon DC. Using this existing scheme saved the EA an estimated £62,000 of effort and has been a 'contribution in kind' from Wychavon. WDC Environment Services manager Steve Jordan was also at the RFDC's October meeting to show Wychavon's continuing support for the scheme.

Plants to raise money

Brenda, who plants out the impressive tubs on Charlton village green and has a colourful display outside her home in Brook Lane, will be setting up a plant stall in the spring to raise funds for the scheme. Go Green: buy locally grown plants and make your contribution towards protecting the village!



Church Fête Committee support the scheme

Charlton Church Fête Committee, who hold their annual fund raising event on The Green, have donated £270 towards funding the flood defence scheme. The committee chairman, Howard Heath, said "The Fête Committee felt that it was important to support this scheme and have given 10% of the funds raised this year. All the rest of our funds go to support the parish of Fladbury, Hill & Moor, Wyre Piddle, Crophorne and Charlton."

Further contribution from Charlton Parish Council ?

PC Chairman, Brian Browne, intends to propose that the PC pledges further funds towards the EA scheme. "The Parish Council is restricted in how much it can give to projects that are not its responsibility. This year it was able to give £2,500 and I hope it will agree a similar amount in the next financial year."

Funding the scheme

The EA estimates the cost of the scheme at £564,000 (plus an additional £343,000 for 'contingency'). Contributions have already been pledged by Worcestershire CC (£40,000), Wychavon DC (£5,000) and Charlton PC (£2,500). Local fund raising activities are also being planned for 2010. The remaining funds are being requested from the RFDC's Local Levy on local authorities in the region.

MP Peter Luff supports scheme

Local MP, Peter Luff has been talking to the EA stressing the importance of the scheme. He said "the EA are very well aware of my strong support".

The problem

The Merry Brook rises on the north eastern edge of Bredon Hill and runs for about seven miles to join the River Avon at Jubilee Bridge. It drains approximately 11 square kilometres of farmland. Heavy rainfall in its catchment area can cause the brook to rise rapidly without warning resulting in the flooding of roads and properties.

The solution

The EA have prepared plans to build three 'storage ponds' upstream of the village. These will be formed by building three earth barriers across the valley. For most of the year the Merry Brook will flow unimpeded through a pipe through each barrier. During heavy rain the excess water will build up behind the barriers forming temporary ponds. The pipes will determine the rate at which the ponds empty, restricting the flow through Charlton to a safe level.

More flooding events!

The Environment Agency in its submission to the RFDC says that 'the Merry Brook in Charlton has a history of flooding' - too true! Since the major flood in July 2007 there have been two further 'close calls'. In March 2008 and again in December 2008 flood water once more threatened houses in Brook Lane and on The Green.



The Green, December 2008



Sandbags out in Brook Lane, December 2008 (after dark)

"There is widespread support for the EA's proposal. Landowners who may be affected have been approached and none have objected in principle."
Charlton PC chairman Brian Browne.

Produced by Charlton Flood Committee, December 2009.
Photographs by Chris Perks.

Environment Agency caught out by flooding



While carrying out maintenance work on the Merry Brook in Charlton the EA were caught out by flooding. Heavy rain caused the brook level to rise rapidly without warning and threatened to carry away their 'portaloo'.



Brook Lane, March 2008



Bus negotiating floods, December 2008 photo RD

"It is so important Charlton gets on to the RFCD's three year rolling programme." *WCC Coun Liz Eyre.*

"This is a much needed scheme not only for Charlton but the wider area." *WDC Coun Tom McDonald.*

"Charlton urgently needs this scheme. It has suffered the damaging effects of flooding for too long." *Charlton Flood Committee chairman Brian Clements.*

"If we get heavy rain in the night I have to get up and look out of the window - I'm always worried it will happen again"
Charlton flood victim.