

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
7th September**

LJ/2021

26th August 2021

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 7 – FLOODING

AIM

1. To consider a proposal from Cllr Wellings that the Town Council forms a working group to facilitate a residents self-help group to mitigate the effects of flooding from the River Severn in Bridgnorth.

BACKGROUND

2. The Town Council recently (July 2021) received a briefing from the Environment Agency following an initial assessment (IA) document that had been produced to consider flood prevention measures in the area. The IA was met with some disappointment by the Council in that it did not identify any funding to directly alleviate the flooding in Bridgnorth. At the briefing members indicated that there would be some benefit if having a dialogue with residents that are likely to be directly affected and at least try to co-ordinate some immediate actions to be taken should river levels get close to breaking the riverbank.
3. Councillor Wellings has had a number of brief discussions with the Clerk about how some formal Town Council involvement might, in the first instance, begin to address the issue of 'immediate actions'

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

4. Flooding issues have arisen in each of the past 2 years and several times in the past decade or more.
5. Flooding in Bridgnorth is likely to have 2 threads:
 - a. What can be done to reduce the chances of it happening.
 - b. What can be done if flooding occurs.

6. Reducing the chances [of flooding], will require much thought and investment and Shropshire Council and the EA are best placed to tackle the medium to long-term measures that are required to improve the current situation. That will likely include climate change activity, some hard-engineering, wider co-ordination of activity, understanding of measures (if any) upstream that might have a positive impact and of course funding. Bridgnorth Town Council on behalf of the residents would likely want to have a seat at the table or at least have some meaningful and direct consultation when such things are being formulated. It is unlikely that anything being considered here would be in place before this winter.
7. What can be done [when flooding occurs], is of more direct and immediate concern for the Council and the residents most likely to be affected. The creation of a local self-help group supported by the Town Council where resources, risks, immediate actions and lines of communication can be identified might be considered a useful initial first step. The following might be a reasonable outline
 - a. The Town Council books a venue.
 - b. The Town Council leaflet drops those properties that it thinks are affected and invite them to an initial meeting.
 - c. The Town Council oversees the first meeting to:
 - i. Suggest the creation of a formal but loose group who agree to share information and support each other.
 - ii. Help produce a list of useful numbers to call as and when things happen.
 - iii. Identify what support is required and produce a list of things that can be done e.g. where to get sandbags from, how to get sandbags if you don't have a car, how we might pre-position sandbags ahead of events, where to go if your property becomes uninhabitable, etc.
8. A resident led group might also be able to contribute to the longer-term issues in due course.
9. A small group of 2 or 3 councillors might be sufficient to set up a residents' group and facilitate, albeit a slightly larger number might allow a good spread. Councillor Wellings as a resident who lives in close proximity to an area of flooding (and having experienced the direct effects) is keen to be directly involved. A draft set of terms of reference is enclosed.

FINANCIALS

10. Initially there are likely to be no direct costs to the Council, other than perhaps hall hire and some light touch officer support.

SUMMARY

11. Areas of Bridgnorth are likely to be at risk of flooding this winter. The need for the delivery, pre-positioning of sandbags, the identification of the vulnerable and some capacity for some emergency care /places of refuge amongst other things are likely to provide some reassurance, alleviate some distress and reduce risk of serious injury and/or property damage.
12. Creating a largely self-help group supported by the Town Council is offered as a way of providing some mitigation to the direct impact of future flooding events.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

13. It is recommended that the Town Council RESOLVES:

To form a working group of up to 6 councillors (with Cllr Wellings taking the lead) to host and facilitate a residents meeting that can identify the support required in the event of flooding and co-ordinate activity ahead of this winter.



Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk

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Flood Reaction Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference

Flood Reaction Working Group – Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION:

At its meeting on 9th September (minute number 0021/21221) the Town Council agreed:

“To form a working group of up to 3 councillors (with Cllr Wellings taking the lead) to host and facilitate a residents meeting that can identify the support required in the event of flooding and co-ordinate activity ahead of this winter.”

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- The Working Group will comprise 3 Members.
 - The working group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -
 - To arrange a meeting(s) of suitable participants.
 - To support the participants in creating their own group.
 - To identify the needs of those most directly affected by flooding events.
 - To provide information and guidance on how the needs of the group can be identified and delivered.

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 9 September 2021, Minute xxxx/2122 refers).