

Flood Alleviation Project

1. The Environment Agency (EA) is moving forward with planning for this project which is scheduled to begin next year. I have looked at the plans available on line and my overwhelming conclusion is that it will be massively disruptive for our village. I would like us to agree to approach the EA now to talk to them about the operation of the works with the aim of reducing this disruption as much as we can. To remind you the project is scheduled to last three to four years and I think we can reasonably assume that, as with any other large engineering projects, it may overrun so we may be looking at even longer. We cannot let major disruption to our community go ahead under the guise of being temporary. The length of time is too long to be mere temporary disruption.
2. The issues I see for immediate discussion are listed in brief below, others I'm sure will arise as we go along. As we gather information, we can begin to press for mitigation measures on behalf of the Parish.

The Works Area

3. This is shown on the plans and surrounds the village to the north and east. The area itself appears larger than the settlement of the village! We need some information:
 - What will happen in this area
 - How will vehicles (of any sort) get in and out
 - How will it be screened
 - How will noise levels be controlled
 - Will it be lit
 - What will the working hours be
 - What will be sited in the areas in the village and what will be further away.

Movement of vehicles and spoil

4. It is safe to assume that the digging of the deep channel and the creation of bunds will require heavy vehicles and the movement of spoil and other materials. This has the potential to be very disruptive across the whole timescale of the project. We need some information:
 - What route will heavy vehicles and spoil take as they/it enter and exit the village and work area
 - What sort of vehicles will be used and how frequently

- What amounts of spoil are we talking about
- What will be the hours of operation for this type of work
- How will disruption noise and pollution be mitigated.

The diversion of the Devil's Backbone

5. The plans include the EA's preferred route. This has been described as a short diversion. I have walked it and it takes more than twice as long as the section of the current route it replaces. If you are able bodied this may not be an issue but of course not everyone is. The diversion runs through the field towards the electricity sub-station (a particularly dangerous area to be diverting users towards). The diversion itself is not a path except in minimal sections, the majority being grass that is soggy even in dry weather. The current route is a hard surface raised above the flood plain level and is suitable for walkers, cycles, pushchairs and, up to the railway bridge, wheelchairs. For this to be an acceptable diversion it needs to replicate the current route as far as is reasonable. Remember this could be a diversion that lasts some considerable time. We need to ask for:

- A complete raised path above the level of the flood plain.
- The path not to include any steps
- As the path runs alongside or approaches any dangerous or risky areas that appropriate barriers are provided to mitigate risk.

Communication

6. I think you will agree that this will be crucial. The EA's mode of operation I imagine will be via a "communications officer". I'm sure they will be competent, but it is unlikely they will have any power to change matters of operation. Conversely as Parish Representatives we need to have a focal point for the EA and residents to feed information into. Clearly, we cannot do all this though monthly Parish Council meetings and of course we may want to enlist the help, if we can find any, from other parishioners. Can we discuss and agree how best to do this?

Cllr Patricia Jones
4th November 2018