

Bleasby Flood Action Group Report to Bleasby PC Annual Parish Meeting 24th April 2024

or Living 'on the edge', with the Consequences of Global Heating, on the flat floodplain of a major river, just 50' above sea level.

or A wake-up for ACTION!

It cannot be overlooked by even the most unobservant resident of Bleasby Parish that our weather pattern and its impact upon us is becoming a less predictable and more challenging force. This year has highlighted the seemingly inevitable future increase in the number, extent and likelihood of flooding events across this parish.

So what is being done to prepare for this eventuality?

- Belatedly the world is waking up to the need to act globally, as demonstrated by increasingly determined COP meetings – but delivery of intent remains a serious impediment.
- Our own Government is aware of public concern and has the will but not, apparently, the financial way! The Pitt Report of 2007 still fails to influence!
- The Environment Agency has itself developed a flooding management policy and has the necessary strategies – but not currently the resources to effectively implement them.
- Our County Council realises the significance and potential of its role in developing and enabling flood resilience but is similarly starved of resources.
- Our District Council has woken up to the significant impact of flooding locally on business, transport, households and welfare, and has taken upon itself the task of attempting to act as a catalyst for effective action by drawing together all relevant authorities, agencies and services in a combined effort to focus operation specifically on the "Trent Valley Basin". (It was at the prompting of Bleasby PC in 2007 that this body proved effective in delivering such on behalf of this parish)
- Our Parish Council has valiantly persisted in standing up for our own "flooding case and cause" amidst a proliferation of other councils clamouring for the attention and input of the associated authorities and agencies. It has made representation through our Council Councillor, Sue Saddington, and District Councillor, Keith Melton, listened to the comments, queries and anxieties of residents and has actively supported the Flood Action Group in its efforts, needs and suggestions.

It has urged the District Council's Planning Department to carefully consider all the flooding implications and consequences of every planning application with close reference to known as well as experienced sources of effect and extent of flooding. What's more, it has set about endeavouring to ensure that immediate solutions to specific flooding issues have been highlighted, sought address and, inevitably has, "just got on with the job" knowing that otherwise "tomorrow we will flood!"

- Our Flood Action Group remains a potent and committed force whose combined individual range of talent, expertise and commitment has produced an effective vehicle of "in-flood" response and action, as well as an advisory body to the Parish Council as it was originally conceived when created by its 2007 predecessor, as a Flood Advisory Group.

Areas for the current focus of the Parish Council's attention have been highlighted by FAG membership representatives at the Council's December 2023 meeting and through FAG's two written reports to Council at its January and February 2024 meetings.

Thanks to the Council's initiative the first of these was circulated to all residents of the Parish through its own website – but thereby can be found the "Achilles Tendon" of this community's cohesion and effectiveness in implementing a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy.....

COMMUNICATION – which, if ineffective, renders the whole community vulnerable, ill-prepared ill-informed, potentially isolated and ... unable to work cooperatively and supportively in a well-coordinated manner before, during and after flooding events within the parish.

We officially have noticeboards, Bleasby News and a Parish Council website. Unofficially we have a Bleasby Facebook site which would seem to be a preferred vehicle for some residents – and the 'phone, BUT ... beware reliance on the almost universally used mobile phone – it has to be dry, charged, have a signal and a power source – none of which can be guaranteed in a flooded environment!

In all of the anxiety, uncertainty and debate which prevails during and immediately after significant flooding, it must be remembered that complacency tends to set in and momentum for flood ACTION becomes dissipated as the weather improves, memories fade and good intentions become overtaken by other pressing issues.

It is dangerous to assume and expect that “somebody else” will be addressing previously concerning issues and that “somebody else” will be there in our of need! We must learn that as a vulnerable community, we are but “small fish in an increasingly extensive flooding pool” and we must be self-reliant, self- resilient and accepting that we must be PROACTIVE to achieve the best possible outcomes for ourselves.

We need to work together as a community and ensure that all residents, whether living in a house, caravan, lodge or boat, have a clear understanding of flooding risk, procedure and personal responsibility, and that we all live with an acceptance of flooding risk but a determination to find ways of minimising its impact and our vulnerability.

P Cast, Lead Flood Warden