

## Oakington Post Flood Update – 16 September 2014

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information on the work taking place to understand the recent flooding and what can be done to reduce the risk of future flooding.

The Environment Agency is working together with Cambridgeshire County Council and Highways (CCC), South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Anglian Water to prepare a single 'multi agency' response to the flooding.

CCC a Lead Local Flood Authority for Cambridgeshire and as such has responsibility for investigating the causes of surface water flooding in Oakington, and the Environment Agency is responsible for establishing the causes of flooding from main river. However, all of the organisations working on this have some responsibility for managing 'water' in Oakington.

### This update covers:

1. Saturday 16 August - a post flooding event summary
2. Friday 8/Saturday 9 August - rainfall facts
3. Who manages 'water' in Oakington
4. Contact us (see separate document)

We will use these newsletters and your parish publications to keep you informed over the coming months.

Please contact the Environment Agency using the details listed under 'contact us' to add, change or remove your contact details from this distribution list. If you have received this newsletter via the post but would prefer us to send you an electronic copy please email us stating your current postal address and we will amend your details.

## Saturday 16 August - a post flooding event summary

Over 130 residents attended the community event hosted by the Environment Agency and supported by representatives from Oakington & Westwick Parish, SCDC, CCC and Anglian Water.

The objective of the event was to gather data and evidence of flooding in order to understand the sources and extent of property flooding. Together partners gathered information from over 100 residents on the causes and impacts of flooding in and around Oakington village, over 80 flood questionnaires were completed and handed over to the Environment Agency.

From the information collated so far:

- 53 properties had flooding inside of their houses; and
- 43 properties had flooding outside of the house - in gardens, garages, sheds, front lawns

All the evidence and information gathered on the day and will be put into an electronic format by the Environment Agency on behalf of the working group. This 'picture' or map of the flooding will help us to identify where the problems occurred which caused the property flooding, so that partners can work on solutions to the whole problem.

## Friday 8/Saturday 9 August - rainfall facts

MET Office forecasts received by the Environment Agency on Friday 8 August 2014 for Friday 8 August 2014

The Environment Agency rain gauge, upstream from Oakington at Uttons Drove, received 140mm rainfall between 12:00 and 18:00 on Friday 8 August. Equivalent to three months of rainfall in six hours or 300% of the monthly long term average rainfall for this area.

Rainfall was at its heaviest between 14:15 and 15:15 when 60mm of rainfall was recorded (130% of the monthly long term average).

The volume of rain inundated the road and drainage network in the village, creating a flood effect from a range of sources, this included surface water on fields and roads, the filling of the river and local drains and overwhelming a local sewage pumping station.

A further 40mm of rainfall was recorded overnight into Saturday morning.

Water levels in the local watercourses were already high as a result of heavy rainfall upstream, but they were inundated by surface water flooding from the surrounding fields.

## Who manages 'water' in Oakington

The term 'flood risk management' is used to describe the work of risk management authorities such as the Environment Agency, local authorities and Internal Drainage Boards. They aim to reduce the likelihood of flooding by:

- managing flood risk from all sources including river, surface runoff and ground water;
- constructing and managing defences, where appropriate;
- maintaining watercourses and flood defences, where appropriate.

### Riparian owners – this could be you

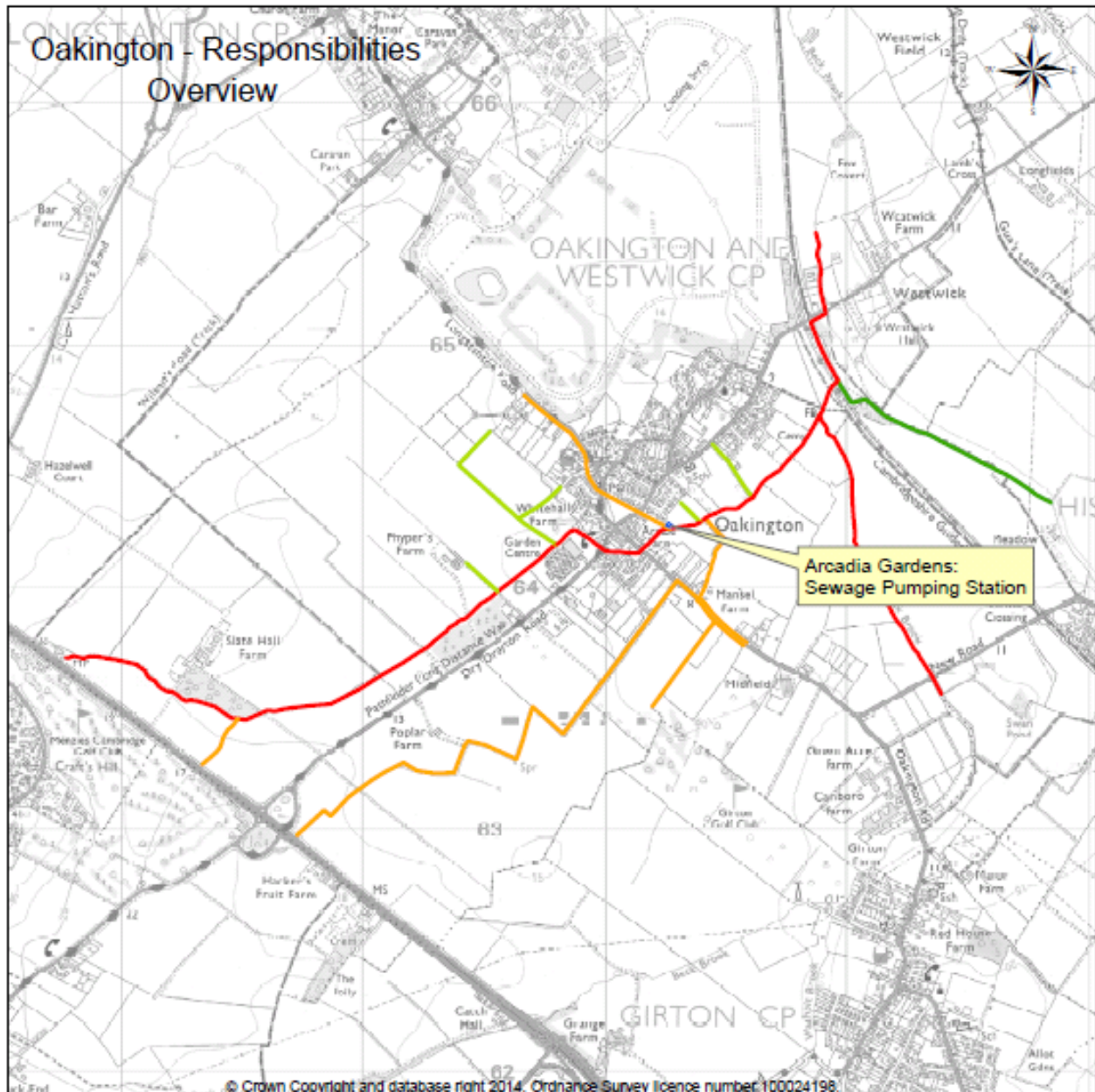
If you own land or property next to a river, stream or ditch you may be a 'riparian owner' and you have certain rights and responsibilities which includes managing your own flood risk

To find out more about riparian ownership rights and responsibilities and the role of other risk management authorities please read the Environment Agency booklet 'living on the edge'. You can read it online here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities> or request a copy by contacting the Environment Agency using the details below under 'contact us'.

## Environment Agency and council responsibilities

This map identifies which organisation has responsibility for which watercourse in Oakington:

**Key:**            **Red** = Environment Agency            **Orange** = South Cambridgeshire District Council            **Green/Lime** and unmarked = Riparian owners



### Environment Agency – main rivers highlighted in **red**

Undertake annual inspections of the Oakington Brook and carry out annual maintenance work to maintain channel capacity. The programme includes weed spraying twice a year, grass cutting once a year and removal of debris which blocks water flow as required.

### South Cambridgeshire District Council – watercourses highlighted in **orange**

Carry out maintenance, at least once per year, on the ditches known as 'awarded watercourses' which are identified as their responsibility. This work involves annual flail mowing to the banks, removal of bed vegetation, de-silting works and silt removal from long piped sections. Additionally,

blockages are routinely removed following heavy rainfall events or other storm conditions. The existing levels of maintenance are expected to continue into the future as Elected Members have placed no budgetary constraints on the Council's drainage responsibilities. SCDC are not aware of any issues with their network at this time.

Any issues with SCDC drains should be reported to Pat Matthews at SCDC in the drainage dept, who is normally in a position to respond quickly.

### Anglian Water

Responsible for sewers and the pumping station. The majority of the sewers in Oakington are classified as foul sewers, i.e. they were designed to take used water from properties, and not deal with surface water runoff. Over the years surface water connections have been made to foul sewers which means that surface water enters the sewage network. The sewers can usually deal with average rainfall events, but when exceptional rainfall falls in the space of a few hours, such as happened on the 8 August, then the capacity of all drainage networks, including the sewerage system, will become overwhelmed.

Cambridge Water provides drinking water to Oakington. Water leaks must be reported to Cambridge Water including clear water flowing in gullies along Water Lane.

### Cambridgeshire County Council including Highways

CCC Highways have a duty to maintain highway drainage, including road gullies, pipes, manholes and outfall. Issues including blocked gullies, offlets and other grates that take highway water, and water discharging from roads and footways need to be notified to this department by calling 0345 045 5212.

## **Next steps**

Our focus over the next few weeks will remain on reviewing the evidence and data collated. We are aiming to produce a second newsletter which will outline the issues identified and the actions each organisation has agreed to take to improve the situation.