

Two updates on precautions against flooding

Parish chairman Jim Donahue provides news about two topics in connection with flood risk in Whitchurch.

Communal sandbags for flood defence – Following the flooding experience in January, the Emergency Team recommended that we provide a communal sandbag storage facility in the village, although we are still strongly recommending that all residents who may be at risk of flooding keep their own sandbags. As it is not possible to predict the full extent of future flooding, a communal sand storage bin is now available off Eastfield Lane at the Village Green car park to supplement supplies held by residents. Neil Huntington of Eastfield Lane has a supply of about 20 sacks that can be filled with sand in the event of flooding. If you need sandbags, please contact Neil at 07979 751985, or you can contact me or another emergency team contact if he is unavailable. The village's Emergency Plan, listing the team, can be found on the Links page of the website.



Village drains clearing, 1st to 8th November – Another important preparation for flooding is to ensure that the village's drains are working effectively. OCC Highways have confirmed that they plan to be in the village for 6 full days from 1-8 November to clear the drains on the High Street and other streets in the village. I am told that this will be a full cleaning including the gulleys as well as the street run-off pipes between them along the High Street. OCC Highway's policy of clearing drains has officially reduced from once a year to every four years, but in reality they now arrange these 'full' cleanings, as and when, based on identified flooding risks. So it pays to continue to raise issues with drains on FixMyStreet.

I have also asked if they can improve the 'catch-pits' on the steep part of Whitchurch Hill to see if they can upgrade these to soakaways that would be more effective. Budget approval is required for this which they said they will consider. The present catch-pits are not very effective and stones and other debris flow into the village, filling High Street drains and leaving debris on the road. This debris also impacts the drains at the Greyhound Pub, which fortunately still appear to be effective in removing water, but only after debris is swept off the drain grills manually after heavy rains.

Cllr Jim Donahue

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council, 7th October 2024

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