

Meeting Chaired by Cllr Cook (Sturton by Stow PC) and assisted by Cllr Turner (Stow PC).

recorded by S. Hoyland - Parish Clerk

Present: Cllr Leach, Cllr. S. Christie, Cllr C Christie, Cllr Capuano, Cllr Mullally and 16 members of the public.

Representatives of Sturton by Stow and Stow Parish Councils met with two Anglian Water representatives Dan Heath and Matt Moore on Tuesday 19th August 2025 the meeting starting at 1.35pm.

Cllr Cook welcomed the AW representatives and the public to the public fact-finding meeting with Anglian Water.

The Chairman proposed that the AW representatives give an overview of what they have been investigating since January and include what they have put right and what they plan to do.

The AW representative suggested that going through the questions would highlight an overview of work which has taken place and mitigations for future solutions.

At 1.37pm a resident requested that they share an impact statement prepared by the residents. It was agreed that the statement be shared of which another resident read out the following.

Impact statement (Appendix A)

At 1:42 PM, the Chairman reiterated that he understands the devastation and emotional toll caused by internal flooding. He reminded residents that this was a fact-finding meeting, and that the AW representatives had been given the opportunity to preview residents' questions and come prepared with answers. He also encouraged everyone to remain calm and respectful throughout the meeting to ensure a productive discussion and to go through the questions one by one to ensure a constructive and orderly discussion.

1. Drainage in Rectory Park, part of the planning a holding tank was included. Was this implemented and if so, who is responsible for it and is it maintained on a regular basis?

The Chairman identified this question as being more suitable for West Lindsay District Council and will be put forward to WLDC in the future.

AW representative added that this has been installed and is a private asset, that would not be allowed today, he was unsure of maintenance but should be self-cleansing and was clean when last inspected by myself this year

2. Stow pumping station. Have the issues been resolved regarding the flooding from the main foul line/surface water being pumped into Sturton?

Investigations are ongoing, due to equipment failure and sickness we have not been able to fully investigate.

The representative stated that there have been on-going investigations into inspecting pipework in both villages and looking into the surface water infiltration. He informed the public and councillors that in answering the questions he does not intend to sound negative, but a lot of the answers will sound similar and disheartening. He stated that there are two networks. Foul sewer network and surface water network both of which on a dry day in normal weather conditions are adequate.

He noted that climate change has played a big part in flooding issues, and problems occur when there is extreme weather such as Storm Babet and Storm Henk and unfortunately due to climate change, we have been experiencing this extreme weather more frequently.

Surface water gets into the foul water network and overwhelms the system. He noted that Sturton by Stow has a combined sewer overload (CSO).

The Environmental Agency (EA) currently allows 95% surface water and 5% sewage to discharge into the R. Till. There is a capacity 'level'; and during extreme weather conditions the level we experience supersedes the capacity level. When the River Till is high and the water course is high, and we cannot evacuate the water quick enough.

The issue is not purely down to AW. SBS is in a high-risk surface water area, however the S19 report data shows that only two properties reported were affected by internal flooding. Without the reports the larger investments will go to other areas. E.g. Where 50 houses are being flooded to make a bigger difference.

A resident asked if there is anything we can do about it?

The Chairman responded and asked the representative that in your assessment, where is the ingress is happening?

The representative responded that once we identify the need, it can go before the board for grants. To remove the surface water, it will easily be a 7-figure investment requirement. We would have to identify incorrectly plumbed in drains and properties to know the true scale of the problem.

At 1.50pm a resident highlighted the AW asset management plan aim to mitigate risks by 2030

The representative agreed that it is more likely that risks would be mitigated by a lower level 5 figure investment depending on the scale.

The resident responded stated that a £469 million profit obtained by AW would be better spent to solve the problem and stop people's lives from being affected by flooding.

AW representative stated that he would rather stay off from the stakeholder profit argument if possible as it is not going to help.

Anglian Water is a private business and businesses make a profit. £1 million worth of investment was invested towards reducing overflow flooding by 48% which is the root cause of spills and they are reducing this by a retrospective water system and plumbing into waterbodies LCC, Flood Action Group and the EA.

A Public Levy System would be 40-50-million-pound scheme.

With the two properties reported in the S19 this will not give the level of risk needed to get a 40-50-million-pound restructure.

We need to focus on mitigating the impact of the flood and look at what small interventions we can make to see how we can stop the water rising. He stressed that money is allocated on risks and more so reducing spills over flooding.

At 1.57pm a resident stated that in 2007 he attended a multi-agency meeting with AW, EA, IDB LCC, WLDC with the same comments that stated a 4-million-pound project is what was needed. He questioned why SBS are not in the current plan now from investigations that were made and meetings that took place back in 2007.

AW representative responded that investments are reprioritised. The retrospective costs of the internal flooding impact per property is £234,000 therefore an economic risk of 10 properties would be £2 million. It is a risk vs cost where investments are concerned.

3. Is the pumping station in SBS capable of dealing with the ongoing excessive rainfall due to climate change and the increase in new houses? If not, when is there an upgrade planned? Why are the current systems for surface water drainage and sewerage failing to cope? We need the professional's expertise to explain exactly why the current infrastructure is inadequate.

AW representative responded that the SBS pipework is adequate to take all foul water (FW) from properties and more. It is the cross connected SW lines and infiltration causes the pumping station (PS) to become overloaded, an upgraded PS will still not cope with the excess during storm events but

removing the surface water (SW) cross connections will help massively. Our foul network is designed for foul only flows, and in dry weather, apart from when there is sewer mis-use with things like Fat, Oils Grease and wet wipes, the network functions and operates as expected without issue.

He assured the residents that he in is common conversations with Morgan Wraith and Matt Harrison about Sturton by Stow as a multi-agency approach is required to mitigate the flooding. He reiterated that if the water cannot discharge into the River Till then the water has nowhere to go but back up, together the agencies need to identify a solution.

A resident questioned what we could do to move ourselves up the list for improvements. Is it that we need more houses to be flooded for us to move up the criteria?

AW representative stated that the lack of reporting skews the data of where the need for investment is. He would encourage residents to always report external flooding, internal flooding, toilet backups etc. He highlighted various ways to reports via the website and phone. He stated that it is not essential to report at the time of the flooding, it can always be report after the event.

Two members of the Public joined the meeting at 2.05pm

The AW representative explained that in regard to hydraulic capacity there is plenty of capacity on a dry day to treat the water. The permit is a flow figure that the EA allows. We are at the limit on a dry weather condition. There needs to be changes to how we manage and discharge the water. that based on capacity, there is a permit for capacity. AW will be objecting to any other planning applications. He explained that AW is not a statutory consultee therefore WLDC does not have to listen to them.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Councils position to the planning process is the same.

At 2.11pm a member of the public left.

4. Mitigation has been found, with the cap ex team. When is this going to be actioned?

This is currently with capital at present and is on a short list for this area.

5. Are we getting surface water from Stow? This surely doesn't help our situation. If so, was the SBS pumping station designed to cope with this?

The representative stated that a previous answer refers to this of cross connections and infiltration which is an ongoing investigation. The management of surface water across the catchment is complex and not simple. Often our foul sewer network is left to try and drain surface water when other drainage assets have become overloaded or surcharged. It is not designed or sized to carry out this function. The representative explained that in extreme weather conditions that water courses rise.

The foul sewer system is adequate; it's the cross connectivity of the surface water that exacerbates the issue. 10-15 litres of water a second is pumped and Stow backs up first before Sturton by Stow. The pumping station pumps to the manhole at Ivy Cottage in Sturton by Stow and then it turns to a gravitational flow.

At 2.13pm a resident stated that water was pumped 134 times from Stow the sewers and questioned why this happens so frequently?

The representative explained that Sturton by Stow is a gravitational system, and Stow will have higher pressure. He added that blockages or an overloaded system then there is an issue.

At 2.14 a member of the public joined the meeting.

A resident asked what maintenance systems are in place?

The Representative explained that AW use Dynamic Sewer Visualisation (DSV) monitors which alert AW when water levels rise. If the levels are rising on a dry day this indicates a potential partial blockage.

At 2.20pm a resident questioned the relief drain to alleviate the flooding from SBS and an outlet under the footpath of Ashfield and also the ditch.

A resident questioned that a previous Chairman of the PC was asked to have a meeting back in 2011 and £4000 was spent for the alleviation of a ditch at the back of his property pursuing the riparian rights. A map was also created of unidentified culverts within the Parish.

The representative highlighted that many of the ditches are down the maintenance of the land/homeowners as part of their riparian rights.

The Chairman highlighted that the PC has an agreement each year with the farmer to maintain the ditch that runs at the back of Old Rectory Gardens and The Glebe of which the Parish Council are responsible for.

AW representative stated that LCC have had a discussion about enforcement with the landowners and have spoken to the local flood authority. He suggested a document called 'Living on the edge' which is available from the EA which explains about what a riparian owner is, riparian rights and responsibilities. Clerk to share a link on the PC Website.

The representative explained that a riparian owner is someone that is on or adjacent to a watercourse that is not a main river.

LCC should be beable to help to advise and explore riparian ownership.

6. What is the purpose of Stow pumping station?

AW representative stated that the purpose of the Stow pumping station is to pump FW away from Stow to Sturton by Stow which then navigates into a gravitational flow. The pumping station will pump 10-15 litres a second through a 100mm pipe on a dry day, which is restricted by the capacity of the pump. Stow will back up first before Sturton by Stow

Cllr Turner from Stow PC stated that there is no backing up in Stow Village

AW representative Dan Heath confirmed there are 4 DSV monitors in that section of pipe. He was questioned by the Chairman as to whether this was an adequate amount of which he confirmed it was.

7. On route to the sewage treatment plant in SBS, is there a blockage between Tillbridge road and Stow? Has this been resolved.

AW representative confirmed that there were no current blockages on any AW assets in this area. Dan Heath updated the council that the pipework in Stow is being investigated and there are properties in Stow where the surface water goes into the Foul system. Surface water backs up at the Stow pumping station and backs up at the River Till.

Matt Moore stated that SBS is in a surface water catchment area. Surface water should go into a soakaway; however these are becoming useless.

Mitigation of holding tanks, rainwater plants would be beneficial, however we need to investigate to determine the the scale of the problem and what mitigation the local residents will tolerate.

He explained that there are no deadlines for investigations as reactive jobs that are logged take priority and proactive jobs get put to one side.

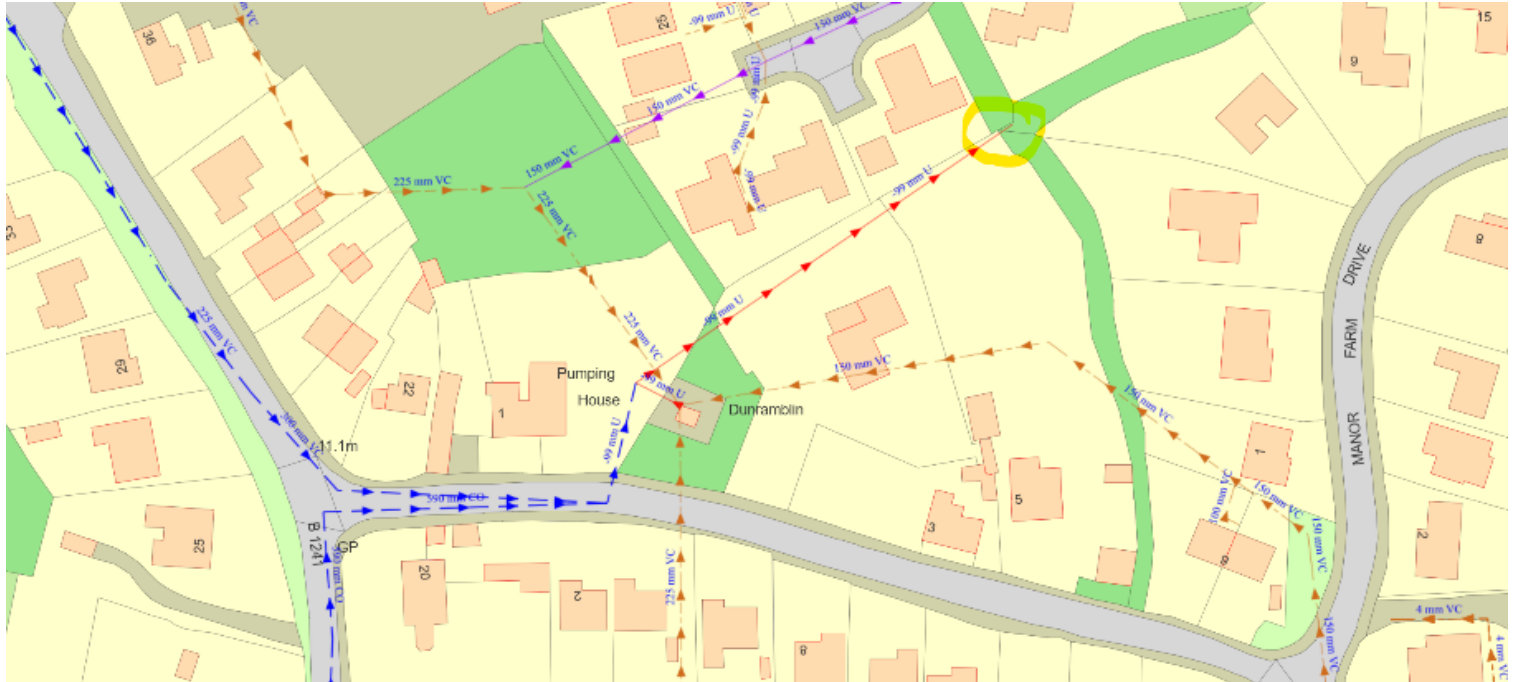
With impermeable driveways and an increase of new extensions we need to investigate how to deal with surface water infiltration. Small patches of work can help alleviate smaller remedial problems.

8. After investigations, what is the outcome of the survey on High Street done over the last two years. No feedback has been given from the PC.

AW representative stated that he was unaware and unsure on what type of survey was required. These questions could possibly be answered by Highways.

9. What is the long-term plan for removing surface water/sewage through the village? Current system is not able to cope. What work needs to be carried out to provide an infrastructure that is fit for purpose? How much will this cost? How will it be funded? How long will it take to complete the work? When will work begin?

AW representative stated that there are no current plans for removing surface water or sewage through the village. Our foul sewer pumping station does have a combined storm overflow. Whilst not ideal, it would surcharge into the watercourse and prevent flooding. The problem is that due to the level and often over-topping of the water course, it inhibits the storm overflow, as well as the discharge from our surface water network. If the watercourse level was lower, it would allow the excess surface water in our foul system to discharge via the CSO into the watercourse, along with the surface water network.



10. Who is our point of contact for each agency?

The representative confirmed that for Anglian Water, due to operational issues, shift rotas and annual leave we do not give out individual numbers. Your point of contact is always the 24/7 emergency helpline: 03457 145 145 or ring the call centre and ask for Dan Heath or Matt Moore.

You will have to reach out to other organisations to get theirs.

11. Flood wardens group. A request for getting a flood support/assistance group organised was muted once and never followed up by the PC. Why the apathy in getting this sorted? Is the local community going to have to take the lead on this as the PC don't seem interested.

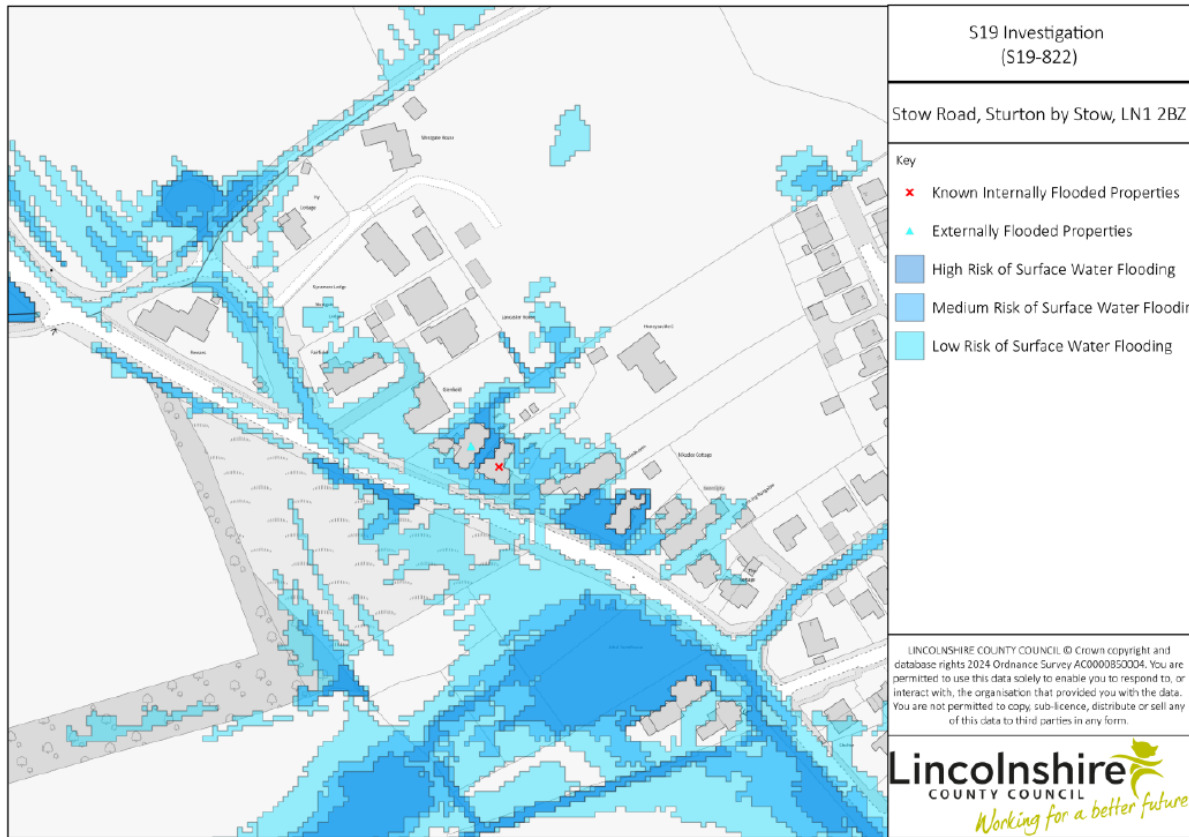
Flood response plan, are the PC going to revisit this? (closing roads/sand bags/contacting highways etc)

AW representative stated that a meeting did take place to discuss setting up a flood action group, but unsure where this got to.

12. What's changed over the last few years?? About 6 years ago, the whole village was cut off by floodwater after a storm. Our home (Rose Cottage) had no flooding, even on the driveway and certainly none in the house. Yet the high street, Stow park road and fleets road were impassable.

What has changed, been neglected, built that has caused such an impact on the residents of Stow road.

As per the EA flood maps, Sturton by Stow is at a medium to high risk of surface water flooding, due to the proximity of water courses, and the way the land sits. Nothing has been neglected or changed, this is unfortunately the current risk, and the impact of climate change:



13. Contents of an email from a resident on Ashfield:

We live at the bottom of Ashfield, by the footpath to Fleets Road. Although to date, we have not been impacted by flooding, we are in close proximity to the parish drain.

This drainage ditch which flows from the high street down the edge of the ridge and furrow grass field, in the direction of the river Till, backs up during heavy rainfall and floods the footpath and neighbouring gardens. By backing up, this stops the flood water draining from the high street.

Having lived in our present home since 1998, there has been a distinct lack of maintenance to this vital water course.

It has never been cleaned out, which with continuous build up of sediment and vegetation, it must surely affect the drainage efficiency of this ditch, thereby restricting the evacuation of flood water from the village to the fleets flood plain.

At a PC meeting that I attended following a flooding incident, it was announced that permission had been given by the land owner of the ridge and furrow field, to allow the digging out of this ditch and depositing of the spoil on his land. For whatever reason, this work was never carried out!

It is our opinion, that with the more extreme weather events we are experiencing, the digging out of this water course will help to alleviate some of the flooding issues in the centre of the village. Why hasn't this been addressed?

AW explained that this watercourse is a riparian asset, so it is down to the landowners of the land, or adjacent to the watercourse to carry out this work. Under the land drainage act, Lincolnshire County Council have the powers to enforce where appropriate. This has been discussed over many years with Lincolnshire County Council. I would suggest a conversation or meeting with Lincolnshire County Council to understand when riparian work is likely to take place, and if not, why enforcement has not been considered.

14. Honeysuckle cottage, stow road.

An inspection chamber was historically inspected/cleaned annually, it is no longer managed or maintained.

Why did this stop (approx. 7 years ago). Where the main sewer from stow road meets with the sewer running from Old Rectory Gardens, it causes a hydraulic effect, which makes the water back up and overwhelms the sewer system, causing flooding in the gardens which seems to be the main reason Rose cottage is flooding. What and when are you going to fix this?

AW representative explained that a scheme is being investigated to route the surface water from Rectory Gardens away from the foul sewer system, but this is still subject to further design, costing and funding approval.

15. Queensway residents want to know why gulleys/drains have not been cleaned for some 4 years.

Considering the regularity that these people suffer flooding, surely this should be done at least every 6 months.

AW representative stated that gulley cleansing is undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council Highways and not Anglian Water. Complex flooding mitigation is required; this will be most likely be actioned by minor works although this depends on the risks to other areas and will be looked at in due course. Dan can report back to the PC when minor works are booked in and when the cause has been identified.

At 2.43pm a resident highlighted that AW pays dividends. He had resided in the village since 1967 and in 1986 the sewage system was extended. He suggested that separating the systems would be a solution. He added that the pond was filled in at the junction. He suggested that by making the surface water go to a separate system you will alleviate the problem. He stated that climate change is used as an excuse and that the pipes have not been increased in all those years. With today's modern plastic pipes and machinery, it could be achieved if the money was put behind it. He stated that mitigating flooding problems should come first, and dividends should come second. Solutions cost money. We know the solution now where is the money. He stated extreme weather is more frequent. AW is profiting a solution and that all of the areas that flooded in 1967 still flood now. Just before privatisation the resident inspected the drains and they are the same now as they were then.

The AW representative confirmed that the systems are separate and additional pumping station may be a viable solution in 5-10 years.

If the IDB, EA AND LCC all pull money together it could be a viable to create an inland washland.

In the defence of AW, a £9.7 billion of investment of shareholders money is used for improvements. We will pay dividends to our shareholders and if we don't the only other option is to increase the bill payers' bills.

16. Are landowners keeping rainwater outlets and drainage ditches clear?

Who checks this? who enforces this?

AW representative stated that this forms part of the Land Drainage Act, and the responsibility for riparian enforcement sits with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (Lincolnshire County Council).

17. Why is planning permission being granted for extra housing without upgrading the main sewer and pumping station. Surely the regular flooding issues are dictating that this is now not fit for purpose.

AW representative reiterated that the main sewer and pumping station is fit for purpose, but we need to improve our permitted flow with EA.

Anglian Water is not a statutory consultee. We are consulted by the local planning authority on applications of greater than 10 properties we will be objecting to any further planning applications in Sturton By Stow. Whilst we can make comments in line with guidance from OFWAT (for example, our modelling on impact has to be done based on dry day flows), the local planning authority are not obliged to always take these comments into account. The re-enactment of Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management act 2010 is really important, as this will remove the developers automatic 'right to connect'. Whilst the government haven't announced when this will be re-enacted, they have agreed that it does need to happen. The National Planning Policy may re-enact it but at this moment they are refusing, ***Cllr Turner and Cllr Cook highlighted that both Paish Councils have refused applications numerous times due to flooding concerns, yet WLDC have let them pass.***

18. Are we too small an issue to have any chance of being listened to and our flooding problem sorted, or are you going to wait until a larger proportion of the village homes suffer from internal flooding? Anglian Water has raised £100m in investment capital, according to their annual report, to invest in infrastructure. So, it is really a question of establishing where we are on their list of priorities?

Anglian Water's immediate priorities are based around our highest spilling catchment areas across our region (Those that cause most impact on the environment in terms of spills).

Currently, Sturton by Stow is not included in our immediate priorities.

£100 million was raised to deal with dry day spills 'pollution'. Water bodies are being impacted during wet weather and causes of the spills.

Every Community Matters. We need to know the full history of the area; this emphasises the importance of reporting to collect true data. We will try to mitigate property level protection.

A resident asked, 'how can we stop the water coming inside?'

AW representative stated that the scheme of mitigation will be property by property

19. If the funding is not currently available to carry out the necessary upgrade, what can be done to improve matters in the short term within budget?

A resident claimed that flooding should be treated with more importance as it ruins lives, properties and disrupts daily life; it was highlighted that the middle of the village is impassable when there has been a flood and this impacts on residents commuting to work and the school.

The AW representative stated that reducing spills: sewage into the sea' or surface water this is seen as more important than flooding as the risk of flooding is a smaller number to the number of spills being experienced. Spills can wipe out fish stocks and pumping sewage is a huge environment issue no matter how diluted.

At 3.03pm a resident highlighted that AW was fined £234,000 for spills in the last year.

AW Representative replied that lessons have been learned. The CSO levels of E coli in the spills are less than what is already in the water. He noted that Queensway, High Street, Fleets Road and Church Lane in Stow are the main areas which are frequently affected by flooding. Schemes that could be looked are a low-level investment.

The resident interjected saying that upsizing and increasing manholes and installing a non-return valve would help to solve the problem

AW representative explained that non return valves would just pass the problem on. Flooding damages the roads and cross funding with other agencies could help. Any mitigation put forwards needs to be modelled to prove that it works before investing. Drain maintenance is Highways responsibility. In SBS there are many causes that exacerbate and cause the flooding. He highted conversations need to be restarted between the IDB, WLDC, EA, LCC, AW and Flood Resilience Authority so they can work together.

Lincolnshire County Council have worked over the past few years in trying to engage the community to create a flood action group. I was involved in a meeting around 2 years ago with LCC and members of the community, but unsure where this ended up. We also took part in a community event at the village hall, alongside the National Flood Forum. There have been grants offered by government, administered by Lincolnshire County Council to look at part-funding property flood resilience. Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant, which is a government scheme administered by local authorities. This grant, which can offer up to £5,000, is intended to help homeowners and businesses in eligible areas recover from flooding and become more resilient by funding property improvements. It has not been heavily advertised, you should contact your local authority to find out if you are eligible and to apply.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/grants-funding/apply-property-flood-resilience-grant/3>

20. After the floods of 2007 it was identified after many meetings with the relevant authorities that Anglian water agreed the system was inadequate and further investment would be required for substantial upgrades to the sewage and water drainage system to cope with the increased demands of new housing etc. is the investment planned and what are the timescales?

AW representative stated that the flooding of 2007 was widely accepted to be extreme. The management of surface water in a catchment is the responsibility of a number of risk management authorities including Lincolnshire County Council, the internal drainage board and the Environment Agency.

Many meetings have taken place but as of, yet no scheme has been identified which would mean should 2007 happen again, flooding wouldn't occur. This isn't as simple as just upsizing assets or building new assets. The management of surface water requires is complex and is often influenced by flooding and rainfall in other areas of the county. The funding mechanism for this sort of work is also based on number of properties protected from internal flooding, and in a rural village like Sturton by Stow, making the figures add up will always be difficult.

He noted a huge investment of a storm tank positioned in a village in North Lincolnshire in 2014 and explained that with the extreme weather of last year and an increase in houses it was not big enough to cope. AW could spend a lower level of investment of £5,000 on upsizing assets and moving surface water away from the foul water that would help mitigate.

A resident stated that building bigger means increasing sizes.

The AW representative explained that we have the get the re-modelling right with the climate change and increasing rain etc.

A Councillor stated that the headland water running off farmland impacts the road and exacerbates the flooding. He questioned who has the power to ask landowners to create attenuation schemes in their fields?

AW Representative stated that as part of the Land Drainage Act, it is the responsibility of the landowner to keep the water of the road. The farmers need to keep a hold of the water where they need it. There is new idea to approach farmers for initiatives to hold water, with the drought we have seen it is important to keep and hold the water for when it is needed.
As a society we need to hold and manage water; an initiative is being trialled in Norfolk.

A resident highlighted that this is a gravitational effect and if one resident cleaned and widened his ditch the water passes through and will be restricted elsewhere. He suggested developing a swale or multiple swales; a low part is where the water can come together. He said there was a tri-part agreement between Sir Edward Leigh, AW and the 'Council' to pay to increase the pipes. Together they had identified a way to deal with floodwater by increasing the diameter of the pipes. The agreement fell apart because of Highways. He further questioned how difficult would it be for the bodies to lay a 100m length pipe and to increase the diameter so that it could hold more water?

At 3.20pm two members of the public left.

AW representative explained that natural flood management is needed to hold the water upstream and integrated flood management would help to store the water.
The Humber Wash at Boston is at the mercy of the North Sea.

A resident added that a method of attack could be to have holding pens rather than the diameter of the pipe. It is better to have the fields flood than houses.

A resident reiterated that the bigger point is that it is not just AW. All the agencies need to meet up and questioned why they were not part of this meeting.

The Chairman stated that originally the Parish Council were considering a multi-agency meeting. However, information and advice shared from other parish councils was that agencies tended to be running scared refrained from attending multi-agency public meeting as most of these meetings had experienced chaos and finger pointing. He stated that this fact-finding meeting with AW has been informative, positive and polite, and the PC has gained information to action the next steps of contacting other agencies.

The Parish Council will initially meet and have private conversations with the agencies and endeavour arrange another public meeting.

AW representative said that he would welcome a multi-agency meeting and stated that AW has good relationships with representatives of the other agencies. Going forward he suggested a meeting with Matt Harrison- Head of Flood Risk Lead for LCC. He identified that the three main points to put forward would be to consider Climate Change, Manage Water and separating foul water from surface water; he suggested that we should question WLDC about the relief drainage around the village, and whether it had been implemented.

The Chairman, Cllr. Cook, re-stated that it had been the considered judgement of the parish council that greater detail could be discussed less confrontationally if the open meetings were carried out with individual responsible authorities. One resident expressed the view that finding answers quickly was of greater importance to some present.

A member of the public joined the meeting at 3.35pm
Two members of the public left the meeting

AW representative sought to conclude the meeting by informing the residents and PC that he is happy to take the lead on behalf of his colleagues with supporting the flooding concerns in the Parish. His focus

will be the victims of the flooding and the houses affected to help develop low investment mitigation. He will liaise with other agencies and further and regroup with his contacts.

The Chairman thanked the representatives, councillors and residents for attending the meeting and stated that answers have been supplied and good conversations had to raise further awareness of next steps to tackle.

The meeting ended at 3.45pm