



Possible flooding in the SMB and Stoke area – message from St Mary Bourne Parish Council's Flood and Emergency Group (FEG)

Currently the river looks fine, however there are probable flooding risks going forward that residents should be aware of.

Official notification about the situation is made by the Environment Agency, available on various websites such as <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/target-area/065FWF3002>

They predict flooding risks throughout the valley.

This note from the Parish Council, prepared by the Flood Emergency Group (FEG), adds some detail based on its years of reacting to this event, whose frequency appears to be increasing.

We will typically see four issues:

1. As the Ground Water (GW) rises to actual ground level, then absorption will be inhibited, soakaways will cease to function and large non draining puddles will form. If these are in the road there have been some issues caused by motorists proceeding quickly through the villages causing spray problems for pedestrians and roadside properties.
2. The rising GW will also gather in gardens, cellars and ground floor rooms for those properties at or near the base of the valley. Pumping these out can be an issue since there is nowhere for the water to flow. Additional springs will break through in gardens and hedgerows. Some of these will create running streams in the road (see issue 1 above on spray). This is also problematic if your house is below road level.
3. The river will continue to rise as the numerous springs break through. Over the years parts of the riverbed have been narrowed and banked up as houses have been built. Elsewhere there is very little riverbank. In various locations along the Bourne Valley the river can flow over its bank and flood some of the surrounding land. Again, this water often ends up in the road.

Individual properties should be able to assess their own level of risk on points such as next to the river or in the low part of the valley but if in any doubt a member of the FEG is available to discuss what has happened in their locality over the last 40 years or so. Please contact the Parish Clerk via email on clerk@stmarybourne-pc.gov.uk and provide a contact telephone number and a FEG Member will call you.

4. Sewage problems. These have been ongoing for years, all caused by ground water infiltration to the sewers as the levels rise. Over this last year Southern

Water have been undertaking a planned series of works both identifying points of leakage and plugging them. They have also installed a number of over-pumping solutions. This work has had some benefits, the GW effects we are now seeing are less severe than previous years at the current recorded GW level. This remedial work has now effectively come to a halt as the GW is too high and SW's efforts will change to prevention of overflows and other issues such as failing systems at properties.

The FEG hold regular meetings with SW on the progress of those tasks registered on their schedules.

Based on previous years two issues are likely to occur.

1. The most important issue is for the houses in the bottom of the valley on the main sewer which may encounter sewage discharge issues with their toilets not clearing typically because the main sewer is full.

The householder should report this to Southern Water on the help line

Tel: 0330 303 0368 and obtain an Incident Number. This will log the issue and its ongoing fix into the SW system.

If the householder then emails this Incident Number to the Parish Clerk on clerk@stmarybourne-pc.gov.uk the FEG can progress it on their regular update meetings with SW. This also enables the FEG to track SW's overall performance going forward.

2. The second issue that has occurred in previous years is that some SW manholes in the main sewage line, typically in the road will overflow and leak sewage into the road. Again, these should be reported to SW and the Incident Number forwarded to the FEG (as above). These issues often need follow up to deal with cleaning the surrounding area and possible river pollution when the river is in the road (see above points)