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**Committees Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Item 9a** - To receive an update on the recent watercourse surveys and to consider any mitigation to allieviate flooding.

**Background** – Various discussions have been had with Beyton Parish Council around flooding in Beyton Road and representatives from Beyton PC have attended an Emergency Planning Committee meeting to clarify what they are looking for regarding help from Thurston Parish Council. Initially Graham Jones, Beyton PC Chairman suggested *“We would like you to take ownership or at least help BPC to clear the watercourse from the A14 Culvert to prevent water backing up into Beyton. The key concern is through the Field of Dreams and beyond.”*

Beyton Parish Council have confirmed the investigations and work they have already carried out.

- Assets Manager for Suffolk County Council Highways had confirmed that they would clear the length of ditch from Beyton Green to the A14 flyover in the autumn.
- The A14 culvert was the responsibility of National Highways and had been maintained in 2021 however had now silted up again, National Highways have now confirmed that they will not clear this again until downstream blocking is solved.
- The length between the A14 and Church Road will be cleared by the landowner once the crop is harvested.
- The culvert under Church Road is SCC Highways responsibility and no agreement has been forthcoming to clear this.

Beyton Parish Council are now seeking financial help from Thurston Parish Council to clear the waterway from the Church Road culvert through to the culvert under Pepper Lane. This length of waterway passes over land at Dream Care Farm (formally Field of Dreams) and a verbal quote has been received by Beyton Parish Council to clear this part of the waterway at a cost of £3050.00. Although sympathetic to the issues of flooding in Beyton, members of the Emergency Planning Committee had concerns that any work to clear the waterway and increase the flow of water towards Thurston may have a detrimental effect on Thurston residents especially at the low points in Church Road that already experience flooding at high rainfall events.

Professional advice has been sought from Suffolk County Council Local Lead Flood Authority for guidance and help and a meeting on site with Jason Skilton, SCC Flood & Water Engineer has taken place. Jason has recommended that both Beyton and Thurston Parish Councils ensure maintenance of the watercourse through their villages suggesting that Thurston survey the watercourse that runs through the parish and note any blockages, obstructions or lack of maintenance. Jason did confirm that all landowners were responsible for ensuring that water flowed over their land and that as long as they only cleared the vegetation and removed any silt build up they would have no liability for any changes in water flow further downstream. If water then accumulated downstream, it would be those landowners’ responsibility to keep it flowing on through.

Beyton Parish Council have been asked to provide a written quote for the £3050.00 and information on exactly what is to be carried out together with a further two quotes for comparison. To date a short email confirmation has been received from a contractor and no additional quotes with no clarification on the level of contribution expected.

*“To beyton parish council  
here is my quotation to carry out works at field of dreams, to clear scrub and dig out the main water course ,check levels deepen and widen where required .  
for the sum of £3050.00 plus vat.”*

There are also concerns around the wording of this quote, “dig out” and “deepen and widen” Jason Skilton was clear that only vegetation clearance and silt removal would keep us clear of any liability for others downstream therefore no recommendation is being made to council to support Beyton PC with this expenditure at this time.

It is understood that Beyton PC have engaged an independent flood engineer, Council were asked by BPC to also contribute to the cost of this and to attend the meeting with the engineer however no actual costs have been forwarded and therefore the invitation to attend was declined.

Members of the Emergency Planning Committee have carried out a walk of the watercourse from Dream Care Farm through to the Vistry site to survey and record where issues may arise. A full report of these walks is available as a separate document. A further walk is planned next week for the remaining length to the Pakenham boundary at Nether Hall.

**Going forward** – All landowners will be encouraged to carry out their riparian duties and ensure the water is able to flow freely across their land.

A further walk and survey is planned for later in the year when water levels are at a high to ensure all mitigation measures carried out by landowners have improved the flow and not caused any additional flooding.