Clarborough & Welham Flooding

The following and attached documents were triggered by receipt of Bassetlaw D.C.'s ***Clarborough/Hayton Future Development Questionnaire*** in mid-January, 2011. Entries in red are observations by Richard Schofield, Planning Policy & Conservation Manager at Bassetlaw District Council.

1. The map attached to the above questionnaire is inscribed ***Crown Copyright 2010 Bassetlaw District Council***.
2. It has a colour-coded Key headed with **Areas at Risk from Flooding**. Although a large area to the north-west of Clarborough-Hayton is so marked, no areas within the village envelope are so marked.
3. Detailed e-mail correspondence with Richard Schofield, Planning Policy & Conservation Manager, Bassetlaw District Council, established that the above map referred only to fluvial (river) flooding, not surface run-off that has affected Clarborough in particular through at least the 20th Century.
4. Clarborough School Log Books for 1871-1987 (now held by Notts C.C.) have been searched for records of flooding events. For the 20th century Head Teachers recorded flooding in 1912 (26 August), 1927 (22 December), 1932 (23 May), 1947 (18 March), 1958 (2 July) and 1973 (16 July). Records from 1987 onwards were not available for scrutiny.
5. The above revelation begs a number of questions:

a. Why does the 2010 map not record the most recent flooding event of July, 2007?

b. Was the flooding event of 2007 excluded by design or oversight? This is an important point since anecdotal evidence indicates that several individuals who completed the Development Questionnaire had forgotten 2007's flooding which might have modified their responses. Some respondents would also have moved into the area since 2007 and would likewise been unaware of flooding issues.

The issue of past flooding has been raised in a number of the questionnaires that have been returned to us and we have had no contact from individuals wishing to amend or retract their comments.

6. With such a long and regular history of flooding in Clarborough it would seem prudent to take stock of likely changes to the risks caused by very recent developments. The most important would appear to be redevelopment of the Clarborough Primary School site. Opened in September 2008, development of the new school building and grounds required significant modification in the light of 2007's flooding; the building was raised significantly and work to re-contour the surrounding grounds to channel flood waters away from the building carried out. It is an established fact that as building developments take place in any area, issues of surface water run off increase, but the effect of removing what was until 2008 a significant overflow area – the school site – from the water management facility of the area requires significant investigation.

This is something for the County Council to address.

7. Closer inspection of the geography of the area that was flooded in 2007 together with the school site reconfiguration described above, could well mean that water previously 'stored' on the school site during flash flooding would now be channelled further along the dike alongside St.Johns Drive. Inspection of that area shows that

should that dike overflow, as it did below the school site, then much of the rest of St.Johns Drive and probably also Southview Drive and Broad Gores which lies at a lower level, would also experience flooding. The right-angled 'elbow' in the same dike where it leaves Little Lane to run alongside St.Johns Drive is another key point where a flash flood might overflow.

This is something for the County Council to address.

8. In past flooding events, the lack of regular cleaning of the drainage channels through Clarborough have been of local concern – the system appears to be unable to respond to flash flooding events which are likely to be more frequent in future because of both climate change and also increased land development which increases run off per se. A cursory examination of the dike alongside Little Lane just yesterday shows a large piece of tree/shrubbery actually in the dike near the school entrance and I personally saw local residents throwing garden waste into the same dike in the Celery Meadows area during summer 2010. Other residents have complained over many years of the amount of refuse/garden waste being washed down Howbeck Lane during heavy rain. All of this blocks an already overstretched network. Blockages like these are a fact of life and need to be taken into account.

Responsibilities for the maintenance of watercourses are clearly outlined in the Environment Agency (EA) document *Living on the Edge* and the District Council document *Land Drainage, Watercourses & Flooding*. Copies of these have been left with the Parish Council and the EA document may be found at:

http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0407BMFL-e-e.pdf

It should also be noted that a major trash screen was installed by the District Council at the Celery Meadows culvert. It is regularly inspected and cleared by the Council, as is Clarborough Beck. This was highlighted at a recent Parish Council meeting by Ian Davies (of the Council's Engineering team) and is part of the District Council's ongoing work to mitigate flood risk in Clarborough.

Notwithstanding the above, local residents will, clearly, need to make sure that they are not causing blockages as a result of the actions to which you refer.

9. Without extensive expansion or reconfiguration of the water run-off network it would seem unwise in the extreme to contemplate any further housing (or other) developments in Clarborough until such time as water run-off management is much more robust.

As noted previously, the Council is well aware of surface water drainage issues in Clarborough. Our Engineering team has undertaken considerable work to get us to the stage where the Council can bid for funds from the Environment Agency to undertake works to mitigate these issues (as we have done already in Wheatley). Furthermore, new planning policy includes Clarborough/Hayton as one of the settlements where any proposals for new development (other than minor extensions) will be required to demonstrate that they will not exacerbate existing surface water drainage issues. We believe this to be a pragmatic approach to the issue as, clearly, there are both design and engineering solutions to enable new development to take place with little or no impact on drainage. Even so, the existing conditions in Clarborough will be a significant consideration when it comes to considering possible future housing allocations.

Greg Herdman (7 Mar 2011)