

DRAINAGE ISSUES IN SWAVESY REPORT 2018

Although Swavesey Parish Council has no drainage under its control drainage is on the agenda at every monthly meeting. This is because Swavesey is in a vulnerable situation, being in a bowl with many varied pressures.

Amongst which:

Surface water drainage

We have water draining from higher grounds at Bar Hill, Lolworth, Boxworth, Conington and Longstanton as it makes its way towards the River Ouse. To facilitate this Swavesey is protected by a system of embankments and a sluice door known as Webb's Hole which is situated at Overcote. If this system is not well maintained, it is estimated by the Environment Agency that many properties could be at risk of flooding.

Treated sewerage water

Swavesey is also affected by outfall from Uttons Drove Sewerage Treatment Works (situated alongside the A14 just past Herbies Diner). This effluent then flows through Swavesey. These works were originally constructed solely to cater for Bar Hill's sewerage. Now however they serve several villages from as far away as Toft and Dry Drayton. At the planning stages of Cambourne, Anglian Water (the sewerage authority) South Cambs District Council and the Environment Agency, along with developers, decided without consultation with Swavesey that the sewerage water from Cambourne should also be discharged into Swavesey via this system. As the system was already at capacity and already giving cause for concern, the Parish Council and the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board strongly objected to this increase in water.

Despite this, the organisations mentioned above decided that the effluent from Cambourne would flow through this system.

Finally, in the planning stages of Northstowe it was decided that Northstowe, despite our many objections, should be added to this system, giving in all a sevenfold increase in discharge from Uttons Drove works into our Swavesey drainage system.

After many years of arguments and wrangling it was agreed that a scheme which involved restoration of banks; widening of drains within Swavesey and a pump to put this extra water into the river when the doors are shut at Webb's Hole would be put into place.

The good news is the pump is in situ., some widening of drains has been done.

The bad news is that one important section of bank at Mare Fen, which is in a very poor state, was not done. This was due to the Environment Agency mismanaging works and running out of money. We have been battling to resolve this.

Riverbank and Drainbank heights

The other problem we had is that the embankments alongside Covell's Drain and the river have settled to below their design level. A combined study undertaken by the Environment Agency and South Cambs District Council concluded that property at risk would be significantly reduced if the banks were restored.

The good news is that South Cambs has restored the Covell's Drain banks.

The bad news is that The Environment Agency has constantly prevaricated and we continue to fight for their work to be done.

We continue to push for meaningful ongoing maintenance of the drainage system.

We have appreciated the support of a unified Parish Council, Swavesey Internal Drainage Board and help from Heidi Allen our MP.

Whilst this situation continues parts of the village are unnecessarily at risk from flooding.