

Storm 'Babet' flooding – Friday 20 October 2023

As a result of heavy rainfall from Storm 'Babet' Barton under Needwood was subject to widespread local flooding on Friday.



Fortunately on this occasion, as far as we are aware, no one has suffered internal flooding, unlike neighbouring Yoxall where many properties were affected when the River Swarbourn broke its banks.

What is your Parish Council doing?

We are not complacent about flooding which we have seen first-hand and we know is devastating for those whose homes are affected.

We helped to set up the Barton Flood Forum which works with the Environment Agency (EA), local authorities and Severn Trent to coordinate works to reduce the risk of flooding. We have had some successes, for example, following our suggestions for highways drainage improvements, properties which used to be flooded from the Knoll Brook on upper Main Street are no longer suffering regular flooding. Following negotiations with Barton PC Bellway are in the process of replacing a pipe crossing that restricts flow in the Full Brook with a timber bridge and this will improve flow and reduce flood risk to Mill Lane and Mill Crescent. Work on this should be complete by the end of October.

The EA have installed a water level gauge in the Barton Brook upstream of Efflinch Lane to gather data about flows in the Brook to use to improve their understanding of how the Brook reacts in real time to different amounts and intensity of rainfall on the land to the west of the village. We are hoping to link this real time data to local rainfall recording to try to predict when Brook levels may become very high and to give a local flood alert to properties that may be affected.

Following the February 2020 flood Barton PC worked with East Staffs Borough Council to encourage properties that were affected then to apply for grants to install Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures such as flood barriers to keep flood water out of homes.

We worked with Severn Trent to get the sewer on Mill Lane put onto an enhanced maintenance programme to try to deal with sewer flooding to properties and Severn Trent ran a leafleting exercise to encourage residents not to put fats, oil or grease down sinks and to not flush wet wipes down the toilet.

We have sourced money from the EA and Staffs County Council to pay for de-silting the Full Brook alongside Mill Lane to keep the flow and flood capacity on this section as high as it can be.

We have worked with Staffs County Highways and local farmers to keep critical ditches and culverts clear to prevent surface water ponding on the road along the bottom end of Efflinch Lane; and other community volunteers have been out keeping gullies and culverts clear also, for which we are very grateful.

We have also worked with our County Councillor who has allocated some additional funding to deal with blocked gullies in the village and we have supplied her with a priority list of locations taking into account feedback from residents.

What is the Environment Agency doing?

The Barton Brook is a tributary of the River Trent and due to the flood risk to properties in the village is designated 'Main River', which means that the EA can promote a scheme to reduce flood risk using Government funding.

Long term, reducing the flood risk in Barton means keeping the Brook clear of snags so it runs well through the village; but also trying to slow the flow upstream of the village to knock the peak off any flood flow that does come down.

The EA is investigating the feasibility of a civil engineering solution (most likely a flood embankment and flow control to the west of the village) but the anticipated cost – more than £1.5M depending on the detailed options - far exceeded the available finance – about £350,000 - and continues to be a significant challenge to the feasibility of the solution.

In an effort to find another way round the problem the Environment Agency and the Trent Rivers Trust have been working with local landowners to identify a variety of methods to slow the rate at which rainfall running off the land gets into ditches and watercourses.



This can involve putting in changes to farming methods alongside watercourses, looking for places to put in small ponds, or using brushwood to create 'leaky dams' that partially hold high flows back and prevent the sudden peaks in flow that cause the flooding in the village.

Together these are all called 'Natural Flood Management' techniques, or 'NFM' for short.

The necessary surveys and negotiations with landowners needed to obtain permission for the installation of NFM measures are ongoing.

What you can do:

With your help we can do more:

1. **Give us information** - If you were affected by any flooding on Friday 20 October please report it to us either by email, phone or visiting our office at the Village Hall. If you have evidence in the form of videos or photographs that will be very helpful. Please send them to our Parish Clerk at clerk@bartonunderneedwood-pc.gov.uk.
2. **Get 'hands on'** - Following the success of the Brook Working Party held in September 2020 we are intending to organise another watercourse clearing day; probably Saturday 4 November. If you are willing to come along and help please let us know by emailing your details to our Parish Clerk at

clerk@bartonunderneedwood-pc.gov.uk and we will get in touch with you. A lot of the heavy work was done in 2020 so this visit will mostly be just cutting back brambles and any regrowth of small saplings and removing any rubbish that might float down and form snags or block culverts.

3. **Report blocked road gullies** - If you see a blocked gulley or flooding of the highway you can report it online directly to Staffordshire County Council Highway on their dedicated site at [Report a fault online - Staffordshire County Council](#)
4. **Report sewer overflows** – If you have seen a problem with sewers backing up, either on your property or elsewhere, e.g. on a road, please report it to [Severn Trent Sewer pipe responsibility | Looking after your sewers | Waste water | My Supply | Severn Trent Water \(stwater.co.uk\)](#) and let Barton PC know too by emailing our Parish Clerk so we are aware what has been reported to them.
5. **Don't throw waste in the Brook** - If you live next to the Barton Brook or Full Brook (or any other watercourse) please don't tip garden waste or anything else into it. If that material is taken downstream by high water levels then that could cause blockages and other people's property to flood. Please dispose of garden waste in your brown bin or take it to the Waste Recycling centre in Burton.

We will continue to report on what progress the Environment Agency is making on Natural Flood Management on the Barton Brook but you need to be aware that Barton Parish Council has no powers to compel any landowner to take part in a scheme.

Barton under Needwood Parish Council
24 October 2023