

Needham Market Flood Group Minutes 14.05.2024

Green Room, Community Centre, 7.30pm.

Present

John Reardon, Amanda Reardon, Bob Wilden, Gordon Crosby, Terry Lawrence, Andrew France, Sarah France.

Apologies

Jeanette Thomas

Elect a Chair

No-one able to take on the role at this time.

Elect a Secretary

Amanda Reardon (until such time as another can be elected).

Other roles needed?

The committee is small. Our capacity is limited. We need to grow the committee so that it has potential to have the impact that Needham Market residents may expect from the group.

Naming the Group

It was agreed that the group would be named: Needham Market Flood Group.

Context

- There is a history of flooding in some areas of Needham Market.
- On 20.10.2023 there was significant flooding to several areas of the town on a scale not previously experienced and in areas of town previously unaffected. A significant number of homes and businesses were internally flooded.
- Overnight on 04.01.2024 and into 05.01.2024 there was again significant flooding, not quite as extensive as in October 2023 but many homes and businesses were affected.
- In between October 2023 and January 2024, there were some incidents of flooding on a smaller scale.
- On 06.02.2024 a public meeting was convened and 117 residents and interested parties attended. Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency were in attendance and spoke about: their perspectives regarding the October flooding; the Section 19 investigation in progress; what resident expectations could be; grants available. Residents were able to raise questions. The meeting was filmed and the Town Council hold that footage.
- On 23.03.2024 a public meeting was convened and 37 residents and interested parties attended. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the process of setting up a resident led flood group and to ascertain interest. Attendees were asked to leave contact details if they wanted to be part of a leading committee and/or part of a wider flood group.
- This meeting is the first of residents willing to form the committee.

Aims for the Group

The following were agreed as aims in the short term:

- To identify what the group is and is not so that resident expectations are managed.
- To identify all watercourses in Needham Market and who is responsible for each.
- To map the watercourses and record the issues for each.
- To encourage representation on the committee from businesses, e.g. from Lion Barn?
- To grow the committee and identify a Chair.
- To identify Risk Management Authorities and the direct contacts for each.
- To request involvement in the Section 19 SCC investigation.
- To communicate the group's existence to all stakeholders.
- To identify whether a membership structure is needed for the group.
- To decide whether a social media profile is needed and if so, what parameters would be put in place.
- To make links with other Flood Groups to share knowledge and experience.

The following were agreed as medium term aims:

- To determine the level to which the watercourses are being maintained.
- To determine the level to which other infrastructure is effective.
- To raise awareness of flood risk in town.
- To respond to the Section 19 Flood Investigation report once published.
- To gather potential solutions to specific issues.
- To publish signposting details for residents re information, RMAs and sources of support.
- To publish advice for residents for action/support in the event of a flood.

Longer term aims could be:

- To identify to what degree the group can engage support from RMAs.
- To work with developers working in town regarding their responsibilities, including attenuation.
- To produce advice on resident dos and don'ts to manage flood risk.
- To work with landowners on potential flood mitigation projects.
- To liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the flood monitoring and alert scheme which they are modifying.

Practicalities

- An email address will be set up.
- Minutes will be posted on a dedicated page of the Town Council website.
- The Town Council have agreed to pay for room hire for the group's meetings.
- A WhatsApp group for the committee will be set up to aid quick communication.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th June at 7.00pm
Green Room, Community Centre