



BRAMFIELD AND THORINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Bramfield Floods 2023

The storm season of 2023 has already occasioned two significant floods in the centre of Bramfield, causing damage to a number of properties with obvious concerns for the remainder of the winter season 2023-2024.

The physical geography of Bramfield means that the village is centred in a bowl with many of the immediate fields of the village envelope being designated water meadows and the village water courses being recognised by the environment agency as a category three flood risk. (Appendix 1 & 2)

Appendices 1 and 2 show where the Environment Agency feels that the greatest flood risks occur. The experiences of the villagers over many years are that these maps do not give a complete picture of conditions of the roads within Bramfield. The recent floods of 2023 as a result of Storm Babette and Storm Ciaran caused significant worry, and indeed as a result of climate change are no longer considered to be neither a once in 30-year occurrence nor once in a 100-year occurrence. Flooding as predicted as a once in 30-year and once in 100-year event can also be seen in the attached maps.

Also attached to this document are photographs taken along Bridge Street during the aforementioned storms this year. These resulted in flood water entering at least four properties in this location and covering a wider area than suggested by the attached maps. The Gull, which is the focus of the Environmental Agency, coped reasonably well, full and fast flowing as can be seen in photographs: C, D, K and L. On both occasions the Gull came close to flooding but did hold. In photographs 1b and 1d, taken after the floods receded it is possible to see brick buttresses, that supported a garden wall just off the A144, that have been swept away by the power of the flood. The water that swept down Bridge Street and Pitman's Grove came from the fields on the Thorington side of Bramfield. The debris and runoff from the fields came at such volume that the culverts that are supposed to feed the Gull, rapidly proved to be inadequate and as a result at the junction of Pitman's Grove and Bridge Street it became a raging torrent. This can be seen particularly in photograph L. During Storm Ciaran it was necessary to shut the Primary School on Health and Safety grounds due to both the volume and the speed of the flood water. Bridge Cottage (Photograph I) particularly suffered as a result. The actions of one of the neighbours, who owns a small mechanical digger, and was able to cut into the verge to allow the water to enter the culverts prevented even worse damage.

Whilst Bridge Street/ Pitman's Grove caused great consternation, the chaos caused during the two storms on the A144 should also be considered. The two major floods here were centred

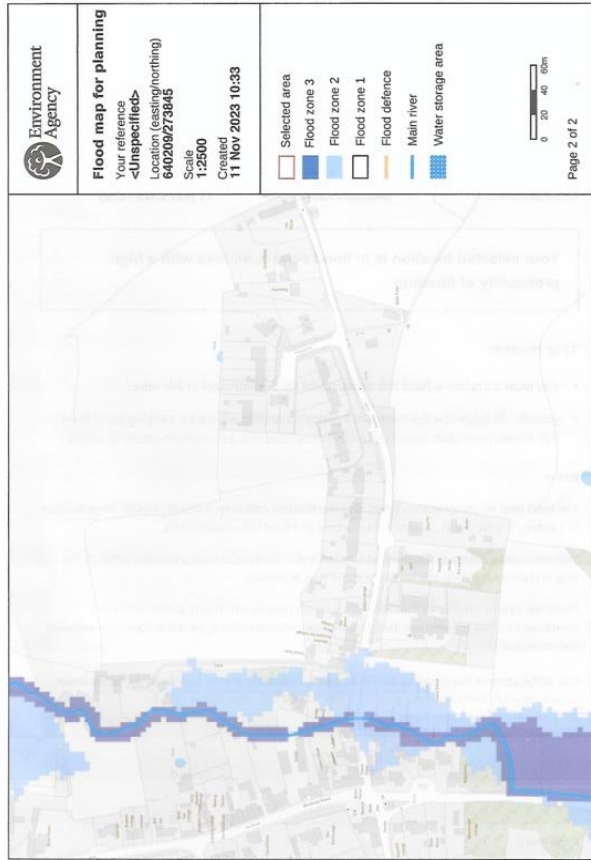
around the entrance to Bramfield Hall and also the junction close to Edwards Lane and the Low Road. There were also considerable volumes of water outside Bramfield Garage and The Old Vicarage. During Storm Babette the volume of water on the A144 made driving extremely hazardous as well as the swell caused by vehicles driving through, causing difficulties for properties adjacent to the road. Had the storm gone on any longer, then this main route was at risk of closure due to the floods. The main casualty here was the Lodge House of Bramfield Hall, which has had to be evacuated with considerable damage caused to the property.

Actions to be considered:

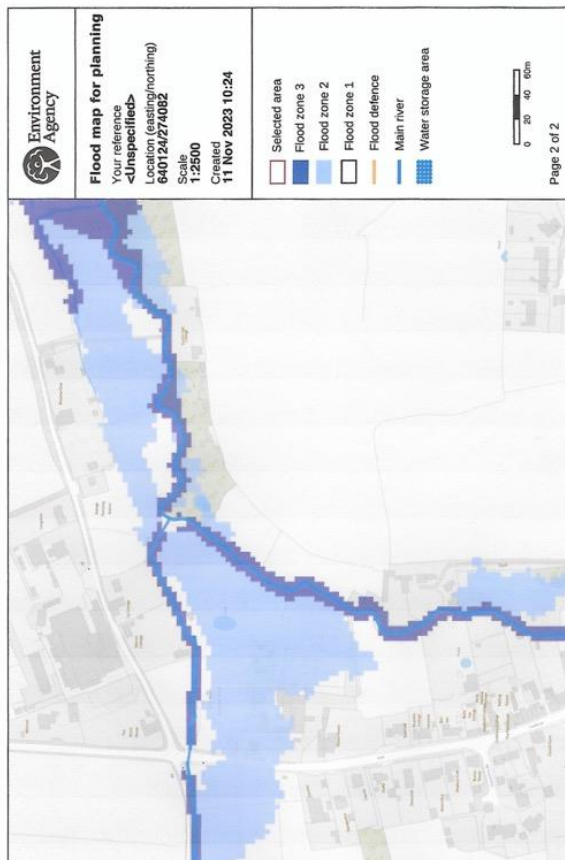
As has been previously stated these floods are becoming an increasing occurrence due to environmental change. Whilst this has to be accepted, along with the risk factors outlined by the Environment Agency, there are things that Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council and the residents of the village would like to see done in order to mitigate these events. Failure to do so could result in legal advice being sought by the residents due to the damage being caused to their properties.

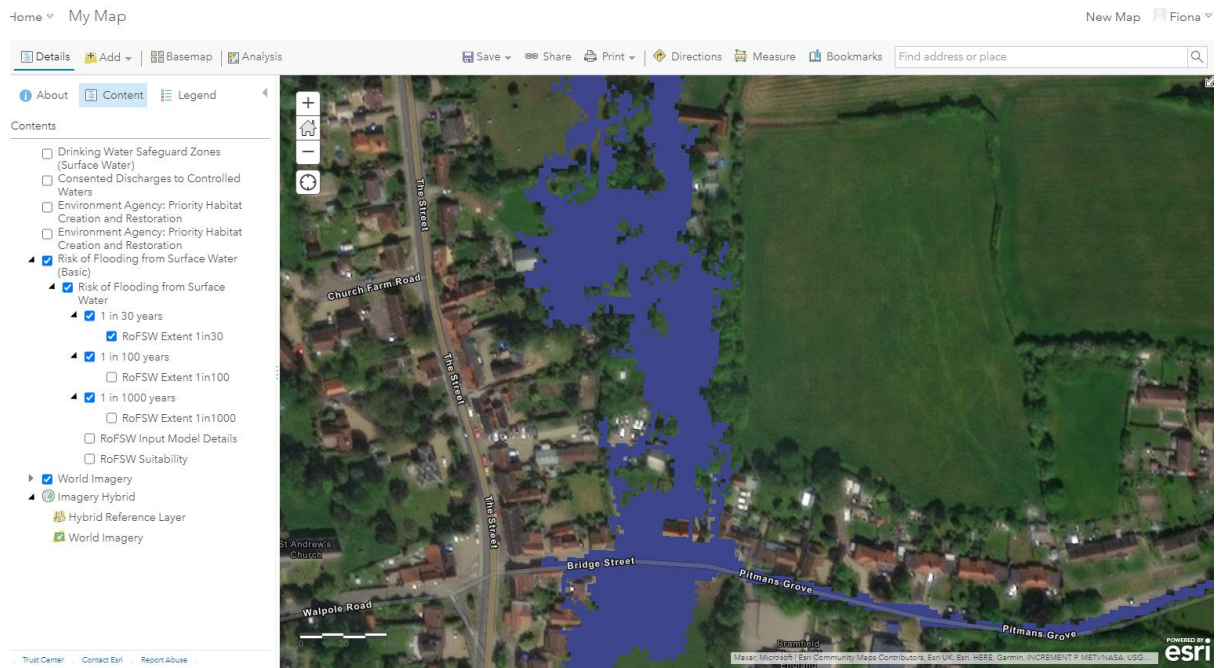
1. More regular maintenance of the culverts that can be seen in photographs 1a, 1d, 1e, 1f, and 1g. In particular the culvert outside numbers 3-5 Pitman's Grove would appear to be completely blocked, an issue not picked up by Suffolk Highways, causing water to be diverted into the road. Maintenance has been carried out recently but has not identified any issues known to the Parish Council and has obviously led to the current difficulties. This is despite an email from a local resident reporting the recent floods, that states that no further action needs to be take and that they are 'monitoring' the situation. Whilst accepting the matrices used by highways and that Bridge Street is seen as a 'rural' road, there is a school here that has had to close because of flooding issues.
2. A complete overhaul of the culvert system on Bridge Street and Pitman's Grove. The narrow pipes that enter each culvert vary from 1 to 3 in number and are clearly insufficient for their purpose. Most of the pipes are actually only 8" in diameter. There seems to be no means of keeping debris from entering the culverts, and as the road is full of trees and shrubs, this is clearly a problem. As the pipes are so small it is easy to create blockages. The cast iron entry points that can be seen in photograph 1e are just not big enough for the purpose of carrying the volume of water to the gull and are easily blocked by debris. The layby in front of numbers 3-5 Pitman's Grove runs over the culvert and is blocked causing floodwater to flow onto the road and this needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. It should not be for local residents to carry out emergency action to reduce the impact of the floods.
3. On the A144 the small number of gullies that ultimately enter the Gull and the water courses of Bramfield are insufficient to keep the water levels at a manageable level and this is something that should be looked at in the near future to avoid potential road closures on what is an important A road.

Appendix 1: A144 and Bridge Street/Pitman's Grove



Appendix 2: A144/Edwards Lane/Low Road





1. Once in 30-year flood prediction



2. Once in 100-year flood prediction



A: View onto Village Green



B: Bridge Street towards Thorington



C: View of Gull



D: View of the Gull Storm 2



E: Bridge Street towards Thorington



F: Bridge Street by school



G: Bridge Street by the school



H: Bridge Street toward Queen's Head



I: Bridge Cottage



J: View towards The Queen's Head



K: The Gull towards Halesworth



L: View from the gull towards Bridge Street



1a



1b

Normal views of culverts and gull



1c



1d



1e



1f



1g