

Since last October, there have been several periods of very heavy rain, causing flooding right across the country. Across Mid Suffolk, over 200 homes and 40 businesses were flooded, those who have put in a claim have received the government grant of £500 for domestic properties, and £2,500 for businesses.

Communities which were particularly affected were Debenham, Stowmarket, Needham Market, and Worlingworth, as well as small numbers of homes in other villages. Inevitably SCC flood response work has focused on these areas. In the Bacton area there were only reports of two homes flooded in Broad Road (Cotton side) and one on Shop Green – this one was from *pluvial* flooding (direct heavy rainfall) rather than *fluvial* (surface water flows).

In the last couple of years two significant flood points in Bacton have been resolved:

- Flooding under the Pound Hill railway bridge – resolved after Network Rail and landowners cleared the drains and ditches downstream.
- Flood on Rectory Road just south of Shop Green – mostly resolved after landowner cleared a blocked culvert downstream – still floods occasionally /temporarily.

However, new flooding problems have emerged – in particular on Pound Hill / Church Road near the junction with Pretymen Avenue, and at the corner of Pound Hill and Broad Road, opposite the Methodist Chapel. A further problem is at the back of Woodward Avenue leading down to Turkey Hall Lane. In January a team came out and worked until midnight to clear a flood near the church.

The original Pretymen / Wheatlands estate – and other developments of that age have probably been built with a combined sewage and surface water system, so all rainfall going into the system has to pass through the Anglian Water treatment works. When this gets overwhelmed, “untreated” sewage (sewage diluted with water) gets discharged into the watercourse, and there will be slower flows into the treatment works.

Many people have stated that “the flooding is caused by all the new houses” – and the Pound Hill flood has appeared since building work progressed on the Bellway site. However, current building regulations mean that all large developments have to install a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUDS) – this means that surface water is collected (separately from foul water) into a drainage area known as an attenuation basin, and this only slowly discharges into the watercourses. This is to avoid large ‘pulses’ of floodwater entering local ditches and streams. In general these are working well, apart from the Bellway site (Ivy Hill) where the basin has overtopped 3 times in the last month. We do not believe that this basin has been correctly designed or installed, it appears to be too small. MSDC enforcement team have investigated this – their first enquiry resulted in Bellway blaming a blocked ditch, we have asked them to investigate further.

As well as further investigations of the Bellway site, we believe that the following actions will help to relieve the problem:

1. Clearing the ditches along Pulhams Lane – in particular on the east side, at the back of Pretymen Avenue, where there is vegetation growing in the channel – and where one resident has built soil up over the ditch and piped it (inadequately).