

Bewdley Town Council Flood Report August 2020.

On 25th August we held a Zoom meeting with Residents from Beale's Corner and the local Environment Agency team arranged in collaboration with Jason Walker their Engagement Officer.

The purpose of the meeting was specifically for the residents to discuss their concerns over the failure of some of the Property Flood Resilience measures which had been installed. Three members of Water Tight the company who commissioned the installation of the property flood measures were present and answered question.

The overview is that the property level protection measures in properties in the vicinity of the temporary flood barrier at Beale's Corner did not work in the February 2020 Floods. Water Tight who it appears had used external contractors for a lot of the PFR work acknowledged that there were many issues with inadequate and failed installations. The EA with Water Tight are now conducting a complete review of measures taken and promised to renew all inadequate installations and complete work on properties not yet fully protected

The meeting concluded with a brief update of support initiatives moving forward for the Bewdley Community Flood Volunteers. There are suggestions to provide electronic communication boards both in the Town Centre and in Wribbenhall near the Garage. If these boards can be provided and located in suitable places software can be written to provide local live updates on flood levels and details during flood incidents. There will be a more general flood volunteers remote meeting update in October where the BTC Local Plan will be reviewed ready for the winter 20/21 date to be agreed.

WFDC Overview and Scrutiny – Flood Evidence Gathering.

The residents evidence Special meeting took place on 3rd September 2020. This was the final meeting in the evidence gathering cycle. These O&S meetings were initiated following the motion to Council in February 2020 with regard to the serious flooding and to see if there is a case to be made to the Government for a permanent flood barrier at Beale's Corner to replace the temporary barrier.

Evidence was provided by residents who are still experiencing problems and recovering from flood water damage in their properties. Their statements and the evidence given to the committee can be viewed on You Tube and are testament to the dreadful ongoing impact of the February Flooding and the bravery of our residents.

The O&S Committee concluded the September 3rd meeting with consideration of a report and proposals to go to Wyre Forest District Council on the 23rd September 2020. The final recommendations were extensive and both the final report and recommendations will be available on the WFDC full council agenda.

During the evidence gathering process all agencies and partners recognised the need for permanent barriers at Beale's Corner. It has been promised that the failure of the Property Flood Resilience measures will be addressed. There is a new regional flood partnership for the Severn including Worcestershire and Shropshire and the new cost benefit formulae to be used by the Environment agency will now take into consideration the wider impact of closing the Bewdley bridge during flood barrier deployment and during higher flood levels. The cost benefit of more permanent flood defences at Beale's Corner need to address issues related to access to services, the local economy, the impact on Heritage buildings and the Conservation Area all of which are seriously impacted during flooding of the river Severn in Bewdley.