

Progress report on investigations following the January 2024 Thames flood, from the Whitchurch Flood Forum, 14th March 2024.

Flood levels in the village peaked on Sunday 7th January and caused flooding of some properties in the High Street, including The Greyhound, and in Eastfield Lane, as well as some properties close to the river.

A significant factor influencing the level of floodwater in the High Street and Eastfield Lane is considered by the Flood Forum to be the limited capacity of the pipeline carrying the village watercourse south of Eastfield Lane, which causes the water to build up pressure and emerge from two locations in the more ancient culvert further upstream. One of these is at the Greyhound and the other is in Eastfield Lane.

A two-page pdf document 'The Village Watercourse', presented at a recent meeting of the Emergency Team, shows the route and extent of the village watercourse.

After a similar flood event in January 2014 a partial blockage was found and cleared near the end of the culvert south of Eastfield Lane. There could still be a blockage of some sort, invisible from the surface, which should be investigated.

This year's flooding was exacerbated by the river level upstream of the weir being significantly higher than in 2014, probably due to tree debris brought down during storm Henk partially blocking the weir or gates. This is thought to have raised the upstream level nearer to the 1947 event, regarded as the '100 year' flood.

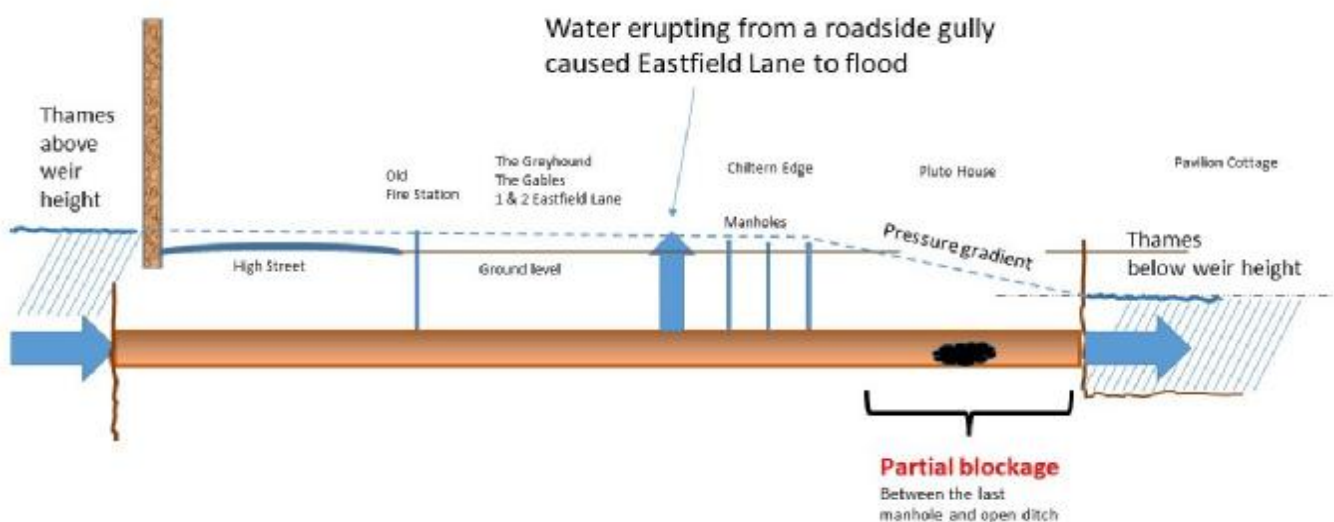
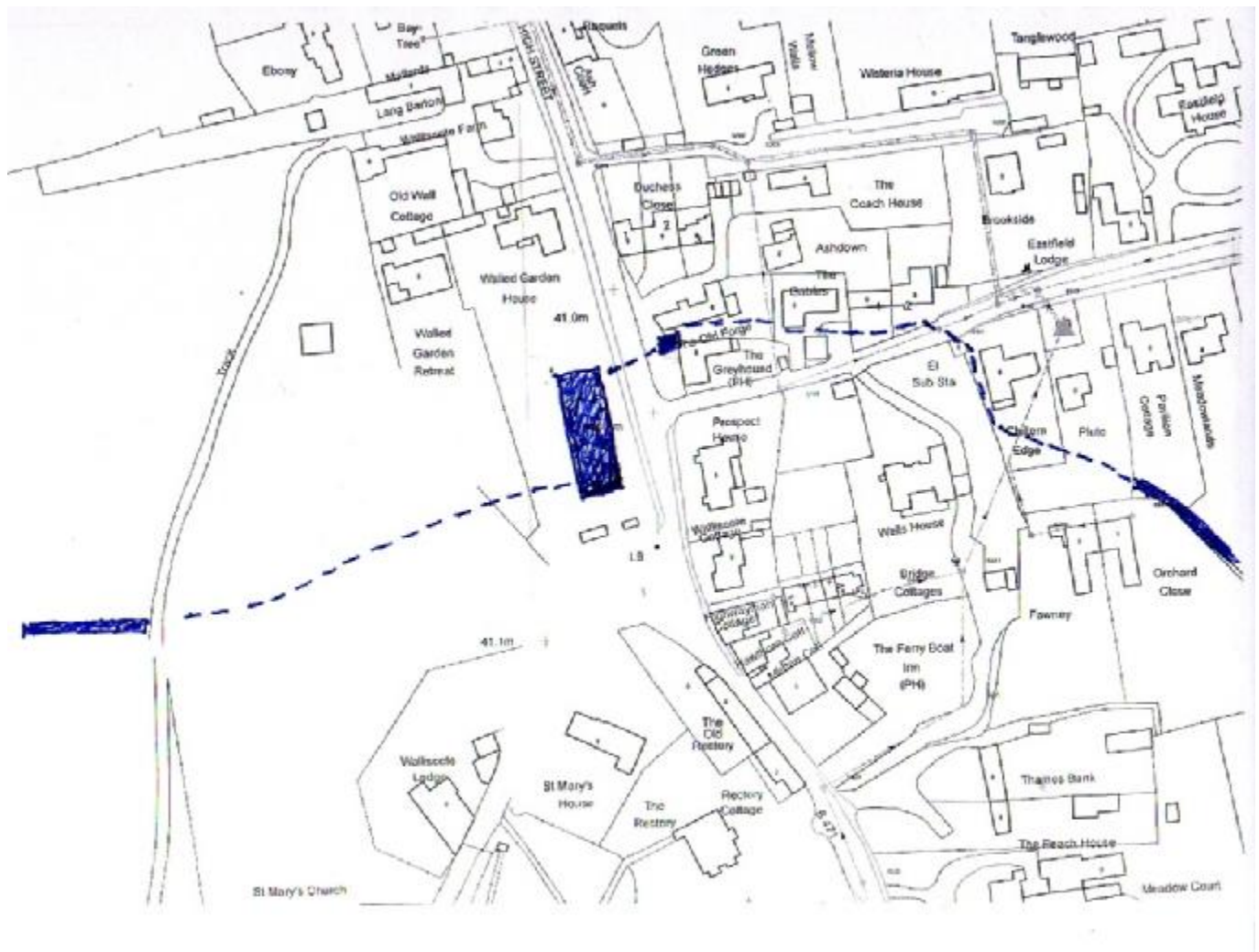
Under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, an investigation can be requested to investigate flooding, provided certain criteria for severity are met. An application was made on 26th January by the Flood Forum to OCC, the regulating authority for the Act, who subsequently approved it and instructed SODC to carry out an investigation.

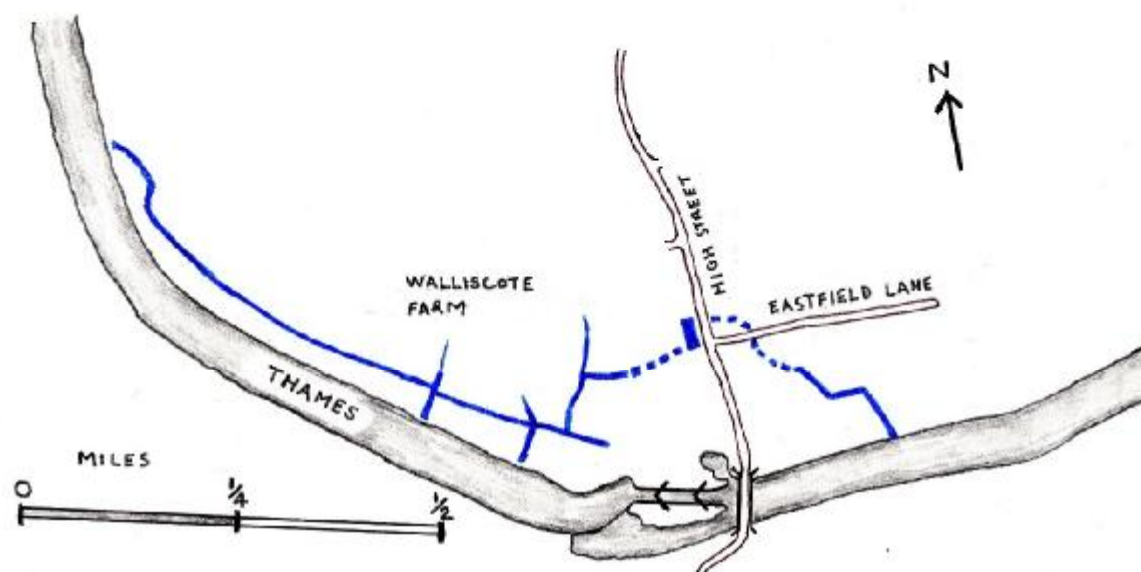
We are now assisting Leigh Travers, Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer with SODC, in carrying out the investigation. Our view is that this should focus on the apparent restriction in the flow in the culvert south of Eastfield Lane, but also to better understand the design, gradient, condition and capacity of the whole watercourse system through the village to determine what can be done to reduce the risk of flooding.

A camera survey is expected to be carried out by a contractor working for SODC, with access from the downstream end of the culvert. Owing to the current high groundwater table we understand this is planned for April or later. Some dewatering of the culvert may be needed.

Our main point of contact with Leigh Travers is John Southey. The other members of the Forum are Geoff Weir and Richard Wingfield.

The Village Watercourse





Whitchurch lock upstream water level - 5 to 11 Jan 2024

