

St Austell Bay Resilient Regeneration (StARR) Project

The notes below, taken from the Minutes of the Steering Group meeting on 18.11.18., concern discussions with the Environment Agency as to how Flooding mitigation measures might be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. These notes accompany the Environment Agency Flooding Presentation (pdf) which is to be found on the Parish Council website. Although this Presentation focuses on the neighbouring NP area of St Blaise, Tywardreath and Par Parish NP areas experiences similar issues.

Meeting StARR 03.10.18.

Present: Shaun Pritchard (SP) Environment Agency (EA); Cllr David Hughes (DH); Alison White (AW)

Summary of discussion

SP introduced himself as a member of the EA Sustainable Places Team (SPT). Originally a Town Planner with a development control background, SP then moved into EU related project work. SP is working with Tom Fletcher (TF) and Howard Simpson (HS) who both attended our Blue Green Health and Wellbeing event. The EA/SPT is working on the evidence base relating to flooding and will be identifying, for example, open spaces which should be safeguarded from development in order to mitigate the risk of flooding.

SP explained that he had asked for the meeting to put forward a proposal concerning the Flood Policy in our Neighbourhood Plan (NP). SP added that he had met with Jenny Moore, Chair of St Blaise NP, the previous day to discuss the same.

The proposal is that:

- Tywardreath and Par Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, St Blaise NP Steering Group, the Environment Agency/Sustainable Places Team and Cornwall Council Development Officers, Sarah Furley and Ryan Searle, would agree the direction of the Flood Policy in each NP. The direction of policy would be in line with the St Austell Bay Resilient Regeneration (StARR) project.
- The primary objective would be to safeguard land from development, so as to mitigate the impact of flooding.
- The EA/SPT would produce the necessary evidence to justify the Flood Policies in both NPs. The aim would be to ensure that the two NP Flood Policies are broadly compatible with one another, as they would both be based on the evidence produced by the EA.
- The SPT would draft the policy statements for inclusion in the NP as regards the Flood Policy in conjunction with Sarah Furley and Ryan Searle.

Discussion

It was agreed that both St Blaise and Tywardreath and Par Parish do share similar problems as regards the risk of flooding, not least in terms of the impact on roads,

footpaths etc. However, it was also noted that there are significant differences too, both topographic and demographic. In Tywardreath and Par Parish, for example, the issue of “run-off” is of particular concern to some residents. Many have also commented on the impact of flooding as regards accessing footpaths generally, be it for recreational purposes or when trying to get around, especially when walking with children and buggies or for those who have impaired mobility.

Proposed Action

SP will organise a meeting to discuss this further at which members from both Tywardreath and Par Parish NP SG and St Blaise NP SG will be present.

All present agreed that they would be willing to move forward on an agreed Flooding policy, providing that Tywardreath and Par Parish’s views are taken into account. A decision as to which SG members might attend meetings will be taken when more is known.

Environment Agency Presentation to Steering Group on 18.11.18.

Presentation on website pdf doc.

Tom Fletcher of the Environment Agency gave an overview of what is happening with the StARR project. It is anticipated that there will be a 4 to 5 month planning period during which the EA will seek the views of the community at large.

This consultation will seek to involve both individuals and organisations such as Par Track Ltd. where there may be opportunities for cross-working i.e. where action across flood risk management, recreational activities and environmental management might prove beneficial. Currently the aim is to put the works out to tender in Summer 2019 with a view to a start date in 2020 and completion in 2021. Although much of the funding will be used to address flooding issues within St Blaise NP area where most properties are at risk, there are also plans for areas within Tywardreath and Par Parish NP area. For example, ideas under discussion include improving bio-diversity from St Andrew’s Rd. Bridge along the Par canal. None of this is set in stone.

Tom’s presentation included examples of what other areas have achieved by using flood mitigation measures as a way of enhancing the built environment, introducing traffic calming measures and/or improving accessibility for all. Further information and examples can be found at: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/34598> and in the UK: <http://bristolgreencapital.org/projects/green-streets-suds/> as well as some interesting work at Heartlands in Pool/Redruth.

Much depends on what the community would like to do/achieve. The intention is to design the flood mitigation measures in consultation with the community. For example, pocket parks which flood when required, but can be used as recreational areas at other times; rain gardens and swales are all possible features. Tom explained that the maintenance of the current pipe system is expensive and

disruptive to residents, so potentially this approach might offer a cheaper and better solution longer term.

As far as the NP is concerned, one way forward might be for us to identify areas in which the flow of water could be kept on the surface and/or slowed. This could be done by identifying and protecting Cornish Hedgerows in the NP, so that they become flood risk assets. Another possibility would be to suggest where catchment ponds might be constructed on higher land, such as above Tywardreath and Tywardreath Highway for example, so that properties further down are less vulnerable. Another issue to consider in the NP is the future of Par Beach. At the moment, there is a shore-line management plan in place, but longer term this might need to move to managed re-alignment, because of the projected rise in sea levels. All agreed that we will need to take all the above into consideration when agreeing the NP policies, as the NP will be a key element in shaping the future of the Parish.

As far as translating dreams into reality is concerned, it is worth noting that the EA would be willing to help with any project plans, which are in line with StARR project ambitions, and for which we might be able to make bids/draw in more external funding. Cornwall Council is putting in £2m and this is potentially matched funding for external bidding purposes. All agreed that it had been a most interesting evening and thanked Tom Fletcher for talking to us.