EA Flood Update #5 May#2 22/05/2024

Good-ish news – at last!

Well would you believe it! Within hours of circulating our own May bulletin, there has been an important update from the Environment Agency, which those of you on their mailing list will already have received. Basically, they have postponed the ground investigations that were planned to start this week while they work on, as a BVT statement on Facebook puts it "*a new plan for consultation and engagement with residents and local organisations/groups".*

The full text of the EA's email follows:

From: TheBournFRMS <TheBournFRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 3:41 PM
Subject: Update on the Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme - 21 May 2024

Please see below for an important update about the Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme.

We know the devastating impact that flooding can have to people and communities.

With anticipated climate change impacts and a rising urban population, we are likely to see an increase in both the likelihood and impact of flooding in the future which is why we are exploring options to help better protect communities at risk of flooding in the Bournville and Stirchley areas of Birmingham.

We are equally committed to working with those who live and work within these communities, whether personally at risk of flooding or where there is potential to be impacted by possible future options to reduce flood risk to others. We have heard and understood the concerns of some residents and groups in relation to the Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme. We are at a very early stage in this process and, while options are being explored, no decisions have been made. We want to ensure that any future decisions are properly informed by the community and as such we have paused all ground investigations within the parks, which were due to commence at Weoley Park on the 23 May.

We remain fully committed to ongoing meaningful engagement with all those who could be affected by any potential scheme and we hope this helps to allay some of the concerns of the community. We will publish an options appraisal report as well as an engagement plan in the coming months clearly highlighting where we are within the project and what the options look like going forward. We will work with the community to decide on the best way forward together.

Kind regards,

Miss Delyth Evans

Customers & Engagement Specialist – FCRM - West Midlands

TheBournFRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk

Making an impact

What triggered their review? Was it our former West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street's letter to a very senior EA official? Was it Gary Sambrook MP's recent meeting with the Environment Minister? Was it the meeting with BVT earlier yesterday along with the threat of their legal challenge? Or was it the efforts of all of the groups and individuals who have been showering the EA with their objections? Probably a combination of all of these have caused the EA to pause and reflect on their handling of the whole process. Let's hope that they review not only their engagement process but also the basis of the whole plan.

Working together

Meanwhile representatives of the action groups for the three affected parks are planning a meeting to ensure that we are prepared to take a co-ordinated approach to the next phase of the EA's project whatever and whenever that may be.

Response from Delyth to the Friends of Manor Farm Park

Having a productive day yesterday, Delyth also responded to the unanswered questions which we indicated in Monday's briefing. She was apologetic for the delay (apparently because, unsurprisingly, they are receiving a high volume of communications!) though did not provide any more actual information about how informal discussions or formal responses are recorded and integrated into their thinking on the proposals.

Lark in the Park

Hope to see you at Lark in the Park on the 8th June, which Delyth has confirmed that they will still be attending.

Keep up the pressure

Thank you to everyone who has made their views known to the EA at: TheBournFRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk . Please continue to do so.

This is only a cease fire, not a victory.

Thank you

fomfpmembership@gmail.com for Friends of Manor Farm Park