

Queen's Wood Update on Proposed Flood Management Plan

June 2021

At last Haringey Council has taken some action following the consultation process that ended on 6 April. It has posted a 17-page long list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers (FAQs) on its website (click [here](#)). It has also invited stakeholders (primarily ourselves) to a site visit with those principally concerned in the first half of July, when it proposes to clarify and explain its proposals.

This response, bearing in mind the large number of objections registered in the consultation, is unsatisfactory and disappointing. Though the Council has stated in the FAQs that the project is currently on hold, it has given no indication of a willingness to countenance any alternative options to this scheme. At first sight there is much to dispute in its document; it is incomplete; and it does little to advance the Council's case. We are preparing a detailed critique of it and we shall make it available as soon as it is ready.

It is still not clear that this move represents a decisive step by the Council to stick to the scheme as proposed. The indications are that no such decision has been taken. In any event, though a site visit may be useful in due course, we believe it is not the right forum for the discussion of the wider options which has long been required. We shall be seeking an urgent online meeting with the Council for this purpose, at least as a first step.

We are proposing to hold our AGM on 14 July and will have the chance to consult with you further then, but in the meantime we would welcome your comments on the document, and you may wish also to express your views on it directly to the Council.

Update on Queen's Wood Flood Management Plan

July 2021

We still have heard nothing from Haringey Council about whether, and, if so, how they intend to proceed with the proposed flood management scheme. However, on Wednesday 14 July, members had a very full discussion of the scheme at our AGM. Fortuitously, this followed a few days after the worst flooding in the wood for many years. On Monday 12 July, the heavy rains which caused flooding in many parts of North and West London and, indeed, later the near Continent, led to streams overflowing and creating a lake of water at the Wood Vale entrance, which then overflowed, rushing down the passageway to Wood Vale and flooding a number of houses the other side of the road.

A full note of the discussion at the AGM has been placed on our website (click [here](#) to read). The consensus was that, while the

flooding of houses in Wood Vale showed a need for action to manage flooding in the area, it was far from clear that the works as currently proposed would have prevented flooding, much of which stemmed from outside the wood or would not have been held back effectively by the works.

We intend to talk to the Council about all this as soon as possible. In the meantime, we are looking into whether we should employ a hydrological expert who can help us analyse this aspect of the proposals further. And we would be very interested if members affected by the flooding in Wood Vale who have relevant evidence, anecdotal and photographic, or opinions could let us have these, if possible before 5.00pm on Thursday 22 July, since a group of us are going to look at the position in greater depth the following day. Please send anything you have to info@fqw.org.uk, giving your house number so we can relate the evidence to precise locations.

RAIN, RAIN, RAIN!



Photos - Michael Johns

Many thanks to all who contributed evidence, anecdotal or photographic, about what happened as a result of the heavy rains on 12 July, which the Council has subsequently told us was a 1 in 25/30 years event. On the basis of this and our own analysis we drew up a report on the impact of the event, which you can find by clicking [here](#). The report focuses on real concerns about the serious scouring and erosion throughout the Wood, and the adequacy of the basic systems currently in place for drawing surplus water from the Wood in such conditions. Many of the pipeline inlets in the Wood were blocked, as were the gullies on the roads in the catchment area. There are also concerns about the capacity of the pipeline itself. The report has been submitted to both the Highways and Parks Departments of the Council with recommendations for actions, including the regular checking and maintaining of the drainage systems both within the Wood and the streets in the catchment area as a whole.

For an ancient woodland the extensive scouring of areas that has removed topsoil and natural debris such as leaves is a serious ecological degradation. It would be extremely difficult - or even impossible - to reverse, and steps need to be taken to prevent or at least reduce it in the future, possibly by increasing the vegetation cover on the ground. This should take place on the slopes well before entering the streams. Even if soil settled lower down, it would not be practicable to replace it higher up the slopes. We will work with the council on this vital problem.

Even before we issued the report we had asked the Council whether the flooding of properties in Wood Vale on 12 July would have occurred if the existing surface water sewers in the woodland and Wood Vale had been properly maintained. The Council has told us in response that they do not themselves hold records of Thames Water's inspection and maintenance regimes of their network, this being a matter for Thames Water. They have forwarded our concerns and photographic evidence to Thames Water for a response.

In the meantime, turning to the proposed flood management scheme in the Wood, we have just heard back from Cllr Hakata, the responsible member in the Council's cabinet, about the way forward following our meeting with him in the Wood on 30 June. He has agreed with us that there is a need 'to step back few paces in order to realise a co-produced approach', kicking off with some on-site meetings between the Parks team and ourselves, in the hope of reaching a consensus, followed by a wider stakeholder meeting which would include the Highways officers. We have welcomed this and stand ready to get started.
