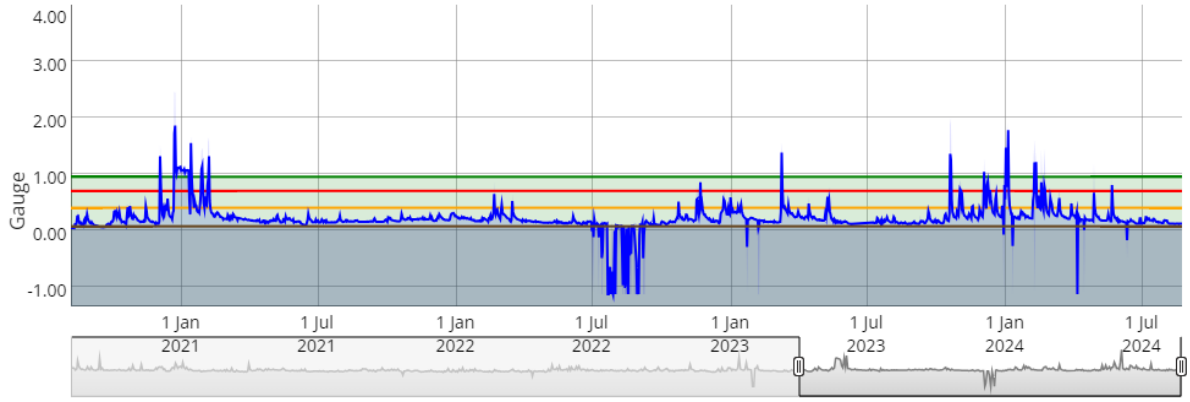
# Broughton Flood Action Group Report for the Parish Council September 2024

**Flooding in the Village**

Thankfully, we've again avoided serious flooding in the village. Despite Storm Henk and others causing widespread flooding across Cambridgeshire, our Brook, which rises and falls faster than the larger rivers Ouse and Nene, did not rise to a level to cause property flooding.

Nonetheless, we received a number of Environment Agency flood alerts and warnings, with Causeway and Bridge Roads being closed at the start of January following our report to the police. The chart below shows river levels at Kings Ripton between the flooding of Dec 2020 and August 2024. Although the peak in Dec 2020 was higher, the multiple peaks we experienced between October 2023 and March 2024 suggest that we probably only escaped more serious flooding because of the breaks in rainfall between events that allowed the Brook to drain. Sadly, the flood group has no control of the pattern of rainfall!




**Highway Drainage in School Road**

Throughout the majority of this past wet winter, the highway drains outside the village hall did not function, causing the ditch on the north side of School Road to overflow across the road. This was reported to Cambridgeshire Highways by the Parish Council multiple times, including escalation via Steve Criswell. Following investigations which revealed the system had failed, a new drain was installed in early August 2024.

The failed section was within the highway and therefore the responsibility of the Council. However, it serves as a reminder that the law of 'riparian ownership' means that landowners are responsible to maintain the flow of water through their land (which often includes ditches and culverts by the roadside), at their own cost and effort. This rather awkward arrangement is typically or, perhaps conveniently, not widely known!

**Broughton Flood Action Group**

Actions of individuals, for example clearing ditches and drains of leaves and debris, can be surprisingly effective, particularly to avoid nuisance flooding and in the early stages of a flood to buy more time. However, more serious flood risk can only be avoided when we work together. This remains the goal of the flood group.

We held our annual public meeting in the village hall on 23rd November 2023, and will do so again this coming Autumn. This raises awareness ahead of the 'flood season'. We have also undertaken the following activities:

- **Watercourse maintenance grant:** Following our successful application, we were awarded £3,075 in June to purchase equipment and training. The main purpose of the equipment is to clear vegetation and debris from the brook to keep water flowing and minimise the risk of blockages. The grant is being administered by the Parish Council with an appropriate system of approvals in place, thanks to Ann. Initial equipment has been purchased and chainsaw training is being arranged. A walkover is being arranged with the EA to devise a plan of community maintenance that compliments the EA's routine channel maintenance.

- **Abbots Ripton attenuation ponds:** Mike and I met with CCC and representatives of Abbots Ripton estate in July to discuss the two ponds which should provide attenuation of runoff from Alconbury Weald into the Brook. Abbots Ripton estate undertook to contact Urban & Civic regarding U&C's 'upper' pond which was unusually full for the time of year and could be at risk of breaching. They also undertook to investigate the original purpose, design and operation of the estate's 'lower' pond. They agreed that the level in the lower pond should be more effectively managed to provide attenuation if this was both intended and possible. An update is being sought.

- **Water level sensors:** Following significant delays, these have been installed underneath the bridges next to the pub and near Illings Lane. Nick Moulton kindly chased and oversaw installation of an internet gateway on the village hall. CCC and the EA are currently finalising survey of the brook which is required for the sensors to provide sensible measurements and warnings of rising river levels.

- **Flood shed:** Cambridge County Council provided a shed to house the equipment we have been given. This is located in the corner of the play park next to the mower shed. Thanks to Nick, Mike and Mark who were involved in the process.

Prepared by Dave Cobby