FISHBOURNE FLOODING ARCHIVE

Bethwines Farm, Fishbourne (2020)

AN EVIDENCE-SOURCE BOOKLET

FOR FISHBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

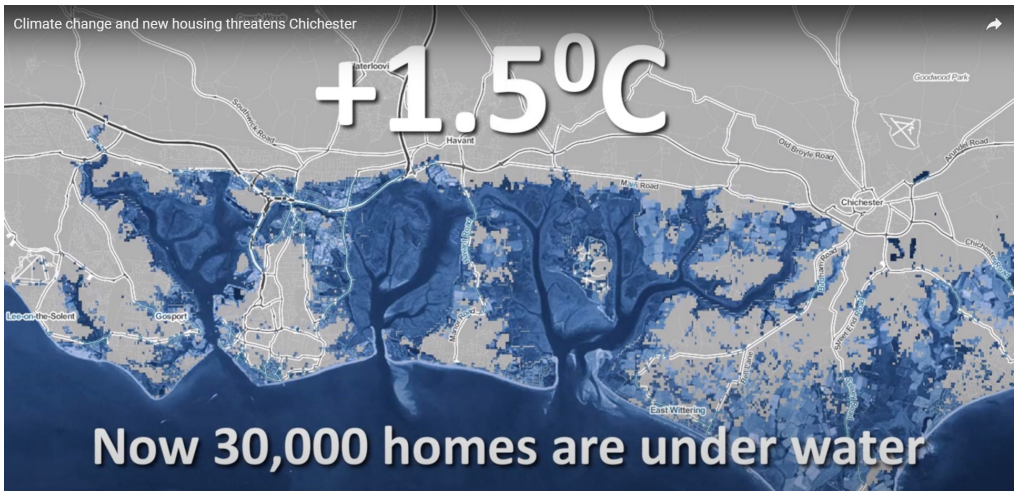
(2014-29 and REVISED 2019-2035)

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT OF LAND IN FISHBOURNE

The Environment Agency's Flood Zone categorisation of Flood Zone 1 in Fishbourne is not a relevant measure, since "these flood zones refer to the **probability of river and sea flooding."** The accompanying maps show the likelihood of flooding in four categories – Very Low, Low, Medium, High - and Fishbourne is shown as Very Low. This means "that each year, this area has **a chance of flooding of less than 1 in 1000 (0.1%)"**

This is the categorisation normally used by developers but the Environment Agency now also uses data based on surface water flooding in low-lying areas

Just south of Main Road is Fishbourne Creek and Chichester Harbour so the surface water flowing down from higher developments meets the increasingly high tides as a result of coastal erosion and global warming.



IMPACT OF RISING TIDES AS A RESULT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A farmer and landowner writes about his experience and warns about the flooding potential if Bethwines Farm is developed.

"The main channel through Chichester Harbour runs approximately South West/North East and our prevailing wind always comes from the South West. Our flooding problems happen when extremes of weather arrive at the same time i.e. torrential rain, 5 metre plus tides and winds at gale force. I personally have observed the tides my entire life and if we get gale force winds from a South Westerly direction, a 5 metre tide is more than the equivalent of 6 metres on arrival at the head of Fishbourne Channel, resulting in the newly replaced and heightened centre footbridge at the 'Three Bridges' being completely submerged. On these occasions sea water is very close to flowing onto the A259 at a point directly opposite the junction with Salthill Road. I have watched tides getting steadily higher over the last 50 years **and predict that sea water, in the very near future, will reach the A259, and will be a regular occurrence within the next 20 years, maybe much less.**

Fishbourne has three main drainage water ditches running North to South**,** all three of these ditches terminate at the head of Fishbourne Creek and pass into the harbour under the 'Three Bridges' centre footbridge. **AT TIMES OF EXTREME WEATHER THESE DITCHES BACK UP AND SEVERAL HOUSES FLOOD**. As part of the Fishbourne Flood Action Group we have studied this situation in great detail. We have plans in progress to help restrict and contain water in one area and also to reinstate a fourth ditch on the East side of the village. Although we believe our current activities will be of great benefit a full solution is not immediately obvious. We have to remember **Fishbourne Creek is not a contained area** and the continued increase in tidal height can only mean water moving further inland.

The proposed development on Bethwines Farm is particularly relevant. The site sits between our two western drainage ditches which are currently running way over capacity. It is also very important to understand that almost **ALL OF THE HOUSES THAT REGULARLY FLOOD ARE SITUATED BETWEEN THESE TWO DITCHES AND BELOW BETHWINES FARM**. I am very familiar with this area and for the last three months, or more, the water table has been at, or just below ground level: this makes it virtually impossible to manage the ground water in the short distance available before it reaches the culverts under the A259. Any holding ponds would be full before they were dug, similarly so the recently favoured S.U.D.S. drainage systems. Any change to this site's current agricultural use would only be detrimental to the situation and lead to greater flooding problems in the area."

The ditch south of Bethwines Farm


The same ditch by Tharfield kennels. The exercising yard in picture has been known to flood. From there it flows under the A259.


The sea creeps round the sea wall at high tide so the water cannot drain.


Local residents express the view that surface water flooding and sewage feedback now happen with a greater frequency.

Here are some examples:

"My family have occupied a roadside cottage on the A259 since 1960 **and been flooded more than a dozen times indoors up to 18 inches deep from surface and foul sewer water.**

Being flooded is a very unpleasant experience and we lived in our home while it dried out and seldom claimed on insurance. Eventually the Water Authority fitted non-return valves to a number of properties to prevent sewer water flowing back indoors via W C's. These valves do not always work due to fouling on the flap valve seating.

The main public foul sewer in the A259 is deep and to a minimum fall consequently the rapid flow of sewage from the more steeply falling Black Boy lane sewer, joining at right angles, is forced both ways and into homes on this lower part of the sewer system." (**KA and Family**)

Flooded for three months ....

"In the summer of 2012 our property in Fishbourne, close to the proposed Bethwines Farm development, flooded. For 3 months we lived upstairs as industrial dehumidifiers worked day and night to dry our downstairs. It was a very upsetting and distressing time.

We have been told that the current drainage infrastructure in the village is not fit for purpose. The ditches already struggle to cope during periods of heavy rain and one of these ditches runs behind our house. A single day of rain can cause the water level in this ditch to get close to spilling over. We live with the constant worry of flooding again and we both struggle to sleep during bad weather." (**Mr & Mrs E, Frampton Close**)

Christmas 2013, Salthill Road

June 2012 Salthill Road

July 2011 Blackboy Lane

Flooding from Bethwines Farm stretching across Blackboy Lane

“The front garden is about 5” deep as is the road, my truck parked out in the road to slow the traffic preventing a wave flooding the house. The crop in the field is hiding the fact that it is completely flooded.”

Surface water at Bethwines Farm

FLOODING and THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2019)

"Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime **without increasing flood risk elsewhere**." (155)