

BSPDG Update 10th September 2026

1. Thames Water

We met with senior operational management and engineers on 7th August 2026 in the Village Hall.

TW shared several graphs and measurement data that they use to monitor performance of the sewer network and pumping stations. Having lined and sealed their assets in Roke and Rokemarsh, they do not see a need at this time to extend this work to Berrick Salome. The Berrick Salome part of the network is managed well by the BS pumping station so the only performance issues seem now to relate to how the Roke/Rokemarsh part copes with the additional flow from BS and how the Rokemarsh Pumping Station sends the whole content on to Benson. TW will be conducting further work and further investigation into these particular matters. Last week we received TW's notes from the meeting which are being combined with our notes in order to produce an output document of record. More detail of the above will be included.

TW and McAllister are committed to repairing verges and road edges damaged by them and repairing the Rokemarsh lane surface down to the PS. McAllister have sourced suitable contractors and coordinated with OCC Highways. They are now waiting for road closure timings to be allocated.

Neil Godfrey is preparing an update on all TW matters for distribution to the parish as soon as possible.

2. Baffled Ditch Maintenance

Members of BSPDG and additional volunteers (happily including newcomers to the parish) spent a couple of hours recently clearing vegetation from either side of each of the barriers and the drains from the road. Although a little early for vegetation die-back and clearance, it was good to see the condition of the barriers and make sure they are clear to allow sufficient flows as and when we start getting more rain and water run-off from the fields.

3. Emergency shed and equipment

Progress has slowed owing to lack of time and the need to ideally use the PC charge card when it is issued. Given holidays and other commitments amongst BSPDG members, it is most likely that the shed and its contents will move forward in October with a view to being up and running in November.

4. Future projects

Changing weather (as we've seen clearly demonstrated this summer and anticipate in future) makes it even more critical that we do more to protect our

villages from the impacts of having too much water engulfing us in winter (or whenever) and not enough available for making land productive in summer.

Again, owing to absences, etc., as a group we are expecting to consider options for next steps early in November, in the hope that we can progress planning for future projects and look at how best to obtain professional advice to find the best locations and ways to harness the excessive water volumes we receive in areas like Hollantide and to the North of Berrick Prior to prevent flooding but maybe also retain some of the excess for later productive use. We will try to explore any grant funding options beyond just the OCC annual Flood Mitigation funds but we need more resources to create the time to do this.

5. Additional participation

We are hoping to circulate the parish over the next couple of weeks to see if anybody would like to volunteer to strengthen and broaden our core team and/or volunteer to be called on to help on any of the practical work. Please spread the word. This is important for the future!

6. Checking and clearing ditches, watercourses and culverts

As summer moves into autumn, late September and October bring the opportunity to start clearing the remains of vegetation growth from our ditches and watercourses and making sure our culverts aren't blocked. Vegetation starts to die back naturally and contributes less to wildlife habitats as everything looks to find "winter quarters". Taking care not to unduly disturb habitats, it becomes the best time to make sure flow is not unintentionally blocked.

We will be looking to remind those with riparian rights (e.g. streams, ditches and culverts on or bordering their land/property) that they have responsibility to ensure that flow is neither interrupted (other than by appropriately approved schemes) nor artificially enhanced by pumping water away to resolve a problem in one location by transferring it elsewhere.

We are considering how best to contribute to initiating and organising volunteer activities without relieving everybody in the village from working under their own initiative to fulfil their riparian responsibilities and/or clear some ditches / streams, etc. BSPDG cannot be considered as a "rapid response service provider" that everybody can expect to do whatever they want to have done! But, we will try to help or advise if anybody is genuinely unable to fulfil their riparian responsibilities.

BSPDG have an endoscope available and we will be using it to check publicly accessible culverts in the village if necessary. We can also help do this on private land at the request of the landowner.

7. Actions and anticipated timings (guideline):

- Next BSPDG meeting – end October / early November
- Riparian Responsibilities reminder (parish email circulation & WhatsApp) – w/c 14/09/26
- Call for Volunteers (email and WhatsApp) to join the BSPDG team and for ad-hoc work on ditches, watercourses and culverts – w/c 21/09/26
- Obtaining timelines for outstanding TW activities and publishing report from last meeting – ongoing
- Emergency Shed ordering, building and equipping – w/c 26/10/26 through to w/c 23/11/26
- Planning ditch, watercourse and culvert checks / clearance sessions – now through to next BSPDG meeting (see above)
- Future Projects consideration will be ongoing, with next steps actions being agreed and communicated at and shortly after the next BSPDG meeting .