

Flooding Meeting – Meeting Notes

Date: Wednesday 26 August 2026

Organised by: Cllr Emma Parker, Dorset Council Ward Councillor

Purpose: To establish what happened during the recent flooding in Puddletown and identify potential measures to reduce the impact of future flooding.

Attendees

Cllr Emma Parker – Dorset Council Ward Councillor

Jack Nash – Highways Liaison Officer, Dorset Council

Cllr Richard Green – Flood Warden, Puddletown Area Parish Council

Kelly Green – Volunteer assisting with Flood Warden administration, reporting, and practical clearance and maintenance

Matt Whiter – South West Flood & Coastal Organisation, overseeing the Puddletown area

Dan Williams – South West Flood & Coastal Organisation, working on an area upstream of Puddletown

Cllr Ridout – Puddletown Area Parish Council

Cllr Bryom – Puddletown Area Parish Council

Michelle Harrington – Clerk, Puddletown Area Parish Council

1. Reporting Of Flooding

It was confirmed that reporting flooding to Dorset Council or the South West Flood & Coastal Organisation does not result in the information being passed to insurance companies and therefore does not affect household insurance premiums.

Residents were encouraged to report flooding even where only a garden or part of a property has been affected. Dorset Council considers areas where five or more homes have been recorded as flooded or partially flooded when assessing areas for potential flood protection measures.

During the 2026 flooding in Puddletown, only two homes were formally reported as having flooded, although it is known that a number of other properties were affected. It was therefore considered important that residents report flooding whenever it occurs.

Flooding reports can be made for incidents occurring within the previous five years.

2. Environment Agency Engagement

Cllr Parker explained that she has had limited direct contact with the Environment Agency (EA). She has attempted to contact them on several occasions but has rarely received a response. However, when she has raised matters through Simon Hoare, the local MP, she has more often than not received a response from the EA.

One of the main issues Cllr Parker has raised with the EA is riparian ownership and the responsibility of landowners to maintain the watercourse adjoining their property. Concern was expressed that some homeowners are not undertaking the river maintenance that they are legally responsible for, including keeping the watercourse clear and free flowing.

It was noted that, although landowners have responsibilities as riparian owners, the Environment Agency is the organisation with the appropriate powers to take action where those responsibilities are not being met.

The representatives from the South West Flood & Coastal Organisation confirmed that they have an existing working relationship with the Environment Agency and are able to communicate with them directly.

3. Flood Investigation and Report

Matt brought a large map of the Puddletown area, which was used throughout the meeting to identify and discuss the locations affected by the recent flooding. During the discussion, Matt highlighted the areas that had been severely affected, locations where potential issues had been identified, and areas where works or other interventions could potentially be undertaken to help alleviate the flooding problems.

The map provided a useful visual reference for the discussion and allowed those attending to identify specific locations and consider how different areas of the river, drainage and highway network may be contributing to the flooding.

The South West Flood & Coastal Organisation has been commissioned by Dorset Council to investigate the flooding and prepare a report for the area.

Other areas across Dorset are also being investigated, with each area receiving its own report. These individual reports will subsequently be considered by Dorset Council.

The Puddletown report will identify and list the recommended works in order of priority for the area. However, the report will not compare Puddletown's priorities with those of other areas or state that one area's Priority 1 issue is more or less important than another area's Priority 1 issue.

It will ultimately be for Dorset Council to consider all of the individual reports and establish an overall priority list for works across Dorset.

4. Sandbags and Sand Store

The Parish Council has previously asked Dorset Council for sandbags but had been advised that Dorset Council no longer supplied them.

Cllr Parker clarified that Dorset Council does supply local councils with sand for their sand stores, although it does not supply sandbags directly to individual households.

The Parish Council therefore needs to investigate a suitable location for a local sand store and arrange an order for sandbags.

When sandbags are delivered, residents in areas at high risk of flooding should be made aware of their availability.

It was noted that some properties use large quantities of sandbags to prevent their gardens or driveways from flooding. This can reduce the amount of sand available to protect homes that are at greater risk. Residents should be encouraged that consideration must be given to protecting homes rather than preventing flooding to gardens, driveways or other non-residential areas.

ACTION – Puddletown Area Parish Council: Investigate a suitable location for a local sand store and place an order for sandbags.

5. Flood Barriers

It was noted that 2026 was the first time the flood barriers purchased by Puddletown Area Parish Council had been deployed.

The barriers were considered successful and are estimated to have prevented flooding to at least 10 homes.

It was discussed that the Parish Council could benefit from purchasing approximately 10 additional barriers to increase the number of properties that can potentially be protected.

The area affected by flooding is changing, partly as a result of recent local groundworks and the lack of river clearance, and therefore the existing barrier locations may need to be reviewed.

ACTION: Clerk to add a recommendation to Council to purchase 10 more barriers.

6. Flood Protection Policy (Inc Barriers and Sandbags)

It was reported that the Flood Warden and other volunteers experienced a significant amount of abuse while deploying the flood barriers during the recent flooding.

It was agreed that having a clear Parish Council policy setting out where and when the barriers should be deployed would help volunteers and provide a clear explanation to residents.

The policy should make clear that the current barrier locations have been selected based on historical flooding data and known flood risk. As the pattern and extent of flooding changes, the policy and barrier locations may be reviewed and updated.

The policy should also make clear that: The Parish Council cannot purchase or provide flood protection specifically for an individual household. It is ultimately the responsibility of individual householders to protect their own property.

Parish Council flood barriers are a community resource and will only be deployed according to agreed criteria and only by or under instruction from the Flood Warden or Parish Clerk.

The policy should encourage residents to consider the wider community and ensure that available resources are prioritised for protecting homes rather than gardens, driveways or other non-residential areas.

The Parish Council should use the Dorset Explorer flood mapping when developing the policy.

ACTION – Puddletown Area Parish Council: Develop a Flood Protection Policy, including reference to historical flood data, Dorset Explorer flood mapping, community priorities and the responsibility of individual householders to protect their own homes.

7. River Clearance and Debris

It was noted that areas upstream tend to undertake their own clearance but may allow the material they remove to wash downstream rather than removing it from the river system. This can subsequently create problems in Puddletown, particularly at the bridge where the arches are relatively small and can become blocked quickly.

The need for better management of debris and river clearance upstream was noted as an issue for consideration as part of the flood investigation.

8. Piped Grip – Druce Lane / The Moor

A "piped grip" was identified running just off the highway along Druce Lane and The Moor, near the Blue Vinny.

It was explained that the piped grip is a Dorset Council asset and is designed to carry water running off the highway. It was not designed to convey floodwater when the River Piddle has overtopped its banks.

Concern was raised that the pipe is only approximately four inches in diameter and can become blocked by debris.

ACTION – Jack Nash: Investigate whether a mesh, "trash shot" or similar arrangement could be installed to prevent debris entering the piped grip and blocking the pipe.

9. Site Inspection

Following the meeting, Matt Whiter, Cllr Richard Green, Michelle Harrington, Cllr Ridout and Cllr Byrom walked to the river to inspect the areas affected by the recent flooding.

During the site visit, the channels associated with the piped grip were identified as requiring clearance.

Jack Nash confirmed that he would arrange for these channels to be cleared and would also look at ensuring that they are maintained regularly.

ACTION – Jack Nash: Arrange clearance of the piped grip channels and investigate arrangements for regular maintenance.

10. Road Closures and Flood Barriers

The current procedure when a road becomes flooded was discussed.

At present, flooding is reported to Dorset Council, who send someone to investigate. If they determine that the road needs to be closed, this is then referred to another team who attend to implement the closure.

It was discussed that Puddletown Area Parish Council could potentially store road closure barriers and appropriate signage locally. This would allow Jack and Dorset Council to deploy the equipment more quickly when flooding occurs.

Jack explained that he is unable to implement a "hard close" at the roundabout where access to properties beyond the flooded section is still required. Some properties accessed from the road may not themselves be affected by flooding and residents therefore need to retain access.

Where the road itself is flooded and residents can no longer safely access their properties, a hard closure can be implemented at the appropriate location.

It was also suggested that "Road Closed – Flood" signage could be positioned at the roundabout to discourage drivers from proceeding towards the flooded section and encourage them to turn around before reaching the closure.

It was noted that once a road has been officially closed, it is an offence to drive through the closure and floodwater. Drivers who ignore an official road closure may also invalidate their vehicle insurance. Anyone witnessing a vehicle driving through an officially closed flooded road should, where it is safe and practical to do so, make a note of the vehicle registration number and, if possible, obtain a photograph, and send this to Dorset Police.

ACTION – Puddletown Area Parish Council: Contact Jack Nash to discuss the provision and storage of suitable road closure barriers and signage ahead of the first flood event of the winter.

11. Resident Communications

It was agreed that the Parish Council should undertake a communications campaign ahead of the winter flood season.

Information should be shared through:

- Parish Council social media
- The Parish Council website
- The monthly newsletter
- Other appropriate local communication channels

Residents should be reminded that they need to take responsibility for protecting their own homes and should not rely solely on the Flood Warden, Parish Council or Dorset Council to protect individual properties.

Residents should also be strongly encouraged to report flooding whenever they are affected, including flooding which may have occurred during the previous five years.

Accurate records of properties affected by flooding will help South West Flood & Coastal plus Dorset Council understand the scale of the problem and may assist the Parish Council in applying for funding for flood protection measures.

ACTION – Puddletown Area Parish Council: Prepare and publish information ahead of the winter flood season covering household flood protection, reporting of flooding and the role and limitations of the Flood Warden and Parish Council.

12. Leaflet for Properties at Particular Risk

It was suggested that the above information should also be produced as a short leaflet for hand delivery to properties in the areas of The Moor and Druce Lane known to be affected by flooding.

The leaflet should emphasise:

- Protect your own home – Report flooding – Report flooding – Report flooding.
- It should explain that reporting flooding to the South West Flood & Coastal Organisation does not result in the information being passed to insurance companies.
- The leaflet should include the South West Flood & Coastal Organisation's flood reporting facility:
- <https://swfloodandcoastal.org.uk/report-flooding>

ACTION – Puddletown Area Parish Council: Consider producing and hand delivering a flood information leaflet to properties in The Moor and Druce Lane that are known to be affected by flooding.

13. Flooding Photographs and Drone Footage

Kelly Green confirmed that she will provide the Parish Council and Matt Whiter with photographs and drone footage showing the recent flooding.

Any relevant future footage and photographs will also be shared where appropriate to assist with the flood investigation.

ACTION – Kelly Green: Send existing drone footage and photographs of the recent flooding to Puddletown Area Parish Council and Matt Whiter, and provide any relevant future footage available.