

# September 2023 Puddletown Flood Report

Report by Richard Green - Flood Warden



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At approximately 5pm On 20th September 2023 after two days of continued heavy rainfall, I was alerted to the fact that the two bridges along the River Piddle in Puddletown were completely blocked with weed, inhibiting the fluvial flow and resulting in river levels rising at an alarming rate.

I worked to clear one of the arches under **Bridge 1** (see map below), cutting back the weed to allow a channel for the river to begin flowing through. As I cleared this, a huge amount of weed from upstream quickly followed, blocking the arch again.

The weed was so dense and heavy, it was an impossible task to move it alone. I contacted Henry Quinney at the EA who was helpful in quickly alerting the on duty officer who sent two EA representatives to help me clear the river.





Clearing arch under Bridge 1 on The Moor





The weed was collecting at the bend in the river next to **Bridge 1** on The Moor (shown on map), which formed a natural dam against the side of the bridge, blocking all the arches which caused river levels to rise.

We worked for over 2.5 hours, and in that time managed to clear one arch under **Bridge 1** and all three arches further down at **Bridge 2** on The Backwater.

This was enough to allow the river to drop back down to an acceptable level. Had we not acted quickly to clear some of the weed, river levels would have continued to rise and most certainly would have breached the bank, possibly flooding the road and gardens of the cottages on The Moor, and the car park and basement of The Blue Vinny.





Photos to show the amount of weed still blocking Bridge 1 on The Moor, hindering fluvial flow





## Conclusion

Clearing the weed by hand worked in the short term, but as we approach the winter and months of increasing rainfall, we need a solution to clear the weed in a more effective manner to ensure the fluvial flow isn't impeded again.

Tonnes of weed has collected and is still blocking 2 out of the 3 arches on **BRIDGE 1**. I ask that the PC contact DC or the EA to request that the weed is removed using a grab lorry as a matter of urgency.

## Flood Prevention + Solutions

- Annual maintenance of the ditch on The Moor next to The Blue Vinny is vital to prevent, control and reduce future flooding events. It is my recommendation that the Parish Council work with DC to ensure the ditch is cleared on an annual basis.

Clearing the ditch is a hugely effective flood prevention strategy, and reduces the effects of flooding on The Moor if regularly maintained. I suggest this is one of our top priorities which needs actioning asap as it is already overgrown again.

- Storm drains along The Moor must be kept clear at all times, especially from Oct-March when flooding is more likely. I liaised with the council regarding this matter in January and they were cleared, but will likely need annual maintenance.
- The sandbag store at the Blue Vinny needs to be reinstated as a precautionary measure for the winter months. I suggest our sandbag stocks are replenished before the end of October.
- The EA have mentioned the idea of installing a culvert on Druce Lane which would divert excess river water to the under-utilised ditch & tributary. This would prevent the river breaching its banks, causing surface water flooding which affects so many properties in this area. This proposal needs investigating further as it could potentially solve many, if not all of the flooding issues mentioned earlier in this report.

## Allocating Funds for flood defences

I understand that some areas in Dorset have their own village/town flood barrier. Wareham for example have their own flood defences, which residents deployed during the recent January 2023 flooding events.

As Puddletown has a history of flooding, which affects so many residents and properties, I think it would be in our interest as a community to invest in flood defences.

The Flood Fence System would replace the need for manually building a sandbag barrier, which is time consuming and not ideal in an emergency situation. The Flood Fence System is cost effective, easy to store, quick to deploy and can be erected singlehandedly in a matter of minutes making this a much more effective solution than sandbags.

<https://www.fluvial-innovations.co.uk/flood-fence-water-diverter/>

Approximate Cost :  
£132 per meter

I estimate we would need 30-40 meters to divert fluvial surface water flooding away from properties on The Moor and into the ditch by The Blue Vinny.

30M x £132 = £3,960

40m x £132 = £5,280

I strongly believe that having our own flood defence system would be of huge benefit to the village community and to those who's homes and businesses are at risk from future flooding events.

As flooding is an ever increasing issue for Puddletown, I request that the Parish Council consider allocating funds to fully or partially subsidise the purchase of The Flood Fence System for our village.

## Urgent Action to take :

1. Contact DC or EA to have weed removed from **Bridge 1**
2. Contact DC / Highways to clear ditch on The Moor (next to Blue Vinny)
3. Check if storm drains on The Moor & The Backwater need clearing
4. Contact DC to request delivery of sandbags to Blue Vinny car park
5. Request PC consider my proposal for investing in flood defences