



Kembhill Park Flood Group – Newsletter

January 2018

INTRODUCTION:

It has been some time since KPFGB sent out a newsletter but that does not mean that the group has been inactive. In fact we have been so busy that we have not had time to sit down and produce a newsletter, for which we apologize. Your membership of the group is important to us and we would have liked to communicate a bit more often with you to let you know what was happening but as you will appreciate there are just so many hours in the day and we have been concentrating our efforts on other matters.

The following is an overview of some of the things which the KPFGB committee has been doing over the last few months. If you want to see a more detailed account of what has been discussed at our meetings please log on to the KPFGB website (www.kpfg.org.uk) which in addition to our minutes and agendas has a number of useful links to other sites including the river monitoring system implemented by the Milton Meadows Resilient Community Group and is also published on Kemnay Community Council web site.

WATERGATE:

As some of you will be aware the Council has decided to relocate the Watergate barrier from the route they originally proposed near the sewage works fence to two new routes in the “wild flower garden”, (shortened to WFG). This follows a topographical survey undertaken by members of the KPFGB committee which showed that the original route proposed by the Council was at the lowest point in the WFG. Members of the committee were concerned that by locating the barrier along this route it might not have sufficient height to contain the flood water with a flood similar to that experienced

in 2016. The Council agreed with the results of our survey and now proposes to split the barrier into two sections and to locate these on higher ground on either side of the WFG. They also plan to make use of the high ground surrounding the old football/tennis court, which is higher than the surrounding area, as part of the flood defences. The diagram shows



— Watergate Route
— Old Football pitch raised border

now Watergate might be deployed.

As some of you will have noticed the Council has cleared a stretch of ground leading from the riverside bund up to the old tennis court and a similar stretch from the top end of the old tennis court up towards Bremner Way. According to the Council by locating



the barriers in this way houses in Kembhill Park should be provided with adequate protection against flooding of a similar nature to that which occurred in January 2016.

One of the consequences however of the Council's plan is that flood water will now be diverted onto Bremner Way where it will flow along the road and be directed onto the football field on the far side of Kembhill Park. We have pointed out to the Council that the lowest point on this road occurs outside the main entrance to Alehousewells school car park and at the houses at the bottom end of Bremner Way. As most of you will be aware there was a considerable amount of flood water at this location in January 2016 with flooding of parts of the school and adjacent houses being affected.

The KPFGB committee has pointed out to the Council that there will now have to be a considerable number of sandbags or other flood protection devices placed across the main entrance into Kembhill Park, at the entrance to Alehousewells school car park and the houses at the bottom end of Bremner Way if flooding to these properties is to be avoided. We have reminded the Council that the football field itself was extensively flooded in January 2016 and have asked them if they have carefully considered all the consequences of directing flood waters onto Bremner Way.

Another concern we have raised with the Council is that by diverting flood waters away from the houses in Kembhill Park there may be even greater volumes of water flowing along Bremner Way than last time thus creating a bigger problem for the drainage system. We have asked the Council if they can tell us what assessments they have carried out to make sure that floodwater will not flow back through the underground drainage system into Kembhill Park and flood houses in the scheme or other houses behind Alehousewells school in the area of Heron Close. If this was to happen we have pointed out that their new plan for the deployment of the barrier would undermine the "protection" which it is supposed to provide.

Council staff have indicated on a number of occasions that the Council could not be seen to carry out any works which might be seen by SEPA as creating a permanent flood defence. We have asked the Council to look again at this issue and examine whether it might be possible to raise the ground level between the old tennis court and the bund which runs along the fence on the Bremner Way side of the sewage works. By placing the Watergate barrier which they have purchased on top of a such a short section of raised ground we have suggested that this construction would not in itself be creating a permanent flood barrier but would be merely assisting a temporary barrier to perform in the most effective manner.

We have also suggested to the Council that an alternative to raising the ground level at this point would be the purchase of two additional sections of the Watergate barrier which were one and a half metres high. Two such sections measuring thirty metres in total would be long enough to bridge the gap between the old tennis court and the Bremner Way bund. We are aware that there would be additional costs involved if this idea was accepted but have suggested that this expenditure would be extremely worthwhile. It would not only stop water flowing onto Bremner Way with all the problems and costs which protecting houses along this route involves but it would also provide greater protection to Alehousewells school.



The KPFGB committee are currently waiting on a detailed response from the Council to a number of questions which we asked them just before Christmas about the above issues. In the mean-time they have said that they are confident that their current plan for the siting of the barrier will be sufficient to stop flooding in Kembhill Park should there ever be a repetition of the events of January 2016.

CHARITABLE STATUS: As a result of the changes to our constitution which were approved at the AGM in September the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator has approved our application to become a Registered Charity. Having charitable status provides our group with a number of benefits. It also means that we will now have access to a wider range of fund granting bodies from whom larger sums of money may be obtained if there are projects which we wish to pursue to improve the flood defences around Kembhill Park.

RESILIENCE PLANNING:

Our committee has been working in conjunction with Kemnay Community Council and the Milton Meadows Resilience Community Group to produce a Resilience Plan which would be put into operation in the event of a flood or other emergency. The Plan covers a number of issues such as how members of the committee will liaise with the Council and other services as well as other groups in the village to co-ordinate our response to an emergency.

It should be stressed that KPFGB does not wish to interfere with neighbours informally helping each other and offering help to those in need. We will need however to have an accurate and up to date list of volunteers who would be willing to undertake specific tasks such as visiting vulnerable residents and helping to evacuate them should it be necessary.

We will also need a number of volunteers who would be willing to keep an eye on the Watergate barrier should it be deployed over a weekend or overnight to make sure no one interferes with it. The Council have provided guidance on who to contact should there be any problems.

Copies of this plan will be delivered to members early in the new year once some last-minute adjustments have been made to the first version.

MEETING WITH ALEXANDER BURNETT MSP:

At a recent meeting with Alex Burnett he indicated that he had raised questions in the Scottish Parliament about Kemnay and other parts of Aberdeenshire being given higher priority for flood defence work than was the case at the present time. A video of his speech can be viewed at the following link. <http://kpfgb.org.uk/wp/useful-links/>. You can also view the video by logging onto the KPFGB website where you will find the clip under "Useful Links".

Alex had also raised the issue of additional funds being made available to Aberdeenshire for flood defence work in Kemnay. He indicated however that it was unlikely such extra money would be made available by the Scottish Government since funding for such work had been frozen for some years and was unlikely to increase.



Alex said he would continue to make the case for Kemnay to be given a higher priority and is willing to help in whatever way he can.

CONCLUSION:

I hope you will find the content of this newsletter to be of interest but if you have any questions or have any issues you wish to raise with the committee please either contact me at chairman@kpf.org.uk or Jim Buchan at secretary@kpf.org.uk.

Ken Ledingham,
Chairman,
Kembhill Park Flood Group

8.01.18