

SW Update from Pillhill Pan Parish Forum Meeting 14 October 2024

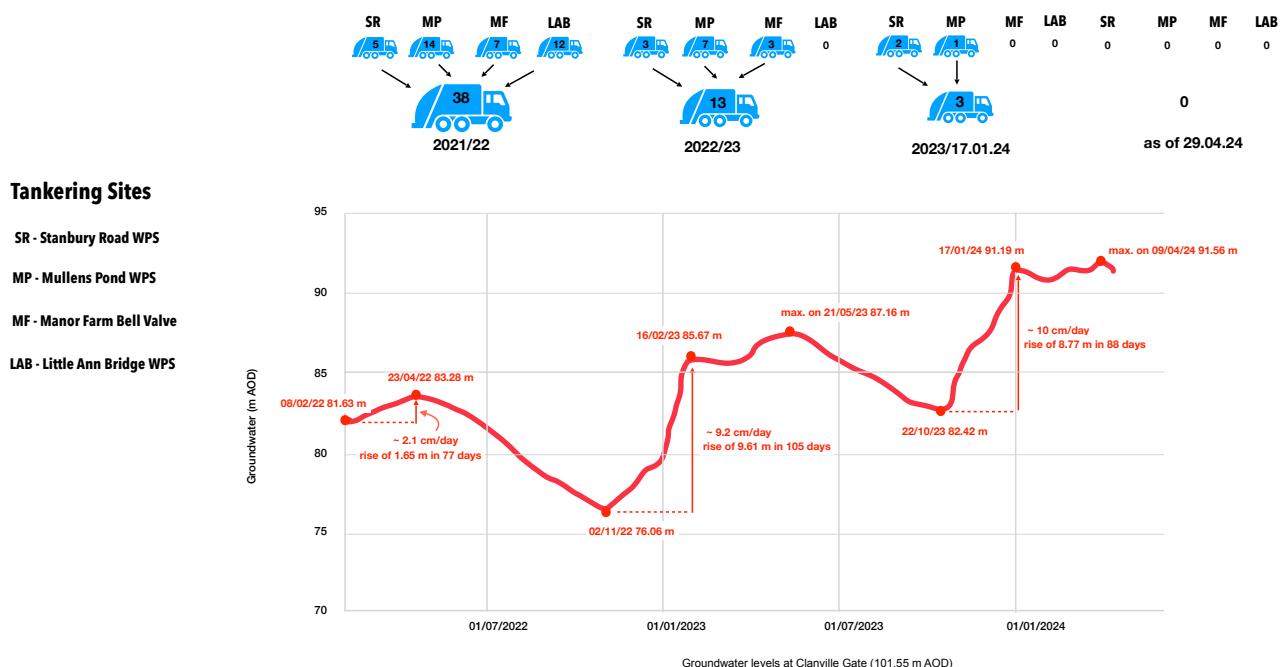
The Pillhill Pan Parish Forum (PPPF) met Southern Water (SW) on Monday 14 October 2024 to review progress against our shared objectives of abolishing 1) tanker disruption from our villages and 2) overpumping sewage into the Pillhill Brook. Just a reminder that tankers are needed when SW's water pumping stations can no longer cope with the combined volume of sewage and groundwater (GW) in the sewer pipes. GW gets into the pipes through sewer joints or manhole chambers (both public and private). Overpumping is the last resort when tankers cannot take the amount of fluid in the sewer pipes away fast enough to prevent sewage pollution. This is a major problem in chalk catchments like our own.

In May 2022 SW set up a dedicated Pathfinder Team and chose the Pillhill Pan Parishes to pilot a new approach to tackling GW infiltration in chalk catchments - relining all the sewers, both public and private, at their cost rather than just patching isolated sections of public sewer.

Has the PPPF Pathfinder been a success? Well, the Environmental Agency (EA) uses a GW level of 84 m, at its Clanville Gate borehole, as a trigger level over which SW need to prepare to take action to mitigate GW infiltration in the sewer. This year tankers left our villages on 3 May when GW level was an unprecedented 90.59 m, 6.59 m higher than the EA's trigger level! This effectively means that all of the sewer network would be under water. And SW have not overpumped in the catchment since the winter of 2021, despite year on year increases of winter GW level. However SW want to monitor sewer performance throughout this GW season so they have demonstrable evidence that the Pathfinder approach of relining everything works.

With SW the PPPF have been using the graph shown below to evidence that SW's relining programme has made a difference.

Pillhill Pan Parish 3 yr Reduction in Tanker Deployment



SW explained that they are looking to replicate the 'reline everything' approach in other catchments and they have started new projects in the parishes of East Dean and Funtington in West Sussex in order to build a portfolio of successes to persuade Ofwat that this is the way forward in chalk catchments.

Keith Herbert the SW Pathfinder lead wanted to stress that the recent success in the PPPF was not just down to the relining programme. Better management and co-ordination between departments to mitigate GW issues have played their part too. To this end SW shared extracts of their new Operational Playbook with the meeting and asked the PPPF to review and feedback our views on its content.

One major issues still remains outstanding, the constant risk of spills at the manhole chamber at Manor Farm in Abbotts Ann. Although the trigger no longer seems to be high GW levels, spills have occurred during storm surges. Much of the meeting focused on the cause of the problem at the valves in Mill Lane, Abbotts Ann. These valves have to be manually opened and closed on a regular basis to stop them being blocked by wet wipes, a modern product that did not exist when the sewer system was installed. If blockages are not tackled swiftly foul water can run down the hill into the village. Some progress has been made with a company called Technolog Ltd being employed to scope an automated solution. The timing of this solution along with the replacement of the Anna Valley rising main are dependent on the final determination of SW's price review with Ofwat which is expected on 18 December.

The PPPF have also made good progress with Hampshire County Council. Their Flood and Water Management (FWM) team have recently published a [Community Toolkit](#) to help parishes plan for and tackle flooding. The PPPF are producing a flooding hotspots document mapping areas of concern to be discussed with the FWM team to together we can best prepare for the winter ahead.

Chris Harris, Co-Chair of the PPPF and Chair of Amport PC yet again expressed his disappointment on behalf of the PPPF that we had not been able to get the EA to engage in these meetings.

The PPPF has opened quarterly meetings to a number of guests:

- [The Pan Parish River Pollution Forum](#), representing parishes concerned about sewage pollution along the Test
- The newly formed Upper Anton Parishes Flood Forum including Appleshaw, Penton Grafton and neighbouring villages, concerned about sewage issues cause by flooding
- The parish of St Mary Bourne, also concerned with flooding

All have said that they have found the collaborative approach being taken by the PPPF and the success achieved so far extremely helpful in their own forward planning.

Janet Wright
Secretary to the Pillhill Pan Parish Forum