

15 Nov 2023

**From:** Mike Dent

**To:** Chair Alderbury Parish Council

### **Environmental Agency (EA) Presentation – Groundwater in Dorset and Wiltshire**

I attended the EA presentation on Groundwater in Dorset and Wiltshire held at Wylve Village Hall on 14 Nov between 1800-2045.

Presentations were made by the EA reps with a contribution from Wessex Water (WxW). Wiltshire Council Drainage (WCD) were present but made no contribution or comments.

The presentation focussed on the issue of Groundwater flooding, which predominately affects chalk-based areas, but interestingly also impacts the areas around Salisbury due to the local geology and the effect of capillary action drawing water up from the water table plus rain and surface water.

#### **Key Factors:**

1. There is currently no accurate groundwater flooding mapping anywhere in UK. EA is currently in the process of undertaking a project to address this shortfall.
2. Surface water flooding mapping is based on historical information (and best guesses!) and cannot always be relied upon.
3. The removal of vegetation and trees adds to groundwater and surface water flooding problems.
4. Hydrostatic pressure from hills forces water upwards in valleys and at the bottom of hills.
5. Climate changes, which have been cyclical since 13<sup>th</sup> century, have increased the instances of flooding since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - Dry/hot summers and wet winters.

#### **Point of Interest:**

6. EA and WxW are **NOT** consulted over drainage and potential flooding area issues associated with or related to new planning applications and new developments. Wiltshire Planning only seek 'advice' from WC Drainage and, according to the EA, the advice they provide is based upon historical information related only to surface water flooding.

#### **Conclusions**

There is potential for future groundwater flooding in the Parish and when combined with surface water flooding this could materialise where insufficient or ineffective surface water flooding mitigation has been implemented (new developments!)

The lack of consultation between WC Planning and EA and WxW over planning applications for new developments is extremely concerning.

#### **Recommendation**

The Issue of the lack of consultation between WC Planning and EA/WxW relating to new planning submissions should be followed up with our local WC representative.

*{Signed}*

**Mike Dent**