

Nottingham Post Online Article following interview with Peter Cross Monday 7 Sept.

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/lowdham-flooding-nottinghamshire-county-council-4499808>

Action group says more needs to be done to prevent repeat of flooding that affected 90 homes in Lowdham

£5m improvements to flood defences are currently being carried out - but a local action group wants more to be done

BY **Peter Hennessy** 04:00, 13 SEP 2020



Fire service fighting floods in Lowdham (Image: Isaac Coles)

The Lowdham Flood Action Group is calling on the county council to do more to protect the village from future floods.

The village, which is centred around the Cocker Beck, has been flooded seven times in the past 21 years, most recently in November 2019 and February this year after Storm Dennis.

Work is now underway on £5m flood defences, such as improvements to the shuttering which runs alongside the beck to try and ensure it doesn't overflow.

The chairman of the local flood action group, Peter Cross, says he wants Nottinghamshire County Council to carry out further improvements - stating drains in the village should be cleaned more frequently.

He said: "The drains were full of roots and silt and were blocked – they weren't being properly maintained.

"So they didn't take the water, the water just went out onto the road.

"They weren't properly maintained at the November point and, as far we know, nothing was done between November and February to check them and see why the excess water was so high.

"Lowdham is a place that is vulnerable to flooding – you cannot apply norms for the whole of the county to all of Lowdham. It needs more than that."

Mr Cross has submitted a Freedom of Information request to try and clarify if this was the case but has so far been unsuccessful in obtaining this information.

He is also criticising the authority for a lack of action over a suspected attenuation tank, an underground storage tank which could help to store excess water in the event of a flood.



Flood defence improvement works are currently being carried out in Lowdham by the Environment Agency(Image: Environment Agency)

The group say they are waiting for the council to serve notice on and access properties on Lime Tree Avenue and Willow Holt to find out if there is a tank there.

Mr Cross continued: "We have been waiting for more than four months for the county council to serve notice on these two properties for Severn Trent to be able to enter them to do the work.

"We have no idea why in more than four months the county council have failed to serve notice on these properties – which are both empty.

"We don't understand why the county council haven't done this."

Every single property nearby flooded in the 2013 and 2020 floods, and the area is known as a "hotspot" for flooding in the village.

Martin Carnaffin, Highways Contract Manager at [Nottinghamshire County Council](#), said: "Via is responsible for keeping over 158,000 highway gullies and offlets maintained on behalf the County Council in the Nottinghamshire area. "We work in partnership with Tarmac Limited and ACL Highway Services to clean every adopted gully in the county at least once every two years.

"As each drain or gully is cleansed, its location and detailed condition is logged by operatives using handheld devices. This includes data on how full the gully is with silt and other debris.

"This data is then used to prioritise the cleansing of drains and gullies throughout Nottinghamshire, ensuring those which are more prone to collecting high levels of silt or debris, or other issues, are cleansed on a more regular six-monthly or yearly basis.

"It also allows any potential drainage problems to be flagged for repair and kept safe for road users.

"The authority has agreed proposals to carry out improvements on the surface water piped system in the Tannery Drive/Willow Holt area that will reduce the flooding experienced in that area.

"The works will require entry onto private land and we are currently progressing with the legal processes and property owner discussions necessary to allow us to do that. Once agreed we will carry out the works as soon as is practical."

The village has been granted £5m to go towards its flood defences - with work carried out by the Environment Agency now underway.

At least 90 properties were internally flooded in February this year, with more than an average month's worth of rain (39.2mm) falling in just 24 hours.

The village green area is used as a flood storage system in the event of a flood.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said: "Our contractors have started initial groundwork on the Lowdham flood embankment after the village was hit by storms this year.

"The upstream storage scheme is also progressing, with ground investigations due to start next week."

The improvements are set to be completed in March 2021.

For those who live in the village, regardless of the works carried out, past flooding will always remain at the forefront of their minds.

"It is bad," says Mr Cross.

"We've got people in the village who have never actually flooded who won't go on holiday in case they do.

"We've got people that have flooded who won't leave their properties because they fear about the ability for flood defences to be put up.

"My mum, she never actually flooded, but she knew that her property had flooded before. And every time it rained and there was a puddle outside her back door she would say 'are we going to flood?'

"What we want to try and do is to give people the confidence that everything that could possibly have been done, has been done.

"We just won't tolerate people not doing the jobs that they need to do to reduce the risk to the minimum it can be."