

Flood Resilience Group

Minutes 8th March 2024

1) Welcome

2) Attendees:

Andy Heer (Auchtermuchty), Ewan Band (Auchtermuchty) Catriona MacDonald (Auchtermuchty), Owen Darling (Auchtermuchty)
John Brown, John Smith (Falkland),
Eleanor & Keith Morris (Strathmiglo) Maaike Cook (Strathmiglo),
Kasha Jarosz, Doug (SFF)

Apologies:

Bill Torrance, Fiona Smith, Annette Scott, George Orr, Marilyn Workman

3) Notes last meeting

Approved

4) Chair's report:

Meeting in Letham Village Hall, organised by Willie Rennie.

Present were Land-owners, Farmers, reps. From Fife Council, SEPA, Woodland Trust, Eden Angling group (with worries about invasive species and water quality) and many others.

The meeting was filled with tensions, land-owners, farmers and SEPA are in conflict about Dredging/Not dredging. Dredging can help in many places.

Problems are plenty, solutions should be found in cooperating.

SEPA to be more willing to help instead of 'digging heels in' and refusing permission for dredging. SEPA's big impact is problematic to keep rivers and ponds silt-free.

5) Discussion:

Approx 200 years ago, the Eden was canalised, to drain a loch, now in hindsight this was a wrong decision. The Eden should be meandering, as well as water retention ponds are needed to slow down the water-flow after heavy rainfall down stream.

A reservoir is too expensive, farmers are willing to make retention ponds.

How to slow down the water: build more 'Leaky Barriers' and 'Log-dams'?

Maintenance of existing flood defences should be 'upped'

Original Flood screen was made in Auchtermuchty with stone walls.

Problems are varying in the Villages.

Falkland wants to dredge the pond for water retaining, SEPA might block.

The following section was a discussion led by Kasha and Doug from Scottish Flood Forum

Kasha informs the group about (inflatable) communal flood defences, that can be put over a local roads to prevent water running down.

Each village should be assessed on their own risks and issues.

Where trees or barriers can help in one place, they can cause havoc in other places.

Communities/Home owners should be informed and educated about what they can do themselves to keep their homes safe and dry.

Education is highly needed.

Impact of building new settlements on hills have massive impact and changes water-flows down hill.

Old dry stone walls, being removed by a farmer to gain easier access as well as more land (crop) has massive impact on the water-flow downhill after heavy rainfall.

Changing the direction of ploughing can pose big risks.

Farming practices have big influences.

Removing a wall from a garden can have massive impact on private property, extra buildings (sheds, summer houses) can block and change water-flows with terrible detrimental effect to properties

People should be made aware that their own actions can and will have far reaching consequences.

The idea that the River Eden is a 'tidal' river is not possible, according to Ewan Band.

SEPA gages to warn for rising waters are not working properly, warnings come too late.

Where can people get advise and items to their protect properties?

Picture per situation is needed via the local authorities, working together with agencies and councils should solve a lot of problems, better than pointing fingers!

Invite Local Councils to walk along difficult parts and find solutions.

How did Falkland set up their Flood defence group.

Flood-meetings from the Council have all emphasis on Climate change.

The Eden sustainability project: the Eden between Strathmiglo and Dunshalt is canalised, this part should be meandering.

Farmers are very much willing to help here.

Fife Council does give grants to people/groups to protect properties, IF they qualify.

What is needed for these grants is a general understanding of
Why, Where and How floods happened, and description of events

6) Any matters or other Business

7) Date Next Meeting ???