FLOODING AND FLOOD PREVENTION

(Minute Ref: 2September 1999)

There have been 4 floods in Teffont in the previous 20 years, but the major and most significant was the flash flood of 5 July 1999. This was primarily caused by 81mm of rain falling in just one and a half hours.

Water poured down into the village and stream from the hills above Teffont carrying the run off from the pig farm situated up on the top of the C277 between Chilmark and Teffont and from the unfinished ‘Golf Course’ up beside the Old Dinton Road. Generally changes in agricultural practises had exacerbated the situation including an increase of silt in the stream, the loss of the flood plain and reduced drainage.

The Fire Brigade and Salisbury District Council were thanked for their prompt reaction and help as was Pamela Fisher who managed to save Magna Church by using coal bags in lieu of sand bags.

Salisbury District Council appointed a Drainage Consultant (Mr Salinger) to give an interim report to outline the problems as he saw them and the statistical likelihood of a repetition of the 5 July rainfall and future floods. His emphasis was on remedial action to include alteration to some bridges and the creation of holding ponds to catch excess run-off. He stated the pig farm should be moved (which was the case within a year) and much work was needed on the north face of the ‘golf course’ (remedial work was done to the top soil of the golf course which at the time was thought ineffective. However, the golf course was never completed and is now pasture land).

The Environmental Agency representative confirmed that the District Council was involved with non-main rivers, but ultimately the responsibility rested with all Riparian Owners for their land and section of their stream. Mr Baddeley (District Councillor) assured the villagers of all possible support from the County Council and emphasised the need for all concerned to work together.

By September 1999 considerable remedial action had been taken starting with the digging out of the long ditch beside the road on the Manor Farm boundary and the clearance of debris from the stream and drainage ditches along Magna and Evias. The small tributary streams to the main channel in Evias were also maintained.

Further flood preventative measures were put in place over some years in addition to those mentioned above.

* 12 grips dug out along the Old Dinton Road to reduce water flow coming directly down the road. Arrangements had been put in place to ensure they were regularly maintained.
* Two attenuation ponds created at Manor Farm which take the diverted water from the grips. These ponds are managed by the owner of Manor Farm.
* An attenuation pond at Spring Head at the top of the catchment to reduce the flow down to the Teffont Stream
* The Environment Agency carry out regular surveys and maintain stretches of the watercourse that is not practical for Riparian Owners to do so.
* The culvert by Evias Church had an upright removed to reduce the impedance to water flow.
* A Flood Warden was appointed for Teffont and some Teffont residents signed up to the Environment Agency Flood Warning System.
* A Flood Plan was made.
* Alterations to both the bridge on the B3089 by Post Office Cottage and the heightening of the bridge at Evias Church finally completed all the flood prevention recommendations.

On 2 November 2006 The Parish Council Chairman, Richard Long-Fox together with the Clerk, Zillah Faulkner, met with Matthew Penny from the Environment Agency and had a walk round the village to show him all the flood preventative measures that had been put in place. As a result of this useful meeting he agreed to write a letter to confirm that he was satisfied that the Parish Council had taken correct measures to reduce the risk of flooding on the community. This letter has proved invaluable to residents who subsequently have wished to sell or buy houses in Teffont. (see letter attached dated 30 November 2006).

Since the flash flood of 1999 Teffont has endured heavy rainfall and storms but to date the flood preventative measures have proved effective.