**Meeting on Thursday 13th May 2021 starting at 12:45 pm at Melverley Village Hall**

**Arranged by Owen Paterson MP with Environment Agency staff and Severn/Vyrnwy confluence constituents**

**Notes**

**Attendees**

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| MP | Owen Paterson |
| Environment Agency | Clare Dinnis - Area Director for the West Midlands, joint chair River Severn Partnership |
|  | Adam Lines - Shropshire Area Environment Manager |
|  | Paul Ardill – Assets team |
| Shropshire Council | Vince Hunt – Llanymynech Ward |
| Melverley Internal Drainage Board | Bryan Edwards - chair |
|  | Richard Jones – surveyor and clerk |
| Melverley Parish Council | Sally Herbert-Jones – chair (briefing only) |
|  | Rosy Harding |
|  | Martin Davies |
| Kinnerley Parish Council | Nick Barclay - chair |
|  | Charles Green |

The main purpose of the meeting was for the Environment Agency to see the argaes; it was also to inform understanding of the whole “system” and to suggest local changes.

The approximate timings listed in the briefing supplied to attendees were largely followed, partly by omitting some planned visits.

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| **Approximate timings** |  |
| 12:45 | Convene at Melverley Village Hall, SY10 8PH (Grid ref: SJ330 176)Outdoor briefing |
| 1:05 | Travel in cars to the Maesbrook locations.  |
| 2:10 | Travel to Melverley locations |
| 3:00 | Travel to Weir Brook outfall, Cae Howel gauges and The Dunkett sluice. Meet Russell Lloyd, Cae Howel |
| 3:50 | On to Pentre locations and the Buckley outfall. Meet Pentre residents and Ed Davies, Buckley Farm |
| 4:30 | Return to MVH |

Attendees were alerted to the 11 February 2021 presentation (expanded and updated) available at [Flooding | Kinnerley Parish Council](https://www.kinnerleyparishcouncil.org.uk/flooding)

**Location 1: Melverley Village Hall**

Outdoor briefing: The tour was for all levels of experience, whether those from families that have lived with flooding for generations or those who are newer to flooding. There was a list of things for the EA to look at, some on the tour. Nothing should be done without consultation and modelling to assess whether there are negative consequences for some whilst giving benefit to others. Spots had been selected that should particularly be seen, partly to gain an understanding of how flooding works round here. The tour took in structures other than just argaes. The Map pack showed the system with Wales, and flood risks. The 1946 flood map was presented, showing the significance of the early water, the Morda Gap, the flood openings in the railway, the flow down to Melverley, and the importance of Ice Age geology.

**Location 2: Maesbrook**

Walter Davies, Dyffryd, on the Morda New Cut bridge, presented his map showing the first restriction and the backing up of the Morda, with a sequence of four photos and the flow through the railway openings, over Gwern-y-daubwll to Melverley. He stressed the importance of getting the early (Vyrnwy) water away. He pointed out the old Collins argae. The EA implied that there was no budget to remove trees that had grown in the river.

Potential visits that were omitted because of shortage of time were to: (1) the Collins argae and its gap; (2) the splitting off from the main channel of the Morda (just north of the Morda New Cut bridge) of the mill stream; (3) flood openings in the railway embankment; and (4) the trees growing in the river by the old ford at the end of the Dyffryd lane.

**Location 3: near The Shores, Melverley**

Rosy Harding explained the shortcomings of the argaes at this location. There was discussion as to the higher level and age of the argae on the Welsh side. The EA agreed to establish the relevant facts, which personnel on site did not know.

**Location 4: Melverley Bridge**

The tour walked to the confluence; Owen Paterson gave his opinion that the Vyrnwy is twice the size of the Severn there. Photographs were taken with the confluence in the background. There were discussions as to the state of repair of the bridge and its future and as to state of the Crew Green gauge.

OP led an assessment of actions arising from the meeting, and then had to leave the tour. As well as items from the list on page 3 below it was agreed that both PCs should write to OP in connection with the state of the Melverley Bridge, which is a highways, not an EA asset.

**Location 5: Weir Brook outfall**

The tour met Russell Lloyd, Cae Howel, at the roadside and walked to the outfall. Note was taken of the arrangements and the two gauges at that location (Cae Howel and New Cut at Cae Howel). Paul Ardill noted that the Dunkett sluice had a double decker arrangement.

Because of shortage of time a potential visit to the Dunkett sluice was omitted.

**Location 6: Road end of the Buckley Farm track**

The tour met Pentre residents John Bewley, Mark Cuthbert-Brown and Jake Glover. They explained the changed nature of a Pentre flood, and shortcomings of the argaes, signage etc. Clare Dinnis agreed to follow up MC-B’s Freedom of Information request about Clywedog reservoir.

CD and AL remained in discussion at that location while the remaining party moved to the final location.

**Location 7: Buckley Farm**

Those remaining on the tour met Ed Davies at Buckley Farm. Buckley Farm sluice was noted to be operating effectively. PA noted that faulty outfalls beyond Buckley Farm were being repaired as part of the present works by the EA gang located at the Crows Nest, Melverley. Work to the old Weir Brook outfall was also part of this programme.

**Local changes suggested (as in the briefing supplied to attendees)**

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| Continued review of maintenance of existing argaes and sluices, including checking and modelling levels and considering height increases e.g. at Pentre |
| Lowering of the levels at Clywedog reservoir to prevent the overtopping and deliberate releases that hit the confluence area and prevent the earlier water down the Vyrnwy from getting away before the Severn water, after storms |
| Additional work and funding for the Melverley Internal Drainage Board, including for further ditch maintenance to allow quicker draining of flood waters e.g.in the Pentre area |
| Further sluices to allow quicker draining of flood waters e.g. between Pentre and Hilly |
| Remove trees and sediment islands from Vyrnwy and Severn |
| Ensure bridge arches are clear of sediment |
| Improve flow through Maesbrook railway flood openings |
| Clear out Maesbrook flood channel |
| Raise roads at specific low points e.g. Gwern-y-daubwll/Station House, Maesbrook |
| Improve accuracy and timings of flood alerts and warnings |
| A need for EA to lead an intelligent evidence-based modelling exercise that notes:1. Climate change trends pending over the next 10-30 years
2. Tracks the flows through the local landscape
3. Does a similar exercise upstream in Wales
4. Maps the benefits of the soft engineering/natural flood management measures by location related to known flows
5. Highlights land use change options i.e. no deep ploughing but permanent pasture, some enhanced wetland provision
6. Options around hard engineering solutions noting cost benefit and upstream and downstream negative impacts
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No suggestion should be carried forward without consultation and an assessment of possible negative impacts elsewhere in the area.