

Annette Blackwell
Burnt House
Zephon Common Lane

I have lived in my house for 23 years; fifteen of those years full time (I worked in the Far East for the first seven years of owning it so wasn't here all the time then). My house and my neighbours' house, Poulter's Bridge Cottage, are the closest properties to the proposed SANG. My house is approximately 150 metres away from the SINC and I can see the entrance to the track leading to the kissing gate from my back door. Between my house and the SINC is the River Hart, which runs along its boundary. The river is closer to the SINC than it is to my house.

The River Hart flows at the bottom of the field at the back of my house and then through a culvert underneath the Basingstoke Canal. The culvert acts like a bottleneck following heavy rainfall, which helps protect the properties downstream in Crookham Village, as once the water level reaches the top of the culvert (six foot high, I believe) the water backs up and floods the field. According to the Environment Agency website, the part of the field closest to my house is in Flood Zone 2, which means there is up to a one in one thousand chance of this occurring each year (see the map). As you can see from the photographs, this is misleading and the pictures contained in this document show water backed up to the bottom of my garden (beyond the one in one thousand year mark) on two occasions. In fact, this has happened at least eight times in the past fifteen years; three of these occasions during the summer months when there had been heavy rain after a spell of sustained dry weather (I do not have a record of the dates). Both sides of the river were under water on these occasions. There have been many anxious moments during the past twenty-three years when heavy rainfall is forecast, and many nights I have been in and out of bed during the night, watching the rise in the water level.

Anecdotally, the field next to my house flooded, a few years ago, to the one in one thousand mark, just after the farmer had cut the hay. This followed heavy rainfall after a period of sustained dry weather. The huge cylindrical bales of hay wrapped in black plastic were scattered over the field and became waterborne, floating towards the culvert. One or two acted like a cork in the culvert and the water backed up very seriously until the farmer managed to get them free on the other side of the tunnel. I can't remember the exact date but I don't think you cut hay at any time other than the summer. It was not more

than ten years ago. There was another serious flood up to this mark in July in 2007 (the twentieth, I think) following a cloudburst early one morning, but I am not certain of the exact date. Again, heavy rain after a dry spell.

When this level of flood is reached my three sets of neighbours who live further down the lane at Riverside Cottage, Zephon House and Poulters Bridge Cottage are completely marooned. They cannot get their cars to Crondall Road and there is no other vehicular access out. In years gone by they have had to wade through the water with their children and we have driven them to school.

I have a well in my garden and, for most of the year, the water level in the well is a few centimetres only below the level of the ground outside it. I presume this shows the high water table in the immediate area. The patch of grass opposite my house, and the verge up to the river, is green and lush, no matter how dry the weather has been. It is perhaps appropriate to note that the lane my house is in, Zephon Common Lane, was also called Watery Lane up until about twenty years ago when this section, west of the swing bridge, was renamed. It was named Watery Lane for obvious reasons.

The site of the proposed SANG is known as Hillyborrow locally, and despite having had dogs for the past fifteen years, and despite living so close to it (as I have said, I can see it from my back door), I rarely walk with them on the footpaths through the field. The reason is, the ground is extremely waterlogged and slippery. For most of the year, you are in danger of slipping over and you come home with a dog that needs to be hosed down. My neighbours are the same and walk elsewhere. My neighbours at Zephon House usually go to the SPA at Caesar's Camp, at Beacon Hill and my neighbours at Poulters Bridge walk the canal. They have a long-haired bearded collie (enough said) and I have never seen them on Hillyborrow.

I take my dog in the car to Crondall each day and walk around the farm tracks there. Part of the reason for having a dog, as I see it, is the social aspect. I have made many good friends from walking my regular route and my dog benefits from meeting and romping with other dogs. If you walk the area of the proposed SANG you rarely meet anyone. Hand on heart, the last time I walked the footpaths over Hillyborrow was about three years ago.

I have heard that Lyme disease has been reported in this area. I see roe deer very frequently in the vicinity of my house, the SINC and the SANG, and that is another deterrent from walking there. Where there are deer, there are ticks. This might be a factor that will put dog walkers off.

I have many times seen the horses that graze the SANG area up to their knees in water at the same time the grassland is carpeted in buttercups, which I believe is in June. The buttercups obviously love the wet, rich marshy conditions there.

I have outlined my concern if the proposed development at Watery Lane goes ahead, not least for the several householders in Zebon Copse that keep sandbags in their garages as a matter of course. I am concerned that there will be extra run off which will add to the flood risk. In addition, and in my experience of living next to it for twenty-three years, the area proposed for the SANG is unsuitable and will not be an attractive option for dog walkers and for recreational purposes.

Please see photos overleaf.



26 November 2006 Taken from my bedroom window



22 December 2013



Taken 25 April 2014. Part of the proposed SANG with a boardwalk which was put in place to make walking the footpath easier and less wet underfoot.



Flood Zone indicated on Environment Agency website. Light blue area indicates 1 in 1000 year risk but **flood level has been up to this level and beyond on at least 8 occasions in the past 15 years.** Pictures above show the water at this level on two occasions (2006 and 2013) The Environment Agency wording is:

- **Light blue** shows the additional extent of an extreme flood from rivers or the sea. These outlying areas are likely to be affected by a major flood, with up to a 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of occurring each year. My pictures show water exceeding this mark on two occasions in the last ten years.