

Flood Investigation Report

Brook Road – High Brooms Tunbridge Wells Borough



As the Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent, the County Council has a duty to investigate flood incidents as detailed within **Section 19** of the **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**:

A flood event occurred on 3 June 2012 at the section of open channel of a watercourse next to a private car park near Oak Road, Tunbridge Wells. The flood event caused damage to three properties and some vehicles.

Date of Incident:	3 June 2012	Date of Investigation:	October 2012
Site Location:	Brook Road – High Brooms, Tunbridge Wells Borough		



Figure. 1: Site location plan

<p>Summary of Extent & Impact:</p>	<p>On the 3 June 2012, during a period of heavy rainfall, it was reported to Kent County Council that a section of open channel, outlined in red on Figure. 1 (see photos.1 and 2) had overtopped its banks causing flooding.</p> <p>This resulted in damage to ground floor properties in Taylor Court, Brook Road. The residents' car parking area (see photo.2) which is accessed via Brook Road was also inundated with flood water to a depth estimated to be approximately 0.6 m, causing damage to vehicles.</p>
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Photo.1: Open channel section – facing south west



Photo.2: Residents car parking area - facing south west

<p>Response:</p>	<p>At the time of the incident KCC Highways deployed a cleansing vehicle; however, it was unable to access the car park due to the low clearance. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was contacted and they attended and assisted with the clear up.</p> <p>Home Group Ltd, the land owners, were contacted by Kent County Council following the incident and urged to clear the rubbish and debris in the channel. Home Group LTD has co-operated with this request and cleared the rubbish and debris.</p>
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<p>Cause:</p>	<p>Following a site visit and discussions with local residents, it is likely that the cause of flooding was due to the downstream culvert inlet (see photo.3) becoming blocked by rubbish and debris (see photo.4). This obstruction caused the water to back up and overtop the banks of the channel. The flow in the channel was higher than normal due to the heavy rainfall during the night of 2 June into the early morning of 3 June. A local rain gauge located in Draper Street, Southborough recorded approximately 25mm of rainfall in 2 hours between 11pm and 1am (source of rain gauge data, www.tunbridgewellsweb.com).</p> <p>The residents reported that the rubbish in the channel that caused this flood incident was dumped by flytippers. However, the source of the rubbish cannot be confirmed.</p>
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Photo.3: Trash screen in front of culvert inlet (clear)



Photo.4: Rubbish & debris at trash screen (obstructed)

Catchment Area:

The watercourse that flooded is called the Somerhill Stream and is an ordinary watercourse, which means that it is not a main river (which are maintained by the Environment Agency).

The channel is open for approximately 30m at Oak Road. The watercourse is culverted for approximately 1km downstream of the open section at Oak Road. Upstream there is a small culvert to the gas works to the south where there is a further open channel and it is joined by smaller tributaries from the southeast and southwest.

The catchment is predominantly urban in nature, with many sections in culverts and under roads. It receives a lot of runoff from hardstanding areas and is likely to be highly responsive to rainfall events.

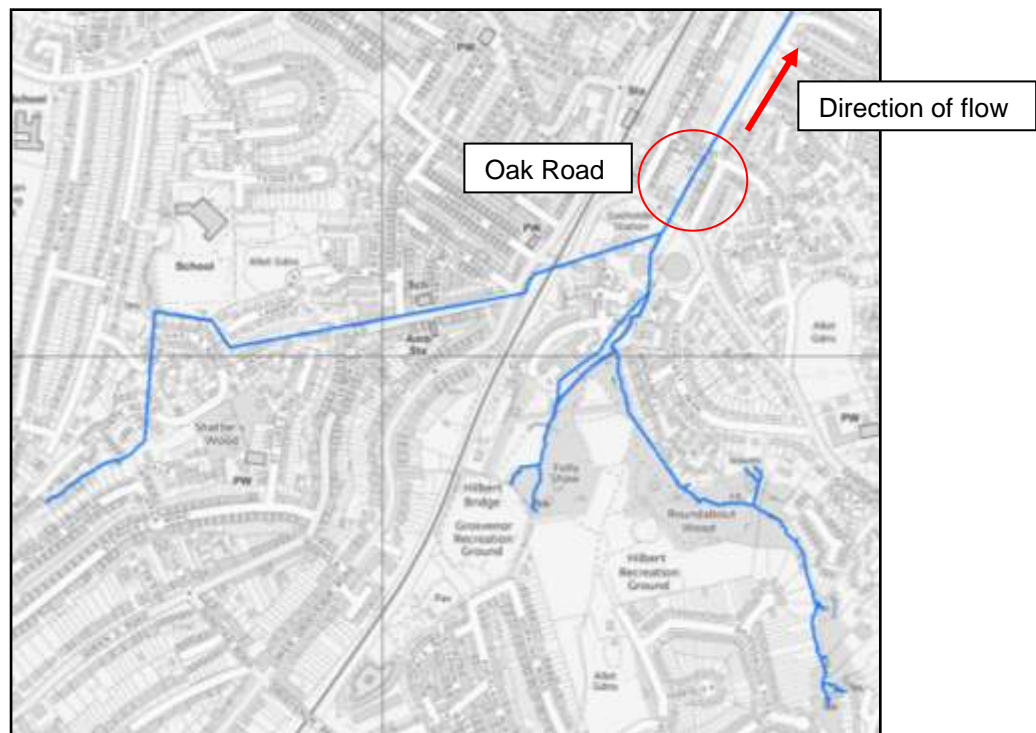


Figure. 1: Site location plan

Historical Information:	From discussions with local residents following the flood incident in June 2012, it is understood that that two similar flood incidents have occurred in September 2002, one of which resulted in internal damage to properties.
Responsible Bodies:	<p>Ordinary watercourses are the responsibility of adjacent land owners, known as riparian owners. A riparian owner is responsible for the maintenance of the bed and bank of the channel. The landowner also has a legal duty to allow the flow of water to pass without obstruction.</p> <p>Home Group LTD is the riparian owner for the section of open channel, the culvert opening and trash screen at Oak Road.</p>
Recommended Actions:	<p>The following recommendations have been discussed and agreed by Home Group LTD and local residents in order to manage flood risk from this watercourse in the future:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deter – It was agreed that “No Flytipping” signs provided by the CleanKent campaign should be erected by Home Group LTD on the fence adjacent to the watercourse to act as a deterrent to potential flytippers (see Appendix.1). 2. Inform – Home Group LTD agreed to produce and deliver a newsletter to the local residents which includes the company’s contact details, a list of their responsibilities as riparian owners and further information about the outcomes of the June 2012 flood incident (see Appendix.2). 3. Report – It was agreed between Home Group LTD and local residents that any rubbish or debris should be reported directly to Home Group LTD to ensure it was removed promptly. 4. Replace – A recommendation was made to Home Group LTD that the existing trash screen should be replaced with one that is easier to rake and clear. Also, the possibility of installing higher fences was suggested to make it more difficult for rubbish to be discarded into the channel.
Next Steps:	<p>The next steps to be taken are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Group LTD should ensure that the “No Flytipping” signs are erected in a suitable location and in a timely manner. • Home Group LTD should ensure that all local residents who could potentially be affected by flooding from the watercourse receive a copy of the newsletter with contact details and further information. • Home Group LTD should carry out regular inspections (monthly) of the watercourse and undertake maintenance if necessary. • Local residents should ensure that they contact Home Group LTD whenever they are aware of rubbish building up in the watercourse. <p>Kent County Council will circulate this flood investigation to all relevant stakeholders and publish this document online at www.kent.gov.uk/flooding.</p>

Appendix.1 – No-Flytipping signs (CleanKent Campaign)

Flytipping? See you in court.

Don't flytip in Kent.

Flytippers face a £50,000 fine or 5 years in prison.

0845 345 0210

www.cleankent.com

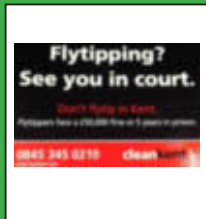
cleankent 

Appendix.2 – Home Group LTD – Newsletter to residents

Brook Road Culvert



Issue 1 | October 2012 | www.homegroup.org.uk



To all Home Group tenants and private tenants in Harold House and Laburnum Court: You will soon see new signs appearing in the car park and at the culvert in the Brook and Oak Road car park.

We would like to thank Kent County Council's Sustainable Drainage Team for conducting an investigation into the June bank holiday weekend flood and for providing these signs.

Kerri Wilson, Customer Service Partner

The Flood

You may remember the flooding in the car park which happened during the June Bank Holiday weekend. As a result of this, Kent County Council has conducted a Flood Risk Investigation of the area and is due to publish the results.

One of the root causes of the flood was the blocked culvert running between the two bin stores in the car park. Home Group's partner contractor, Roalco, cleared out the dumped rubbish from the culvert after the flood. A significant accumulation of broken furniture, household waste and general detritus was removed and taken to landfill, allowing water to once again flow freely along the stream.

The Aftermath

As a result of the flood, several homes were flooded with dirty water and, in some cases, sewage. Some cars were also damaged by the floodwater.

As owners of the land, Home Group will monitor the culvert and keep it clear of waste. However, we will pursue the persons responsible to recover costs wherever possible.

Please bear in mind that if you are caught flytipping you are at risk of a 5 year prison sentence and a £50,000 fine. Not to mention the fact that you would be putting residents health and home at risk.

If you see anyone flytipping, report them to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Cleaner Borough Hotline on 01892 526 121 or 01892 584154. Please take a note of car registrations where possible. You can also notify the Council on their website: <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/>

If you see dumped rubbish but don't know who did it, please contact Home Group on 0345 141 4663.

If you have bulky items you need to dispose of, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council operate a collection service. They will charge £25 and will uplift large items which do not fit in the wheeled bins. As I'm sure you'll agree, this is far cheaper than a £50k fine!

If you are able to get there, you can also take bulky rubbish free of charge to North Farm Household Waste Recycling Centre, which is run by Kent County Council.