

# *West Manhood Drainage Improvement Group*

The West Itchenor Parish Council made a serious effort to follow the 2012 storm flooding by engaging Ground Management LTD to look for surface water problems and gather information from available sources. Once this was collected, they did not have the experience or time to follow up so an Environment Working party was set up to report to the PC and take things forward.

The Working Party soon found that a level of cooperation was needed with West Wittering Parish who shared much of the same watershed, and with the larger landowners who had resources and influence greater than smaller householders but still needed their support for any work to be successful. Mentoring from Jane Reeve (FLOW Project) and Robert Carey (Earnley and Sidlesham FAG), showed that much could be achieved with a separate body dedicated to the work needed.

The WM D.I.G was founded with a written constitution 21.04.16. - *The Diggers*

Members from each PC to represent the the residents. x 3

Farmers. x 2

Coordination of information and Environmental guidance. x1

The group meets quarterly and is focused as follows:-

1/ Created a coordinated Mapping tool that can easily be used and shared with residents. Using Ground Management LTD, this overlays the familiar OS map with house names and boundaries with ditches, culverts, foul drainage and ground levels. Also with flood zones. it can be enlarged to 600% for accuracy.

2/ Continue to collect local information for annual updates

3/ Review map information to assess accuracy and urgency. Plan work sequence efficiently where possible.

4/ Seek quotations and funding.

5/ Provide reports bi monthly to the PC

6/ Inform residents and landowners of the issues as they progress.

7/ Liaise with County, District, Environment Agency, Harbour Conservancy, etc to keep a constant loop of information.

We have demonstrated to many residents that their recollections of the way things work is not entirely sound. 50 Years of neglect has caused drains to be lost or run the wrong way. This can be proven with mapping so that often money can be saved by doing the right work. We can also identify serious misdemeanours that have created some of the issues. Many important ditches have simply been filled with a small pipe in the bottom. Others have never been seen at the correct depth in living memory.

Still in our first year, we are planning to add more farmers/ key stakeholders to the group and continue the programme of informing residents. The first projects funded by Operation Watershed are complete and have raised much attention.

We have applied for further funding for a list of projects essential to continue the work. With this and local interest I anticipate private, local funding becoming available to boost progress.

Jim Dunn

22.11.16