

Sheila Beeton writes

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

In February the Parish Council organised an Environmental Forum with a focus on flood and water management in Dedham. It comprised a drop-in session followed by presentations from officers from the Environment Agency, and Essex and Colchester Councils. We were disappointed with the lack of participation from Anglian Water. The event was well attended and included: reports, maps, and analysis by Guy Cooper (EA) of the weather patterns and circumstances which led to particularly acute flooding in parts of the village last June; details from Graham Robertson (EA) of a scoping project which included Dedham's Black Brook. Graham presented a number of historical and current maps showing how the route of the brook had changed over more than 200 years and other analyses of flood fields and occurrences which identified the pinch points and risk factors across the village. Attendees contributed much useful information which will be noted. The objective is to use the data collected to identify options for better management of water flow in the future which might include both technical and preventative solutions from responsible agencies and work that might be undertaken by residents to better protect their property. Some community funding had been allocated for this project but there must be a clear cost benefit from the work undertaken with the potential reduction in flood risk to the numbers of people who might benefit. The scoping project also now enables the EA to undertake modelling to better project the likely impact of changes that might be made and how work undertaken in one area might impact on other areas. DPC will continue to work with the EA on this project.

Charlotte Smith (ECC) then outlined the role and responsibility of Essex in water management, which relates mainly to ditches and other smaller contributories that were not the responsibility of EA. She reported on work undertaken elsewhere to identify and codify the position and condition of these features within the Parish which might then lead to remedial action being taken.

She indicated her willingness to work with Dedham Parish on a similar project and the consensus was that this would be a positive initiative. Given active participation from the village DPC will now progress this. Hannah de la Rue finally outlined the work she was undertaking at CBC on emergency planning and prevention from flooding and again demonstrated her willingness to work actively with Dedham on this.

DPC will now pursue the above work with a view to publishing information for the Parish on flood and water management which might include: roles and responsibilities, contact numbers, emergency planning and warning arrangements, identification of pinch points and risks and helpful information for residents on what might be done to better protect properties in vulnerable areas.

Thanks were given to all the above officers for attending and giving us such enthusiastic support. We also appreciated the attendance of both Anne Brown and Nigel Chapman.

Nicola Baker writes

## **BUSINESS RATES**

The Parish Council is very concerned about the imminent rise in business rates which will affect many traders in Dedham. A meeting with the Colchester Business Rates Team will be held on March 21st 6pm-8pm at the Marlborough Head.

This meeting is by invitation only, but if you run a business in Dedham and would like to attend, please contact Christine Frost on 322296.

## **TRAINING**

Councillors and Clerks attended an informative training session run by the Local Council Public Advisory Service with the aim of ensuring that our skills and knowledge remain up to date.

Next meeting: Monday 6 March 2017, 7.30pm in the Duchy Barn  
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