



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Meadow Drainage

Background:

Since taking over Town Meadow from Waverley Borough Council there have been lots of discussions about the very wet boggy part in the middle of the Meadow and what to do about it.

A history document held by Waverley B.C. was discovered after some investigation work had already been done which didn't find anything significant.

The history document showed a lot of information about the Meadow, Pyle Well and Pyle Well Cottage (68, Lower Street) over the years, as well as some dated Geology information (please see APPENDIX 1).

The sum of £10,000.00 was allocated by Council to engage through the tendering process a company to install a drainage system to drain the water from the middle area of the Meadow into the drainage ditch to the west near the old GPO building and subsequently into the stream at the lower end of the Meadow.

The history document had a map attached to it which showed an attempt by Waverley B.C. to drain the Meadow in 1988 / 89 by using a central pipeline from the spring head to the covered part of the stream and had a series of perforated pipes herring boned into it to increase drainage through the soil (please see attached History Document).

Although this appeared to work for a short period of time the report says that the water (springs) started to appear in other areas of the Meadow according to the Engineer's report.

As some time had gone by since the previous tendering process, we looked at this again and it was decided that a CCTV investigation of the existing pipework would be a good way to find out if there was any drainage occurring at all or if the pipe was damaged or blocked.

The CCTV pipe camera showed that the pipe had collapsed at around 35 metres from its outlet to the stream.

To repair or replace this pipe would be very difficult and costly due to the boggy part of the Meadow and the problems for machinery access.

We contacted 3 drainage specialist companies to give us quotes for running new pipework from the spring head (near Pyle Well Cottage) to the drainage ditch to the west side of the Meadow.

Quotes received:

SUPPLIER	QUOTE (EX VAT)	Support/maintenance program
Leith Hill Plant	£13,213.00	Includes Ditch clear and removal of all silt and soil.
Drain Doctors	£6,914.00	Cannot do Ditch clear or removal of silt and soil without 3 rd Party involvement.
Drain Detectives	No response	

None of the above companies could give any assurance that this work would succeed in draining the middle of the Meadow.

We have sought a new opinion from Albury S I Ltd, geotechnical & environmental specialists, (please see APPENDIX 2).

The report suggests that the underlying Atherfield Clay would continue to cause a problem with drainage even if we were to carry out the work that had been suggested.

It is felt that continuing with this project with no guarantee of success may be a waste money. Urgent work on the Bell Tower at the Town Hall has been identified and budget is being sought. It is recommended that this would be a better use of the remaining £8.5k in the Town Meadow budget.

RECOMMENDED:

That this project is not pursued and the remaining budget (approx. £8.5k) diverted to repairs to the Town Hall bell tower.

TOWN MEADOW (PYLE WELL MEADOW)1. GEOLOGY

"There is geological evidence of the former existence here of a marsh or mere, which covered ground between the Station, Tanner's Lane (formerly Hawe Lane or Hall Lane) and the present Post Office, e.g. the peaty lower part of the field immediately below Pyle Well was at one time part of its bed. By 1850 the mere had dwindled to a series of small ponds. There was one in the corner of Pile Well Meadow (*Town Meadow*) adjacent to Tanner's Lane."

Bygone Haslemere – E W Swanton

"Pyle Marsh" is referred to in Court Rolls in 1586.

"The stream proceeds south-west to the mid-point of Bridge Road, back of Pope's Mead, where it is joined by the stream from the High Street and so down across the meadows to near the bottom of Tanner's Lane, where was **Pyle Marsh**."

"Just beyond is the so-called Pile Well, **which was an excellent spring**, supplying the inhabitants with a good water."

Haslemere in History – G R Rolston

"In former days we got our water in Haslemere from draw wells and "dip and deve" or dipping wells, of which latter the Pile Well was one. There was a draw well in Cow Street **and an excellent spring in the meadow off Tanner's Lane** (*Town Meadow*)."

Two K's Pamphlet

"Although many domestic and farm supplies have probably been obtained from the Drift deposits of this district, details are known of only three ... the third relates to Pyle Well in Lower Street, Haslemere which formerly supplied part of the Town; much of

the supply from this well, which was sunk through Head deposits and possibly into the underlying Atherfield Clay, was probably derived indirectly from water which issued from the Hythe Beds and infiltrated into the Head."

"Springs are common at the junction of the relatively impermeable Atherfield Clay and the overlying permeable Hythe Beds ..."

Geology of the Country Around Haslemere – Geological Survey

"The clay throws out two fine springs forming dip wells."

Proc. Geol. Ass. XIII 364

2. HISTORY

Whilst there is a common perception that the Meadow has been used for community activities throughout history there is some doubt about the extent of this;

Tim Winter in his "Around Haslemere" compilation of postcards and photographs says that the last fair was held in the High Street in 1904, was held in Town Meadow only in 1905, but quickly moved in 1906 to its present site at the Old Clay Pit at Weyhill. Perhaps the Meadow was unsuitable due to its wetness?

Rolston was less specific;

"In September (1876) there were about 2,000 people merry making in the High Street. The following year the fair was moved to a field off Tanner's Lane (*Town Meadow?*) and a little later back nearer the Town, until September 1906 when another move was made to Clay Hill (Weyhill)."

Clearly Town Meadow was not a favoured site for the fair!

Water abstraction from Pile Well, which may have suppressed the groundwater levels locally to an extent, ceased in 1907 when the Parish Waterworks opened at Blackdown (Chase Lane).

3. RECENT HISTORY

It is believed that some attempts at drainage of the Meadow may have been made by the former Haslemere UDC prior to 1974, but no evidence of this has been found.

In the 1980's a strong spring flow arose in the middle of the Meadow and a steady stream of water overflowed from the pond at Pilewell Cottage. A limited land drainage system (shown A-B on the enclosed plan) was constructed by WBC in 1988/89, which was designed to intercept that spring and was extended to capture the overflow from the pond. This successfully eliminated the surface flooding from the pond (and continues to do so) and, for a period of time, successfully drained the strong spring flow in the centre of the Meadow. The spring then surfaced at a different location and subsequently the drain was extended to again intercept it. Groundwater has now emerged at a number of other locations across the Meadow.

To effectively drain the Meadow permanently would require an extensive and very closely spaced herringbone system of sub-surface drains. For this to be completely effective the top soil would need to be replaced with a free draining soil. Due to the limited depth of the outfall it would not be possible to drain to any depth and given the extent of widespread spring activity, there is no guarantee that any drainage system would be completely effective. It is worth noting that groundwater levels now reflect the succession of extremely inclement periods and are at levels of elevation previously unrecorded.

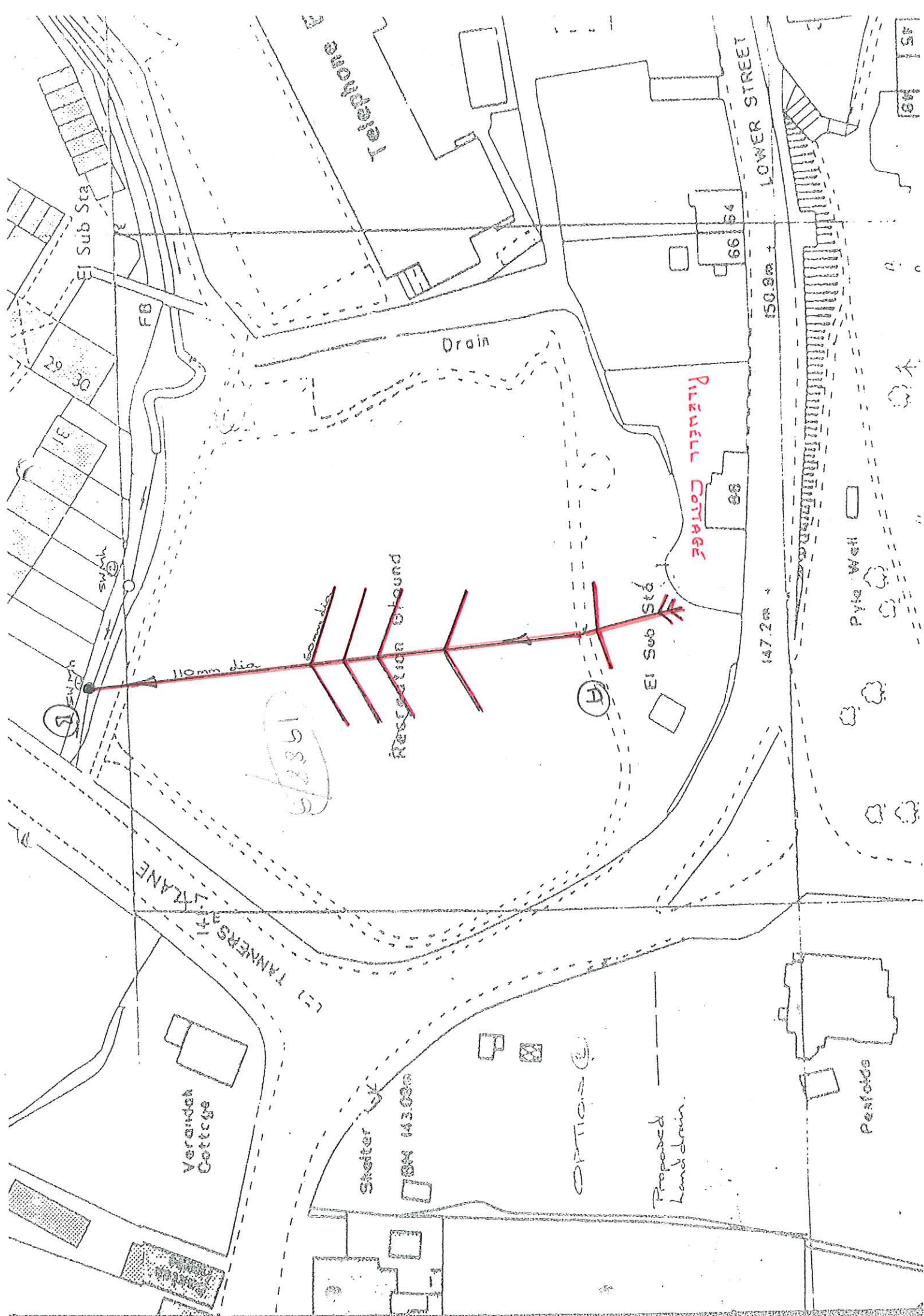
It is unlikely that any extent of drainage could guarantee ground sufficiently firm for general vehicular access.

Robin Ellks
Engineering Manager

August 2002

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From: Keith Clark - Albury S.I. Ltd <keith.clark@alburysl.co.uk>
Sent: 22 December 2022 09:42
To: 'Martin Wellen'
Subject: RE: Town Meadow, Haslemere Town Council.
Attachments: plan.pdf

APPENDIX 2

Dear Martin,

I have attached a plan showing the area of Town Meadow. The plan also includes extracts from the BGS digital mapping.

This confirms the comments relating to geology within the Town Meadow History document you kindly sent me.

As you can see Head of recent geological age overlies the majority of Town Meadow. This soils is likely to be mixture of clay sand and gravel.

The Head is underlain by the Atherfield Clay which again underlies the majority of the area. The Hythe Formation is shown to outcrop in the eastern part of the area overlying the Atherfield Clay. This stratum also outcrops to the south.

The Hythe Formation comprises sand and sandstone and therefore is likely to be more permeable than the Head and will be more permeable than the Atherfield Clay.

There are a number of records on the BGS website to the east of the area. The closest noted the presence of 7.25 ft of drift (Head) overlying the Atherfield Clay. I would point out that the boundaries of the strata encountered are not necessarily accurate.

Groundwater was encountered at 10ft below ground level with a standing water of 5 feet.

The ground levels in the area suggest a low point at the junction of Lower Street and Tanners Lane which would suggest that the flow of groundwater may be from east to west.

The prevailing geology suggests that permeable soils (Head and Hythe) overlie less permeable soils (Atherfield Clay).

Hence, it is likely that a perched water table is present within the near surface soils, which may account for the observed issues with drainage

I hope the above comments are of assistance.

Regards,

Keith

Keith Clark
Director

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