

Emergencies in Waldringfield ?

Now that the Waldringfield Flood Defence Group has achieved their admirable wall to defend properties and even raised funds for reinforcing the Marsh river wall – which work is well underway - I feel it is right to observe that few place on Earth are safer than Waldringfield.

Tidal predictions and surge forecasts can reliably warn us when the floodgates should be closed. Once WFDG and the EA have finalised their drills from warning to closure of all the gates, I shall amend the Waldringfield Emergencies Resilience Plan accordingly to form Issue 2 (see page 16 of current Issue 1). Also a few errors such as phone numbers in the aide memoir and can be corrected; meanwhile please note the current flood wardens are John Smith, Tony Lyon and Ged Morgan, and no longer Clive Underdown.

As Jon Wilkins reported, the strengthened and heightened Dairy Marsh Meadow river wall should withstand overtopping by a surge coincident with a high spring tide in what may be a 1 in 50 year event. As gamblers and others recognise such a probability is independent of the previous events; there were 60 years between the 1953 storm surge and our December 2013 flood, but it would be unwise to reckon the next flood challenge will not be until 2063. Rising sea levels (0.85 m around Britain in the past 125 years) and the comparatively small sinking of the tectonic plate on which we live, are less of a risk than the increasing frequency of stormy weather leading to tidal surges. The latter are nowadays remarkable accurately forecast over 24 hours in advance and we are now well prepared.

Meanwhile house fires, storm and deluge damage, electricity outages, water and sewage disruptions, plane crashes, subsidence and riots are as unlikely as anywhere in Britain that I can think of. Droughts, earthquakes, nuclear accidents, landslips, avalanches, forest fires, tornados, typhoons and tsunamis are even less likely.

As to medical emergencies, we are remarkably close to ambulances and A&E at the excellent Ipswich Hospital; police, fire, mud and air-sea rescue services are also close by. Compared to almost anywhere on Planet Earth, Waldringfield seems exceptionally safe. I do not believe that pointing this out is to tempt fate - there is always some risk of one or more of those hazards materialising – but I hold we should be a grateful community.

Those who do want the excitement of the unexpected or the adrenalin rush of an 'epic' (to use a mountaineering word), may travel to seek that in more dangerous circumstances and places or go sailing. If these personal views annoy you, then please feel free to say so publicly and consider standing for election to our Parish Council or at least offer to be co-opted, perhaps in my stead!

Meanwhile none of us wants anyone in our community to feel at risk, lonely or unsafe, so if you or some one to whom you are close wishes to be registered for assistance, please let me know appropriately. Also if you spot any errors in the Waldringfield Emergencies Resilience Plan or its aide memoire <http://www.waldringfield.onesuffolk.net/assets/parish-council-docs/policies/WPC-Emergencies-Aide-Memoire.pdf> or can volunteer relevant skills or equipment, please tell me in a written note.

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