

C of J. Auckland.

BARNHAM RATEPAYERS ASS

STATEMENT TO BARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Dial Close Flooding 30th December 1993

At 1:30pm Barnham Road, adjacent to Dial Close, was 10" deep in water.

2:30pm Water now 15" deep, traffic build up.

3:00pm lorry & bus stranded; 2'0" deep; passengers rescued by firemen. Our gardens, as others, now 10" deep in water. There was a trickle of water in the house. A neighbour helped moving items upstairs. Furniture - settee stacked on table.

3:55 Front door, rear burst open, wave 4'6" deep came in. Neighbour dashed to his bungalow now 2'6" deep. Damage 100% to all contents there; other neighbours much younger than us offered no help. All lights out. Phones off. Most items on ground floor wrecked. Kitchen cabinets, panels, doors swelled and distorted. Dining room sideboards similar; cutlery tray boxes ruined. All electrical equipment condemned: Freezers, fridge, washing machine, spinner, food processors, vacuum cleaner.

Garage wrecked - car write-off. Tools & equipment damaged. We were evacuated by boat to Churchill House at 6:30pm. NOTE: this water comprised sewage, oil, vegetation, mud, etc. It quickly drained from 1:00am 31st December. All gone at 6:00am leaving stench. Our Loss Adjuster handling job fairly well (Link Lloyds Insurance). We have a good understanding at this time.

My wife was taken ill on 1st January with vomiting etc.

I understand police were warned by Arun District Council/Water at 2:00pm of flooding in Barnham Road. They did not warn anyone, probably have no loud-hailers or tannoy or interest in residents.

The first Council presence was four days later offering manual help to load skips. Sandbags were not available until 3 days after the flooding. Skips asked for five times eventually arrived 6th January. The only service to help on the night were the firemen, comprising many part-time volunteers who worked all night. Police and others never seen.

On January 2nd, Barnham Parish Council meeting with authorities, 72 members/victims; chairman delegated Mrs Britton to supervise sandbag distribution.

After The Flood

The first visitor was Mrs J. Gould, although incapacitated, visited all areas. Second was Councillor Chris Mills who offered use of phone or meals; later in the week observed in storm gear assisting trench digging/drainage. Rev. Doug Farnham and Bishop of Horsham visited on 2nd January.

Womens' Institute as usual were quick off the mark, one member provided food 10 hours after the flood, others handling our laundry and running errands, plus numerous offers of assistance.

The volunteer group organised by Claire and John Auckland^{B.R.A.} (who took us home for the first hot meal in three days), has done a magnificent job, including working with Meals on Wheels for those without cooking/heating facilities. Eastgergate Parish Council have offered them financial help. We moved to hotel on 7th January (at home in day, hotel at night).

During the past three weeks, victims of this, the worst disaster in living memory to Barnham, have asked what is the Parish Council doing. Indeed, "What are you Brittons doing for us?". One would have expected the Chairman of a Parish Council at least to visit the area instead of driving past it daily.

These parishoners, invaded by 4'6" of stinking sludge, wonder what the Council is for. The Corporate Guide Lines spell out "Care and Help for the Community", so why no action or, come to that, why no interest? Of the seven Council members only one made a very welcome and appreciated visit.

Where is the "Emergency Scheme"? Funds are available. Why no food packs or blankets for those without cooking or catering facilities? Have a look at a tiny bungalow deep in sludge, owned by under-insured people. The Shelter organisation in London, the WVS and the Army Catering Unit can supply details of food packs and First Aid available through suppliers. The only action I have received was a phone call to the hotel asking if I would go on an all-day seminar on Saturday to discuss allotments and burial grounds!

There have been many statements that the flood was caused by negligence and generally poor maintenance by a number of organisations.

Sir Malcolm Marshall visited on January 23rd and was very concerned and surprised that the Barnham Parish Council were not helping in any way. There is a meeting at Arun District Council on Friday 28th January with other MPs and all the organisations to discuss responsibilities, compensation and possible legal actions which many of my neighbours are demanding.

Finally I request a statement in writing within 14 days as to why Barnham Parish Council have not helped the community which they are alleged to represent. I also question if service on the Council is of any benefit to the community. Indeed is the Council of any use at all?

W. Britton
B.P. Councillor

W. Britton 25/1/94.

Copies to:
Ratepayers Association
ARUN D.C.
PARISH MAG.

Flood Relief Group