

It was felt that the bare soils, steep fields and the high runoff were the major factors contributing to the intensity of the flooding and made worse by the heavier farm machinery used to harvest the energy beet crop (which is replacing maize grown for the bio-digester) during the autumn and winter which damages the soil structure and creates tracks for water to flow down, leading to more erosion. The question was raised about what the County and District Council can do to stop this problem and whether codes of practice which are promoted by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) should be followed by the landowners. *The Parish Council resolved to contact the Somerset County Council Flood Prevention Officer to find out more about how the issues can be dealt with for the residents.*

**Reply by Andrew Jeanes:** Andrew made a short presentation to the meeting to explain soil agronomy and how farming practices have changed, with a better understanding of soil science. This included Soil Organic Matter (SOM) and satellite monitoring techniques to predict drought resistance and soil erosion whilst producing high crop yields, soil profiles being scanned to prohibit soil erosion and that they have won a 1<sup>st</sup> prize for soil management. He stated that the storm in question was 38mm in ¼ hour, which was a very intense rainfall event. He highlighted that good practice is to under-sow the main crop with another one to help protect the soil during September to March i.e. over the winter months, to stop the rain drops hitting the soil and carrying it away and that this under-sowing needs Government alternative funding to encourage land managers to use this technique.

Andrew offered to attend another independent public meeting to explore what can be done to improve the situation and to explain in more detail how farming can work to minimize the effects that modern farming has to contend with. No date was set for this at the meeting.

#### **Other Parish Council business.**

**Defibrillator:** This was discussed and reported that £2,000 is needed to fund this equipment, although grants from Community Heartbeat are possible to help with this worthy cause. The Community Shop has agreed that this can be mounted on the shop where it will be monitored by the CCTV system. A training video comes with it, so that people will know how to operate this should the need arise.

**Footpaths:** Some strimming work has been undertaken to clear access to a few footpaths. There are issues with arable crops being planted across the line of footpaths and no attempts made to keep the path clear. *Contact the Parish Council if you have anything to report on footpath issues.*

**Bins for Dog Waste:** A request has been made for bins at the top end of the village. There are no other dog waste bins in the village, so the Council declined to provide any, especially as the cost of emptying these is £900 per bin per year. *If you have photographic evidence of dogs fouling the local area these can be sent to Sedgemoor DC for them to action and prosecute the dog owners.*

**Highway Drainage:** The SCC Highways have undertaken some local drainage work around the parish following a report that the Parish Council sent to them a couple of months ago. More work needs to be carried out to get the water off the roads and into the roadside ditches or storm water drains, also verge reinstatement where large vehicles have damaged them and pushed them into the roadside ditches.

**Dates of next meeting : 25<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 8.00pm**

*All our welcome to attend*