

# Billingborough Flood Group Progress Report – April 2026

The Billingborough Flood Group (BFG) has made significant strides over the past six months, focusing on the development and implementation of various actions outlined in the Billingborough Strategic Flood Mitigation Plan produced following the severe flooding experienced in January 2025.

## Formation and Structure of BFG

Since its inception, the BFG has been incorporated as a Non Registered Community Group, functioning similarly to a charity. This move enables the group to apply for grants to fund flood mitigation and maintenance schemes within the village.

The group has appointed a Chairman, Treasurer, and four Members. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that all funds are spent appropriately and accounted for in accordance with best practices. Currently, the BFG is in the process of opening a bank account to manage donations received to date as well as future donations and grant funding. Additionally, BFG email addresses and a domain name have been established to facilitate communication and organisation.

## Update on Progressing the Strategic Plan Main Elements of the Billingborough Strategic Flood Mitigation Plan

### 1) Controlling Water from the West of Billingborough

- a) The BFG has produced an initial proposal to locate multiple holding pools, utilising Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUD schemes), at various sites west of the village. These pools are intended to collect surface water from saturated fields and facilitate controlled drainage into the Ousemere Lode over time. The group is currently working on developing natural drainage methods before presenting these proposals to relevant authorities and landowners. Initial discussions have been held, with positive responses pending further details.
- b) In parallel, the BFG is awaiting the initial findings from the Stantec consultancy project commissioned by the Lincolnshire Lead Flood Authority last year. These findings are expected to be published in the coming weeks. Once available, the group plans to meet with the LLFA to discuss outcomes, present proposals, and progress the development of SUD schemes for which grant funding will be sought.
- c) Potential grants are being explored, specifically:
  - i. Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Funding, led by DEFRA. The BFG is currently in discussion with the Environment Agency to determine eligibility for funding once detailed plans are available.
  - ii. Anglian Water Community Fund, established by Anglian Water, with funding up to £150,000 available. We are currently making enquiries about eligibility.
  - iii. For both funding sources, once detailed plans are developed, support from various authorities and a cost benefit analysis will be necessary to secure funding.

### 2. Drainage System in and around Billingborough

Folkingham Road: Following a meeting with LCC Highways in November, an investigation of the drain along the south side of Folkingham Road, under the railway embankment and on to Station Road, was conducted in February. This revealed one, possibly two, partial blockages opposite No. 1 Folkingham Road. Highways are scheduled to return with their small works team on 11/05/2026 to excavate the affected stretch and determine the cause of the blockage. Discussions are also ongoing regarding reinstating the section as an open drain for easier future maintenance, as it historically was. A strong relationship has been developed with the LCC Highways Portfolio Holder, Councillor David East, who is advocating for the group. Further updates will be reported in due course. Additionally, enquiries have been made regarding future maintenance of the pipe under the railway embankment and Grimers Yard entrance to ensure unimpeded water flow.

- a) Blasson Estate – Surface Water Drainage System: There has been some uncertainty regarding responsibility for the drainage which flows from the estate via a culvert west along Folkingham road and then north under Folkingham road into a large pipe behind properties on the north side of Folkingham Road into the Ousemere Lode. Evidence has been found indicating that the system was

meant to be adopted by LCC Highways. The group is now pursuing this through Councillor East to ensure inclusion in the Highways maintenance programme. Proper maintenance of this drain is critical, as blockages could result in estate surface water contributing to flooding on Folkingham Road.

- b) High Street/West Road: The BFG is currently following up with Anglian Water to confirm that any previously identified blockages in their drains have been addressed.
- c) Vine Street: The group is also seeking confirmation from Anglian Water regarding the resolution of blockages identified last year and the planned work to disconnect a surface drain from a foul drain at the end of Vine Street (Hurn end) and clarify its future connection.
- d) Vine Street / Vine Court Culvert into the Ousemere Lode. Anglian Water have also been made aware of the backflow of water from the Ousemere Lode during flood events and the contribution to flooding and are reviewing the design of the culvert exit into the Ousemere Lode.
- e) Low Street: LCC Highways have identified a partial blockage at the Vine Street end, necessitating significant repair work. The job is listed as a 'larger' project and the BFG is urging completion before next winter.
- f) Slotted Foul Drain Covers: Anglian Water has committed to replacing all slotted foul drain covers with solid covers to reduce the risk of sewage leaking into the streets during flooding.
- g) Roof Rainwater Diversion: Anglian Water has informed the group of plans to redirect roof rainwater from properties currently connected to the foul system into the surface water system. This initiative, undertaken at Anglian Water's expense, aims to reduce foul system overloading during extreme weather and is being implemented across several villages in the area.
- h) Other Open Drains: The BFG has previously announced intentions to establish a volunteer group for general maintenance around the village. Bernard Holmes Precision Engineering have generously donated numerous items of tools and equipment for the volunteer group as have members of the BFG. Further details on the maintenance plan will be published in the coming months. In the interim, signs have been placed along drains to remind the public and riparian owners to keep drains clear of rubbish, vegetation, dog poo bags, etc. This includes drains outside the village, such as the Black Miles Drain, where dog poo bags are regularly dumped.
- i) BFG have been in discussion with the Crown Estates regarding the clearance of surface water ditches and the repair of a damaged culvert to the west of Blasson estate and are pleased to confirm that the Crown Estates have confirmed that repair / maintenance work will be carried out.

### **3. Removing Flood Water from the Village to the East**

While the ultimate solution involves slowing the flow of flood water from the west, immediate efforts are needed to remove water from the streets during flood events. Main streets affected last year included Folkingham Road and its spurs, and Vine Street/Low Street and their spurs. The group has proposed opening the drain from the track at the end of Vine Street, through a culvert under Black Miles Track, into Cowgate, and onwards to Billingborough Lode. Pending permanent access from Vine Street to this drain, BFG is planning to acquire two large petrol-driven pumps (1000l/minute each, with 100m of hose) to pump water out of Vine Street/Low Street and into the drain for removal via Cowgate. Following discussions with Crown Estates, agreement has been reached to reinstate the drain at the end of Vine Street and repair the collapsed culvert under Black Miles Track, facilitating free flow into Cowgate drain. In the event of water accumulating against the railway embankment on Folkingham Road, a pump will be placed to move water over the embankment onto Station Road and down Vine Street, from where flood water will be pumped out of the village. Although not ideal, this approach represents a positive step towards managing flooding. A more permanent solution is being developed, contingent on funding and authority support. The group emphasises the importance of residents maintaining drains, as their proper function is vital during flood events.

## **Ongoing Challenges and Future Outlook**

It is essential to acknowledge that resolving the flooding issues in Billingborough will take time. The village is one of many in Lincolnshire affected by extreme weather, and the relevant authorities have to prioritise their limited resources and expenditures.

The BFG has been established to ensure that our voices are heard and over the last year we have built relationships with every authority with access to people who can influence and make decisions.

Our work will continue at pace for the foreseeable future.