22/05/2024

Progress to date:-

**Environmental works**,  The Environment Agency received the Licence from Natural England on the 18 April allowing us to proceed with final Newt trapping.  Since then, the newt fencing damaged during the winter flooding has been reinstated.  The newt fencing will remain in place throughout the trapping period and until the embankment work has been completed.

Newt trapping started during the week commencing 22 April and will be ongoing until the remaining trees have been cleared, root balls have been grubbed up and ditches and ponds drained and checked for newts.  The remaining site clearance and newt trapping will take place over the next three weeks.  I have been informed that to date no Great Crested Newts have been found.

At this time there are no environmental constraints that will hinder the start of the project.

**Planning permissions**.  There are no outstanding planning conditions that will hinder the start of the project.

**Construction.**  The amount of funding available for the scheme is limited and as such we must ensure that the project is built within its budget.  That means addressing any risks that could cause delay and increase the duration and consequent cost of the scheme before we enter a contract.

The premiss that this scheme is based on and makes it viable, is that the material used in the construction of the embankment would be provided free to the project, is suitable and meets the design specification.  In March we were ready to sign a contract with a contractor.  At that time, we did not have enough suitable material available on site for use in the construction of the works.  This was because the material sources that were initially thought to be suitable were found on close examination not to be so.  If we had started work at this time we would quickly have run out of material and then started to incur costs from the contractor to cover standing time, which would likely have pushed us over budget.

We are still seeking suitable sources of material that meet the project specification, consequently until we do, work on construction cannot proceed.  Because of this we anticipate stockpiling material on site when it becomes available and then starting work when we have enough stockpiled.  This we accept means the date when we start construction cannot be confirmed with any certainty and we further acknowledge that this is not news the Parish Council or the residents of Severn Stoke want to hear after the flooding that occurred this year.  We can only reassure you that at this time along with Chris Prosser we are working hard to find suitable sources of material.

The Environment Agency reaffirms its commitment to providing a flood defence for the village and points to the preconstruction work currently ongoing as proof of this.

If the Parish Council has any further questions regarding this update, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My apologies again for not being able to attend in person on this occasion.

**Paul Jones B. Eng. (Hons), C.Eng., FICE.**