

**Planning Application: 23/P/0664/OUT Land at Rectory Farm (North), Chescombe Road, Yatton, BS49  
4BZ. Appellant's Name: Persimmon Homes Severn Valley. Appeal Reference:  
APP/D0121/W/24/3343144**

**TALK ON HISTORIC FLOOD EVENTS AND FLOOD RISK BY SARAH REAKES ON TUESDAY 24  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

I'm Sarah Reakes and along with my husband Simon, we live at 3 Shiners Elms with our two dogs. We're both senior citizens.

We moved here from Bristol in 2007 because we were keen to embrace the more rural life. I had spent much of my time as a child visiting my relatives in Claverham, and so it was an easy decision to choose Yatton especially as it had a train station and good facilities.

Without doubt, with climate change being given as the primary reason for causing rising sea levels, increased rainfall & higher temperatures, we are now seeing the negative impact of this on our village and North Somerset in general, with incidents of flooding events due to heavy rainfall becoming more common which we have witnessed ourselves.

North Somerset, experienced significant flooding in 2012 following intense rainfall on 24 September, 21 November and 24 November with more localised intense rainfall in August that fell over Nailsea, Portishead and Portbury. It was during one of these significant storms that two houses in Grace Close, located to the rear of our home at the bottom of our garden, suffered flooding because of the run off from Mendip Road and Lodge Close. NSC prepared a detailed report of the flooding entitled "North Somerset 2012 Flood Investigations" and the total NSC figures for properties having been flooded were shown as 639 and out of this number 21 were in Yatton and 26 in Claverham and a lot of the primary roads remained flooded for quite some time.

The Report's finding describes issues of blocked culverts and gullies (which we presume to be from fallen leaves and other debris), and collapsed drains, which clearly had an adverse impact. It also reported that for the four years prior to 2012 the rain fall was on average 750mm annually but in 2012 the annual rainfall was 1450mm which was double this figure. The combination of high tides also contributed to the flooding problem as ground water simply could not escape quickly enough and then made significantly worse because of a lack of essential maintenance on the drainage systems. Councils being hit with budgetary cuts which seems to be the norm these days, certainly adds to our concerns regarding essential maintenance being undertaken to provide adequate flood defences.

What seems to have been overlooked from the numerous documents that have been uploaded by Persimmon Homes is the topography of where Shiners Elms actually lies in relation to the rest of the village. On this side of the village, and we're on the west side, we are at the lowest point which effectively means we take much of the run off from a large numbers of roads that are above us on the opposite side ie: Mendip Road, Dysons Close, The Ridge, Grassmere Road, Heathgate, Elborough Road, etc and if one walks or drives on Mendip Road from either the GP's Surgery or the Strawberry Field's development down to Shiners Elms you can clearly see and feel the gradient drop quite dramatically, and then as you pass Shiners Elms, Mendip Road rises up again as it proceeds in a loop up toward the Railway Station and onto Ashleigh Crescent and Ashleigh Road.

**Planning Application: 23/P/0664/OUT Land at Rectory Farm (North), Chescombe Road, Yatton, BS49  
4BZ. Appellant's Name: Persimmon Homes Severn Valley. Appeal Reference:  
APP/D0121/W/24/3343144**

Shiners Elms is basically set within a hollow basin where much of the run off from these roads makes it way down to us, and both Lodge Close and Grace Close (which are located behind us) also experience significant run off from Mendip Road and the roads above them but then the run off from Lodge Close and Grace Close also travels down towards Shiners Elms as well but this time from the rear. Without doubt what protects Shiners Elms, Lodge Close and Grace Close from flooding is the land on Rectory Farm at the bottom of our road that takes the residual ground water run off away from us and into the rhynes and fields.

I respectfully suggest that the Inspector could include in his visit, a walk down from Strawberry Fields down to Shiners Elms where he will also pass Lodge Close and Grace Close to experience the topography and gradient fall himself. If he would like to see it from a vantage point we are more than happy for him come into our property at 3 Shiners Elms where from upstairs he would see the view of these areas from the back and front of our property and see for himself the lay of the land.

It cannot be overstated what an incredibly vulnerable position the properties in Shiners Elms, Lodge Close and Grace Close are in, with the prospect of this wetland area/flood plain being developed and there being nowhere for the current water run off to disperse and drain away and instead to be faced with the prospect of that volume of water backing up at us, is simply unthinkable. There is also the additional real concern from the repeated references by Persimmon Homes of their intention to significantly raise the land levels on this site (to raise it above FLOOD ZONE 3 we presume) to make it safer for the new dwellings and their residents, but even with the inclusion of attenuation ponds, this will simply create an even greater problem of yet more volume of ground water from this site being pushed toward our properties.

The other significant factor which impacts the ability of this land to drain is that the boundary to it is the Strawberry Line cycle path and with it being the former railway line, it actually forms a solid barrier to ground water escaping across the Line and so the only way water can escape is through culverts that are often blocked or poorly maintained and so this will also inevitably cause water to back up. This elevated land being concreted over will simply push the groundwater our way.

Finally, after two days of heavy rain, we have seen flooding on the roads at Yatton High Street, Horsecastle Roundabout and Yatton Rugby Club. But also between Cadbury Garden Centre and Smallway, and of significance, is the flooding on the Smallway lights adjacent to the new small housing development where flooding has never been seen there before. So much for the effectiveness of these new Attenuation Ponds since there is an enormous pond just to the right of the entrance to this development and it has clearly failed to do its job!!

SR

23 September 2024