



Exploring Solutions to Mawgan Porth's Changing Coastline – 15/06/2024

In attendance:

- 9 members of the community
- Jolyon – Cornwall Council; Making Space for Sand (MS4S)
- Gitty and Amy – Cornwall Community Flood Forum (CCFF); MS4S
- Claudia – PhD Student at the University of Exeter; Volunteer for CCFF

Challenges to Tackle

We asked the community to come up with the challenges to their community from flooding and coastal change that they want to tackle. They wrote the below ideas on post it notes that were grouped into three overarching categories to guide the conversation – flooding, dune erosion and planning.

Flooding (river and coastal)

- Increased sewage farm runoff and housing developments affecting surface run off, contributing to flooding.
- Rising flood levels.
- Valuing drainage space on downhill sites.
- Drainage infrastructure.
- Upstream beaver introduction.
- The Village Hall is at risk of flooding.
- Increased flooding.
- Housing in flood risk areas, both existing and proposed.
- Slowing the flow of water from further up the catchment.
- Encouraging landowners to preserve wild land and plant trees. Recommending rare tree species for planting.
- Road access and bridge considerations: Discussion on moving the road and the risk of being cut off as bridges are threatened.
- Highway closure and alternative routes
 - Shopping and the impact on the local commerce
 - Community adherence
 - Services across the estuary
 - Parish links between Mawgan Porth and Trevarrian

Dune erosion

- Reduce dune erosion – are boulders a hindrance?
- Slow down dune erosion.
- Assessing if boulders are hindering dune stability.
- Current threat of flooding upstream but long-term there is a need to also think about strategies to adapt to erosion.
- Developing marram grass to replace invasive species.



Planning

- Planning control and building restrictions.
- Limiting additional hardstanding and parking areas.
- Planning for new builds in St. Mawgan village.
- Restricting property footprint expansions including garages and outhouses.
- Ending the threat of building on our floodplain – limit use to wildlife and agriculture.
- The politics of local planning decisions.

Initial Questions

At this stage of the discussion, the below points/questions were raised.

- How to develop an adaptation plan without expertise or funding?
 - Response: CCFF will bring their expertise to support the community with both of their plans.
- Can the community apply for funds for detailed flood mitigation assessments? This would be good to know how to best focus solutions.
 - See section on potential solutions to flooding. There are some funds available through MS4S. CCFF will also endeavour to also signpost the community to other possible funding sources if needed.
- How to persuade landowners to plant trees and introduce beavers?
 - Forests for Cornwall run by Cornwall Council can assist communities with planting native trees in places where it can help to reduce surface runoff. Forestry Commission may also be able to assist.
- River is one of the biggest issues, it is always very full. Can it be dredged or is it too expensive?
 - Lisa Goodall to help with accessing future funding for Catchment Based Approach and mitigating the impact of future flooding. Need to combine soft and hard engineering across the catchment.
- Should the upper catchment be separated from the sea in the plan?
 - This is not possible as one is detrimental to the other, they are linked together.

Exploring Solutions

We asked the community to consider first how they would tackle these challenges in a perfect world, then after discussing the limiting factors to this response, to come up with some potential solutions to the challenges.

Flooding (river and coastal)

Perfect world:

- Make the Village Hall more resilient to flooding.
- Consider a different type of bridge that can allow more water to move through.
- Maintain and invest in new highway and services. This is essential as otherwise it will split the parish in half. Highway is also critical to access supermarkets and healthcare.





- Need to maintain optimism here and recognise that communities that are leading by example are the most successful. If they don't try, they will never know.
- It is important to not think about solutions as bouncing back but rather think about new alternatives.
- Maintain vibrant local community. The hall is a part of that! But also: commerce and healthcare for community.

Limiting factors:

- If the estuary takes over the road this will destroy community adherence, people will disperse elsewhere, and the community hall will be unnecessary. Also, there aren't any good locations to which the community hall could currently move to.
- There is a need to think more broadly about putting in infrastructure in a different way. For example, if we want the coast road maintained we are looking at 25 years for obtaining permission and design, however we need to think sooner than that if we want to maintain the phone lines, broad band etc. Someone needs to lead on this.
- Cost and will.

Potential solutions:

- Solutions to the Village Hall:
 - There is a need to take this opportunity to start thinking about whether to protect the village hall building where it is or move it elsewhere.
 - Can we put the village hall on stilts?
 - Can we access lottery funding for the village hall? (**Action: Community to investigate**).
 - Implement Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures for the building. However, we first need to work out how much a PFR assessment would cost and how to get funding for it (**Action: CCFF to give the community details for a PFR specialist and look for funding to implement any measures**).
- The Environment Agency (EA) has done assessments about the recent flooding and wants to propose a meeting later in the year; however, an earlier meeting is necessary especially to provide the opportunity for the community to provide feedback to the EA (**Action: Gitty to speak to John Pask from the EA to organise a meeting with the community**).
- Collect data by collaborating with the EA and start a conversation about what they are doing and collecting. This will help us to understand what slow the flow measures would be best – e.g., beavers/woody dams, tree planting, etc (**Action: All**)
 - Implement slow the flow measures.
 - Learn more about spring system.
- There was some discussion about improving the flood defences (bank reinforcement) to minimise the potential of some areas to the north of the river flooding.





- Write an Emergency Flood Plan (**Action: CCFF to send the template to Kevin**).
 - Volunteer Flood Wardens need to keep an eye on when the floodplain is filled with water, as this provides a warning for flooding.
- Investigate a highway plan and work out how much it would cost to commission a study on the risk and connectivity (**Action: Jolyon**).

Dune erosion

Perfect world:

- Offshore reef to break wave energy
 - This view was not supported by all. Some felt that this would be damaging to tourism and recreational use of the beach.
- Tourism adapts to changes in the village. For example, could the current water sports move from the sea to the lagoon type feature that will potentially form in the longer term?
- Do not build a big wall.

Potential solutions:

- Let the sand build up.
- There was some discussion about the value and purpose of the boulders and whether they are needed (**Action: Community to consider this further**).
- Dune work – assess the type of plants in the dune (**Action: Community to work with Andy Nelson from Cornwall Wildlife Trust**).



Planning

Perfect world:

- Tighter controls on development.
- Make the edge into green land. This will reduce runoff from homes.
- Higher contributions of tax from large and new developments.
- Less large homes on the edge, fewer second homes and smaller size of them. For example, the amount of second homes and the size of them is a huge challenge. They contribute to flooding, pollution, homelessness. Houses are built on land that could catch water, instead water is running off from houses and contributes to flooding.

Potential solutions:

- Possibility of gaining funding from philanthropic contributions from second homeowners in the village (**Action: Community to investigate**).
- Increased participation: More people in the community need to feel confident in making their voices heard and showing up to meetings like this. Some people that live in rented homes feel like they can't have a say. More people need to understand that they should speak louder and make their voices heard.



- A better understanding for current planning policy and how this dictates what we can and cannot develop.
- Consider implementing a Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) in the Neighbourhood Plan (**Action: Parish Council**).

Final points

- This was the most useful session.
- Amy will write a report on the sessions and send it to the community.

Potential future discussion points

- Beach safety and the vulnerability of the RNLI lifeguard hut.
- The Surf Life Saving Club.
- Access onto the beach, are other routes required to provide resilience?
- Maintenance of the river channel on the beach and, alongside it, the primary access point onto the beach.
- The impact of flooding on carpark capacity. Could other sites be used for parking/commercial activity when the valley becomes wetter?

Challenges

