

# Longstanton/Northstowe Groundwater Collapse: What can be done?

**Public meeting: 7pm, Friday, 29 April 2022**  
**All Saints' Church, Longstanton**

A public meeting will be held at 7pm on Friday, 29 April, at All Saints' Church in Longstanton to update residents on the latest information on the groundwater collapse affecting the river terrace deposit aquifer beneath parts of Longstanton and Northstowe.

Last year, a series of reports from the hydrology consultancy firm HR Wallingford confirmed that the development of Northstowe was responsible for the loss of groundwater in the aquifer and the subsequent collapse in water levels in wells and groundwater-fed ponds in Longstanton and Northstowe.

In March, our Member of Parliament, Anthony Browne, facilitated a meeting between representatives from the Environment Agency, Northstowe Town Council, and Longstanton Parish Council.



Ladywalk Pond, Longstanton, was entirely devoid of water in summer 2020.

At that meeting, the Environment Agency made it very clear that the only opportunity to address the loss of groundwater was through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, which has been conducted by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

However, the district council excluded the impacts on groundwater from the EIAs for the final phases of Northstowe on the basis that the loss of water from the aquifer, wells, and ponds in Longstanton and Northstowe was “not significant”.

It is possible to ask a judge to carry out an independent review to determine if the district council complied with the EIA regulations, and Cambridge Friends of the Earth and Fews Lane Consortium have kindly offered to coordinate the initial steps

of the process. However, in order to move forward, there needs to be some public support for the review amongst residents of Longstanton and Northstowe in order to justify the review proceeding.

There is a final deadline coming up on 6 May 2022, which represents our final opportunity to use the environmental regulatory process to attempt to resolve the groundwater collapse.

Once this date passes, there is no regulatory or legal mechanism available to address the groundwater collapse, reverse the harm caused, or mitigate the impacts.

Following a brief presentation to summarise the findings of the HR Wallingford reports, the meeting will be opened up to discussion to allow residents to voice their opinions on whether the groundwater issue is something that demands attention from our parish, town, and district councils or whether it is a concern that residents are content to leave unaddressed.

An invitation has been extended to the Environment Agency to send representatives to the meeting, and South Cambridgeshire District Council, Homes England, and L&Q Estates (the developer of Northstowe Phase 1) have been also been invited to attend. Representatives from Longstanton Parish Council and Northstowe Town Council will undoubtedly also be in attendance.

This meeting represents a chance for all members of our community to come together to exchange views and try to reach a consensus on how best to proceed.

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