

## **Report on meeting between Ron Galton and Steven Lewis at KFRS Headquarters on 19<sup>th</sup> November at 10.00 am.**

The meeting was the result of a personal invitation following an introduction by Chris Wheal.

1. This meeting was very worthwhile, it clarified a number of points that were worrying us.
2. I explained that since Chris Wheal had ceased clearing vegetation from Fire Hydrant covers with Robert Turner we had been trying to find a Lengthsman to do this and clear ditches, but without success so far.
3. I also explained that I was very concerned that if there was a serious incident as a result of someone clearing vegetation from a fire hydrant cover we could end up without recourse because as the employer we were responsible for authorising work on Water Company / KFRS property, particularly if it was not our legal responsibility to do it. I then asked if such responsibility lay with KFRS or the Water Company.
4. Steven clarified that ownership and maintenance of fire hydrants was that of the local water company and with the cost of maintenance being borne by KFRS. He also pointed out that a number of Parish Councils had refused to clear vegetation for the same reason that concerned us and insurance was a problem.
5. Steven then pointed out that with approximately 29,000 fire hydrants in Kent and more added each year through new developments and infrastructure upgrades, the KFRS regular hydrant inspections were undertaken using a table of prioritisation which had been created by his team. As a result all 11 fire hydrants in Boughton Malherbe are inspected and maintained as necessary at least every 4 years by KFRS. The last inspection was on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.
6. KFRS are hoping that the new initiative that we have been invited to join would assist in the maintenance of hydrants without Parish Councils having to worry about liability.
7. Hydrants on roadsides are now sometimes identified with yellow paint work (thermal "H") and opposite each is a yellow marker in the road with an arrow pointing towards the fire hydrant so that if it is covered with vegetation and cannot be seen, it can easily be found.
8. The Parish Council reporting visual defects after joining the initiative would be in addition to that of the 4 year inspections undertaken by KFRS, as factors in rural areas (vegetation etc) may only be cut once a year or the yellow paintwork and markings have deteriorated.
9. What KFRS would like us to do is to check our fire hydrants regularly and identify where the yellow road markings have deteriorated to the point that they are no longer obvious to the eye due to traffic wear, and/or the hydrant covers have disappeared under vegetation and cannot be seen. (As per the KALC fire hydrant initiative guidance note).
10. If vegetation is such that the cover is partly visible it is acceptable.
11. In addition we are requested to report the location of any leakages whenever they are found, particularly if noticed between our regular checks.( As per the KALC fire hydrant initiative guidance note)
12. Each time we do a check on our hydrants we are requested to log those cover locations that need KFRS attention and report them. KFRS will then attend to rectify the problem ASAP – Contact [water.services@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:water.services@kent.fire-uk.org) or 01622 692121 Ext 2391.

13. We also discussed other issues with regard to useful inclusions in our emergency plan that I am in the process of revising, and Steven will send me some information that will be helpful to residents if they suffer an incident.

This link sets out the services KFRS provide:

Your safety – Kent Fire and Rescue Service ([fire-uk.org](http://fire-uk.org))

If the Parish Council requires any additional information on any of the services we should let Steven know.

14. I think we should carry out the necessary checks to assist KFRS, it is all in our interest without the risk of taking on onerous liability and no tools are needed, just pen, paper, and a camera from which pictures can be incorporated into our reports.

15. I propose that all we now need to do is decide on how many inspection checks are needed per year. Appoint or find someone to do them, join the initiative and report as requested by KFRS. Our two Councillors who deal with road potholes etc might be able to combine these inspections for KFRS into their normal rounds.

16. I have checked our KFRS hydrant location map, and it shows 9 locations actually in the parish and 4 on the boundary. Steven thinks we only have 11 that are ours so I need to sort this out with him when revising our Emergency Plan that incorporates the map.

17. The KFRS monthly report, highlighting work undertaken in our area will be sent to [Boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com](mailto:Boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com) and [galton@gotadsl.co.uk](mailto:galton@gotadsl.co.uk) from January 2022

18. Would Chris our Clerk please put this report onto our next meeting agenda for discussion and resolution.

**Ron Galton, Chair, Boughton Malherbe Parish Council.**

19<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Ist Draft for comment by Steven Lewis of KFRS before circulation to all councillors.

22<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. Amendments after receiving back comments from Steven Lewis.

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 . Circulated to all councillors and Clerk. Copied to Steven Lewis.