

THE general manager of Norwood Gardens, Southwell, Mr Henry Starkey, at the highest point flood water reached as it channelled into a balancing pond built to soak up excess water.



Drains could not cope

THE area's flooding problems were discussed by Southwell Town Council planning committee on Wednesday.

Members said drainage problems in the town were to blame for last week's flooded roads in the town.

Mr Graham Ball said the Co-op store and the health centre on The Ropewalk had balancing tanks that pumped the water into the drains.

But he said the drains on The Ropewalk could not cope with the extra water and had cracked.

Mr Brendan Haigh said many of Southwell's drains had not been cleaned for a long time and they needed to alert the Highways Agency to that.

Record

He said particular areas of concern were Halam Road, Church Street, Easthorpe and the entrance to the Minster School on Nottingham Road.

Mr Haigh said residents should record as much evidence of the flooding as they could because they may have a claim if any negligence was proved.

Mr Andy Gregory said Nottinghamshire County Council had neglected the emptying of the drains.

There were also concerns over the lack of maintenance to the Potwell Dyke and the affect that new housing developments such as the Merryweather site had on the flooding.

The flooding will be discussed again at a full council meeting on July 18.

Reception saved

One event cancelled because of flooding at Southwell Racecourse was the wedding reception of Miss Claire Gordon (25) and Mr Dominic Marsh (30) of Appletree Close, Southwell, who are getting married tomorrow.

They have booked Rolleston Village Hall for the day instead.

Mr Marsh is from Sydney, Australia, and his family were already in the country for the wedding at Southwell Minster when the floods hit.

Pond helped save town from worse flooding

RESIDENTS in the Southwell area have started picking up the pieces after last week's floods wreaked havoc in the town.

Things could have been far worse had it not been for a pond constructed at Norwood Gardens to soak up excess water.

The balancing pond was installed by Sir John Starkey, the owner of Norwood Gardens, in 1996.

Prevented

He agreed to install it when he sold land for housing development to ensure that water from the Halam Road catchment area was channelled directly into the pond.

The general manager at Norwood Gardens, Mr Henry Starkey, said the pond prevented a lot of flooding in the town.

"That whole system has effectively saved Southwell," he claimed.

The rain water was diverted by a cul-

By Andrew Miller

vert laid across Halam Road with an inlet pipe installed to take water into the pond.

Mr Starkey said had the pond not been in place most of the water would have ended up in new build houses off Halam Road.

In the aftermath of the flooding in Lowdham, residents have met representatives of Newark and Sherwood district and Nottinghamshire county councils, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water to find out why the village was so badly affected.

The county councillor for Lowdham, Mr Andy Stewart, said residents had been let down by professional people such as planners and engineers.

"Areas like Lime Tree Gardens have been there for 50 years and never had any water around their houses," he said. "There has to be a reason for it."

Mr Stewart said one of the problems

was that roadside dykes designed to hold flood water had been filled.

"There are miles of roadside dykes on the B and C class roads which are filled with soil, meaning pools and lakes of water are everywhere," he said.

"The responsibility rests with the landowners, the county council and the drainage board.

Flood plain

"Dykes get filled because heavy goods traffic squashes the dirt into them."

Mr Stewart suggested councils could pay farmers money to clear out the dykes.

He said money earmarked for rural development, which amounted to £1bn nationally, could be used.

He suggested creating a flood plain on the south-east side of Lowdham to relieve the pressure on the rest of the village.

Residents in Edingley were also coming to terms with the damage caused by the floods.

Mr Wayne Gaskell and Mrs Maria Gaskell, of Greaves Lane, began digging trenches around their home after it flooded twice in four days.

Mr John Hill, of Hill's Farm Shop, Edingley, said the deluge had affected crops in the area.

"It has had a dire effect on the soft fruit," he said. "The strawberries have just been devastated.

"The raspberries have also been affected by the continual water but if it dries up they will still be okay."

Mr Hill said the wet weather had affected vegetables because farmers could not plant autumn and winter crops in the water-logged fields.

"It is an unusual time," he said. "Disease is bad on crops and all businesses are affected.

"Sales are down because people are not having barbecues, but it is interesting that sales of comfort food like cakes and biscuits are high."

Cast to tackle A-bomb impact

PUPILS from the Orchard School, Newark, will showcase their acting talents at an event in Mansfield tomorrow. Seven pupils from the school, which caters for youngsters with special needs, will perform a 12-minute piece about Hiroshima at the Library Theatre, Mansfield.

Colin Telfer (15) Josh Stubblings (15) Alex Birch (17) Kerry Pattison (16) Emma Reavley (16) Sean Anderson (15) and Rebecca McDonald (15) have been studying on a GCSE course in expressive arts for the past two years.

A tutor, Mrs Susanna Crowther, has visited the school once a week. The piece is part of their final examination.

The course has been organised by Nottinghamshire County Council's youth arts department.

Mrs Crowther said it was a chance for them to showcase their talents in front of a large audience.

The piece is based on the effects the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1946 had on children living in the area.

Pupils had to do research and were each given a character to play.

They also visited The Aegis Trust to watch a programme about genocide in Rwanda.

Mrs Crowther said: "They have absolutely loved it. The pupils have worked so hard and I'm very proud of them."

Boundary support

An application to build a brick wall and railings outside a property on Westgate, Southwell, has been supported by councillors.

A 2ft wall with 4ft railings on top has been proposed by residents of the Old Vicarage, Westgate.

Members of Southwell Town Council's planning committee agreed the new front boundary of the property was in keeping with the character of the house.

Mrs Mollie Toy said it would be an improvement on what was there at the moment. Newark and Sherwood District Council will make the final decision.

Reading through the rain

THE latest Lowdham Book Festival was a hit despite the village being hit hard by the recent floods.

Saturday was the final day of the village's eighth festival.

The event's literary highlights included Daljit Nagra's vivid tales of immigrant life in Britain and Rosie Boycott on her book, *Our Farm*, which tells of a year in the life of a smallholding.

Issues dealt with by books and debate included slavery and the works of Chaucer.

On Saturday there were workshops on how to become a writer and travel writing.

The village hall was full of cuddly jungle animals for a read-aloud session of children's books and traditional Chinese stories were told in the festival marquee.

Earlier in the festival the actor, Colin Tarrant, and playwright, Stephen Lowe, performed extracts from the play *Old Big 'Ead* about the life of Brian Clough.

When the flooding was at its worst 300 homes were swamped and 100 people were evacuated.

The previous weekend's



planned sporting activities were cancelled because of it but everything else went as planned.

One of the organisers, Mr Ross Bradshaw, said: "The backdrop to the festival was that the village was so badly affected by the floods.

"A handful of sporting activities could not take place but that was all.

"It was very successful again and several of our events were sold out to their 350 capacity.

"We were busy with sandbags at one point but the

attendances were no different to previous years. The atmosphere was amazing and very supportive."

● ABOVE: Children's author Mr Tony Mittin reads his story, *All Afloat on Noah's Boat*, to Eve Jones (5) left, and her sister Annie (3) of Woodborough.