

SOMERTON – Road surface water drainage

The road surface water drains from the higher ground to the south, mainly in a northern direction via a system of drains and ditches to enter the river by means of Somerton South Pump. This pump is situated on the east side of the river so the surface water from the centre of the village has to flow through a culvert beneath the river to reach it. There is also an auxiliary pump on the west side of the river close to the aforementioned culvert.

1. Sandy Lane: Water drains down Sandy Lane and enters a small section of ditch on the west side of the lane just passed the junction with Cottage Road. There are 3 surface water drain covers at the west end of Cottage Road, immediately opposite Grange Cottage, which also connect to the same ditch on the west side of Sandy Lane. At the north end of the ditch, there is a culvert which takes the water under Sandy Lane to enter a dyke/ditch system which flows north between the properties on the east side of Sandy Lane and The Grange. This ditch system connects with the drains on the south side of the New Track (Rectory Cottage Path). The water then flows via a culvert beneath Rectory Cottage Path / New Track to enter the Drainage Board's adopted drain. This drain / ditch crosses the grazing marsh on the west side of the river and then runs parallel to the river northwards to Somerton Auxilliary pump where it then flows through the culvert beneath the river to Somerton South Pump.

Weak Points;

- a. Blockage/silt accumulation in the Sandy Lane culvert and the subsequent ditch system.
- b. Blockage of the culvert beneath the river.

Risk: Failure of the culvert beneath the river. A 'penstock' valve is located either side of the culvert beneath the river so, in theory, these can be closed in the event of the culvert failing.

2. Martham Road / Centre of Somerton.

Water drains downhill from the top of Martham Road, close to the junction with Sandy Lane. There is a section of open ditch / grips on the east side of Martham Road which takes some water, however, most continues flowing on the west side of Martham Road downhill past The

Lion P.H. where it meets the first drain cover located on the west side of the Horsey Road close to the junction with Cottage Road. Road surface water also flows down the 'school hill', Winterton Road and continues down Horsey Road mainly on the east side of the road where it then flows across Horsey Road to the west side. There is a network of piped drains on the west side of Horsey Road, from the junction with Cottage Road down to Common Road. The pipe continues on the south side of Common Road to a point opposite Stanley Cottage where a culvert beneath Cottage Road takes the water to the ditch system on the north side of Common Road. From this point, the drainage water flows west along the open ditch fronting the properties on the north side of Common Road and then north to join with the ditch on the south side of Rectory Cottage Path / New Track. The water then flows west to the culvert beneath Rectory Cottage Path/New Track and to the Drainage Board's drain / ditch as explained in point 1.

There is also another section of piped drain from the drain cover located in the middle of Staithe Road, close to the junction with Horsey Road, which runs east and then continues south on the east side of Horsey Road to join with the piped drain down along Common Road. There is also a 'beany block' drainage system to collect any surface water accumulation on the bend in the Horsey Road opposite the junction with Common Road. This also drains under Horsey Road to join with the Common Road pipe.

Weak Points:

- a. The surface water drain covers become blocked with debris.
- b. The piped drain network becomes blocked with silt.

Risk: The system through the centre of the village generally copes well with moderate rainfall but can become overwhelmed during prolonged heavy rainfall events.

The greatest threat is 'run off' from the high ground on the south side of the Martham Road i.e. Crow Hill. Currently, part of this high ground is not ploughed therefore reducing run off risk, however, the field further along the Martham Road is under arable production and poses a high run off risk particularly with irrigated potatoes crops.

Properties on Cottage Road, with gardens bordering the west side of Martham road, could be vulnerable to water flowing over the road side verge and down into these gardens.

3. The Street / Church Lane.

Water drains down Church Lane past the War Memorial to cross the Winterton Road to enter The Street. There is no piped drainage system along Church Lane nor along The Street. Water from a short section of the Winterton Road west, towards Somerton village centre, also flows down the hill to enter The Street and, likewise, from a short section of the Winterton Road east. The water continues flowing downhill along the Street to the only drain cover on the east side of the road close to the property Alderbarran. This drain connects with a pipe which takes water beneath the field entrance to flow into the open ditch close by. From here the ditch flows in various directions through the Burnley Hall Estate to join with the Commissioners Drain and onto Somerton South pump.

Weak Points:

The single drain cover at the north end of The Street can become blocked with debris in heavy rain fall events.

Risk: Run off can take place from the arable field at the top of Church Lane, on the west side of Coronation Lane.

4. Somerton Hall Entrance / Winterton Road.

There is a surface water drain located on the south side of the Winterton Road, close to the post box. This drain takes water under the Winterton Road to discharge in the open ditch between 3 acres property and Burnley Hall Estate land. The water flows north to join with the Estate's network of ditches which connect with the Commissioners Drain.

Weak Points:

The drain could become blocked and is currently not functioning at 100% owing to the drain entrance being reduced in size by road resurfacing / raising.

There is a road side grip through the hedge on the north side of the road which takes water to the aforementioned open ditch but this can also become blocked.

5. Collis Lane / Dark Lane Corner (Winterton Road)

Water flows downhill to the north end of Collis Lane where it meets with a single drain cover on the west side of the bend with the Winterton Road. This drain cover connects to a 'sustainable drainage system' which is a basis soak-away. Unfortunately, it soon becomes overwhelmed and blocks during moderate rainfall. Water then continues to flow downhill to the two drain covers on the bend at Dark Lane Corner. From here the water flows through a pipe running south/north beneath the road to enter the open dyke system on the east side of New Cottages. From here the water flows east on the north side of Back Road and then north past Honeypot Cottage on the Burnley Hall Estate.

Weak Points:

The drains at Dark Lane corner become blocked mainly with leaves during the autumn and winter months.

6. High Barn Farm / Manor Farm Road & Low Road

Water flows downhill from High Barn Farm Road and can cross the Winterton Road to enter Manor Farm Road if the road side ditches become full. It continues flowing north down Manor Farm Road to enter the section of open ditch on the east side of the road. If this relatively short section of ditch becomes full then the water continues down Manor Farm Road and then flows east along Low Road to enter the pond on the south side of the road, fronting the nearby properties. The overflow from this pond is through a pipe beneath Low Road into the ditch on the north side of the road. This in turn connects with the dyke system on the Burnley Hall Estate which flow to the Commissioners Drain. Some surface water also flows west along Low Road from the second pond. This eventually joins the same dyke system via another pipe beneath Low Road approx. 50 yards east of the first pond.

Weak Points:

The drainage relies of the network of road side ditches on the south side of the Winterton Road, close to the entrance of High Barn Farm Road, and those on the east side of Manor Farm Road together with the two pipes beneath Low Road remaining clear.

Risk: The drainage system becomes overwhelmed during prolonged periods of heavy rainfall which can result in considerable 'run off' from the arable land either side of High Barn Farm Road.

7. Collis Lane/ Hemsby to Martham Road.

Water flows from the Collis Lane junction with Blood Hills Farm Road, south downhill to the junction with the Hemsby to Martham Road. There is no piped drainage on this section of Collis Lane nor any road side ditches to absorb the surface water. The water accumulates at the junction with the Hemsby to Martham Road where it flows into a constructed pond / soak away and ditch network on the north side of the road.

Weak Points: No roadside drainage ditches on Collis Lane.

Risk: History of considerable 'run off' from the high ground bordering both side of Collis Lane.

Conclusions:

- a. All drainage in Somerton relies on the regular maintenance and upkeep of the roadside surface water drains and the road side ditches.
- b. The systems cope well with moderate rainfall, however, heavy, prolonged rainfall events may well result in 'run-off' from higher ground particularly on the east side of Martham Road and the fields bordering High Barn Farm Road.
- c. All drainage water eventually flows to Somerton South Pump from where it is pumped into the river. The pump is maintained by the Broads Drainage Board. Water can also be diverted to Somerton North Pump should the South Pump fail. The Board also maintains mobile pumps if required.

Richard Starling

Somerton Parish Councillor

26th April 2026.