

Chris Watts, chairman of South Swindon Parish Council, has spoken out after flooding coughed sewage on to the path Pictures: DAVE COX

# Dirty wet wipes spill from sewer during Swindon's soaking

## Concerns after sewage spills from drain cover after heavy rainfall

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FILTHY wet wipes were left swimming in a Swindon underpass as heavy rain caused sewers near Coate Water to spill over.

The spill was labelled a public health hazard. Chris Watts, chairman of South Swindon Parish Council, told the Adver: "We can't have raw sewage running in the streets of Swindon whenever we have slightly heavy rain."

The spot beside the Coate roundabout has long been a flooding hotspot, with the problem hitting headlines in 2007 and 2012.

But when a video showing murky water cascading from a drain cover into underpasses beneath Marlborough Road and Queens Drive on Monday circulated online, some said their had rarely seen it so bad.

Park South man Kyle Caswell, who took the video, said: "I was expecting it to be flooded due to the rain we had but I was quite surprised when I saw the water coming out the manhole.

"I've never seen anything like it. There were baby wipes everywhere, which is



Excrement appeared to have been pushed from under a manhole cover

what must've blocked the drains and cause the water to come back up.

"It's quite disappointing that people are flushing baby wipes. It's no good for our sewers, especially with heavy rainfall.

"With the subway being flooded, it forces people to

cross over Queens Drive which was dangerous - especially on Monday since visibility was poor due to the rain."

Andy Scott, 66, who regularly cycles from his home in Park South to Coate Water, said: "It's a disgrace. It's awful, a public health hazard."

Chris Watts added: "It's unfortunate that the infrastructure is in such a state that we would have excrement flooding into the subway. We will be bringing it up in a parish environment meeting to discuss with Thames Water.

"This presents an environmental risk to health. I hope Thames Water can clean this up between themselves and Swindon Borough Council."

Engineers from the water board and the council could be seen working on the skid-marked drain cover yesterday afternoon.

A Thames Water spokesman said: "The extremely heavy rain in recent days caused one of our sewers to flood which we accept is unpleasant for anyone passing. We were on site in a few hours to fully clean the area.

"Our engineers have checked the sewers and they were working as they should but were simply overwhelmed by the amount of rain - as well as wet wipes which should never be put down the drain.

"There was no problem with a nearby pumping station. The water in the underpass had been tested and contained no contaminants."

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## Flooding Issue

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### Verification

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## Confirmation of supplied details

### Question

Please advise details of your request

Please advise of the type of Flooding that occurred (eg, river, sewer, highway drainage or other) and the Date/s of the event

Where is it? \* (Please give a detailed location - eg: 'outside no. 10 High Street!')

### Answer

Blocked Roadside Gully

Flooded Underpass 14/10/2019, the water has receded but has left the site with a layer of sediment and excrement, this is a public health risk due to people/cyclists slipping and falling into the layer of sediment and its residue.

The underpass at Marlborough Road to Coate Water in Swindon