

Flood Warden Newsletter – Summer 2024

Welcome to the Flood Warden Summer Newsletter 2024

Welcome to our third Newsletter of 2024.

It was great to see so many of you attend the first of our online Flood Warden lunch and learn sessions, and to hear about your experiences. It's clear from these conversations how much of a vital role community volunteers and flood wardens play before, during and after flooding, and we're pleased that these online sessions will be continuing in the autumn. We're looking forward to welcoming some of you to the Incident Rooms in Blandford Forum and Bridgwater later this month too.

This edition of the Flood Wessex newsletter will focus on Property Flood Resilience (PFR) as a key part of flood resilience.

The Environment Agency works to reduce flood risk in many different ways. Between 2021 and 2027, we will be investing over £5.2 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management projects. This includes building new flood alleviation schemes like the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier, and Salisbury River Park, as well as maintaining existing schemes. Every Flood Alleviation Scheme, that the Environment Agency construct, go through a robust process to ensure that it provides good value to the taxpayer, with the benefits outweighing the costs. Unfortunately, for many smaller communities or areas with fewer properties at risk, it may not be feasible or affordable to build large scale flood defences, so there is the need to look at other ways to reduce the impact of flooding.

PFR is one of the key actions that householders at flood risk can take to adapt their homes so that if flooding does occur, the damage is far less, and recovery can happen far more quickly. We work with communities across Wessex to promote, and in some cases install, PFR measures to properties. But PFR isn't just about flood boards and pumps – it's also about individual and whole community preparedness for flooding.

We can't stop flooding altogether, but there is a great deal we can do together to be ready when it does happen.

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Flooding Information and Support

Environment Agency Property Flood Resilience Scheme

In communities with a main river or tidal flood risk, when other options for reducing flood risk have been discounted, the Environment Agency is sometimes able to support eligible householders with Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures, which covers two different types of adaptation – ‘resistance’ measures, which aim to keep water out of a property, and ‘resilience’ measures, which aim to make recovery faster and easier.

Examples of resistance measures include:

- Door or window barriers
- Flood gates
- Flood proof doors
- Portable or sump pumps
- Self-closing airbricks or airbrick covers
- Non return valves
- Tanking

Examples of resilience measures include:

- Flood resilient walls
- Raised electrics
- Water resilient flooring
- Flood resilient design – i.e. raised boilers or appliances
- Flood resilient kitchens / cupboards – i.e. stainless steel
- Storage of valuables above flood level

When we are considering where we can support communities as part of the Environment Agency’s PFR scheme, we have to consider a number of factors, including:

- The likelihood of flooding – our direct support is for those properties with the highest flood risk, so some properties at risk in the community might not be eligible if their flood risk is lower
- Where properties are linked, all homeowners must be in agreement when installing measures
- Homeowners should be prepared to commit to having a flood plan, and to undertaking the long-term maintenance and appropriate storage of equipment

When we have identified an area that might be eligible, we contact residents and community representatives directly. For those properties at risk of flooding that aren’t in areas covered by our PFR scheme, there are still a number of other avenues available for support. If the flood risk is from groundwater, ordinary watercourse, or surface water, it may be worth contacting your local authority to see if there is any support they are able to offer.

The insurance industry is also offering support in the form of the [‘Build Back Better’](#) scheme, which enables householders to install PFR up to the value of £10,000 when repairing their properties after a flood. Check with your insurer or look at the detail of your flood policy to see if you are covered. It’s something to consider when it comes to insurance renewal.

The National Flood Forum has a directory of PFR suppliers called [the Blue Pages](#). If you are undertaking your own installation, a key action will be to get an independent survey of your property to identify the most appropriate PFR measures. The other thing to look out for if you are buying your own products is whether they are kitemarked, which means they have been tested to meet standards set out by the BSI.

Correct storage and maintenance of PFR is essential to keep equipment in working order, as well as having a plan for when you might need to deploy it. Know what your triggers are, which might include [flood warnings](#) or [Met Office alerts](#).

Low-Cost Property Flood Resilience

Protecting your property from flooding can be an expensive business, which is why schemes such as Build Back Better and the Storm Henk recovery grants are so welcome. However, there are options that don't cost the earth too.

It's worth starting by thinking about the type of flood risk you have. Are you vulnerable to flooding from a river, or from runoff from fields or roads? Is there a coastal flood risk or risk from sewer systems? Understanding your risk will help you to interpret expected flood durations, depths, and lead times, and identify how flood water could enter your home and what could be damaged.

Next, think about where your valuables are stored – including important documents and photos – and assess whether they are safe where they are. Store things on a high shelf or upstairs - you can capture any information about what else you might need to move in the event of a flood in a [personal flood plan](#).

What could you use to lift furniture above flood level? Even tin cans under, or welly boots over table legs could be used to raise things up. Trestle tables are another good option for raising vulnerable appliances or furniture.

Airbrick covers, toilet seals and non-return valves are potentially low-cost options. Using waterproof paints, sealants, and tiles, as well as repointing masonry might also help to keep water out in a flood. Rugs can be used on stone floors instead of carpets. Using lift-off hinges on internal doors means they could be removed easily and stored safely in a flood.

Sandbag alternatives can be very compact and easy to store but are not always effective at creating a flood barrier. They can be useful in a flood for redirecting flows, so think carefully about where you might use them. In an emergency, some people have used makeshift barriers for doorways using plywood cut to size and attached with expanding foam or silicone, but this might not be effective, and you need be aware of any damage that might occur when removing this. Also be aware that floodwater can only be safely kept out to a certain height before there is a risk of structural damage to the building.

Even the best, properly installed barriers have an expected leakage rate, so anticipate having a mop and bucket handy to deal with any ingress of water. Puddle pumps can also be affordable.

For more information on low-cost PFR options, see [Low Cost Property Flood Resilience \(thefloodhub.co.uk\)](#)

Property Flood Resilience Online Resources

There are some great examples online about properties adapted with PFR. Check out some of the following resources, some of which contain inspiring case studies of people who have adapted their homes:

[HouseholdersGuidetoFloodResilience2023_ONLINE.pdf \(floodmary.com\)](#)

[Property Flood Resilience \(pagesuite.com\)](#)

[Property Flood Resilience | The Flood Hub](#)

[BeFloodReady – Property Flood Resilience \(PFR\) | Helping Reduce Flood Risk](#)

[Home - Flood Mary](#)

[Property Flood Resilience - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](#)

[Build Back Better - Flood Re](#)

[Blue Pages](#)

[Flooding and Historic Buildings | Historic England](#)

Environment Agency Online “Lunch and Learn” Sessions

We will be hosting some “lunch and learn” sessions which will be a combination of online sessions and drop-in events in both the Bridgwater and Blandford Offices.

The online sessions will run from 12.30 to 1.00pm with the drop-in events open from 12:30-3:30pm.

- **Visit the Incident Control Room in Bridgwater or Blandford – Thursday, 15 August (drop-in session in Bridgwater Office and Blandford Office)**
Drop-in and see how we manage flood incidents and how the Flood Warden role fits in.
- **Risks and Hazards Awareness and Staying Safe – Thursday, 19 September (online)**
An interactive session for Flood Wardens and volunteers identifying potential flood risks and hazards, dynamic risk assessments and how to stay safe.
- **Flood Plans & Flood Warden Action Cards – Thursday, 17 October (online)**
Join us for an open session – speak to us if you want any assistance developing or reviewing your plan; hear about some of the good examples and templates available and check out our simple and effective Flood Warden Action Card that can be easily adapted for your community.
- **Online Flood Information and Warnings – Thursday, 21 November (online)**
We will take you on a tour of www.gov.uk/check-flooding where you can check current flood risk, 5 day flood risk, current flood alerts and warnings, find river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels in your area, check long term flood risk from main river, sea and surface water and how to make sure you are signed up to receive the correct Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings for your community as a Flood Warden.

Please e-mail us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk if you would like to attend any of the above sessions.

Riparian Ownership, Roles, and Responsibilities

Riparian ownership, roles and responsibilities can be a tricky subject to navigate.

This new guidance offers advice on watercourse ownership and contains useful information on the maintenance of watercourses.

Scroll down to bottom of the [Owning a watercourse - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/owning-a-watercourse) webpage to find the link.

Alternatively, click on the picture.

The new *Your Watercourse* guidance also contains information about the roles of the various authorities that are involved in Flood Risk Management.

SSEN Fund for Communities

SSEN Powering Communities to Net Zero

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), the Distribution Network Operator for **Central Southern England** and the north of Scotland, is now welcoming applications to its new Powering Communities to Net Zero fund.

The new Powering Communities to Net Zero (PCNZ) fund is a successor to the previous Resilient Communities Fund, which has awarded over £5m to around 700 projects in the past nine years. The new fund will run annually from now, concluding in Spring 2028. More than £3m in grants will be awarded during this time. **This fund will support communities during prolonged power interruptions caused by storms, aid their ability to cope in periods of severe weather, and will now also support the adoption of new low-carbon technologies by non-profit organisations.**

The new fund explained

The fund is split into two categories - community-led physical and environmental resilience, and Low Carbon Technology (LCTs).

The new community-led physical and environmental resilience grants

Half of the £3m funding will be available over the next four years to enable communities to apply for grants that will bolster physical and environmental resilience measures. Further details of the criteria are found in the fund guidance and in the application form. Grants of up to £15,000 will be awarded to successful applicants in this category.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Saturday, 31st August 2024**, and applicants are asked to consider the criteria in the fund guidelines. The application documents can be downloaded on our website www.ssen.co.uk/pcnz. This gives full details of what can be supported by the fund as well as guidance on which projects will be prioritised.

The PCNZ Fund Panel, will review applications and determine which projects should receive funding, with the successful applications announced in late October.

More information can be found on our news article on the [SSEN website](#).

Events

Bath and North East Somerset Community Resilience Day

9.30 am to 15:30 pm on Friday, 6 September 2024 at Saltford Hall, Saltford, BS31 3BY

A free day of talks and workshops to help you, your community or business better prepare for emergencies. Hosted by BaNES Council with support from the Environment Agency.

Come along to hear from and speak to BaNES council, Avon & Somerset Police, Avon Fire & Rescue, ReACT and the Environment Agency.

Lunch will be provided.

Find out more, see the agenda and register here: www.eventbrite.com/e/bath-and-north-east-somerset-community-resilience-day-tickets-947777176047?aff=oddtcreator or email: emergencyplanning@bathnes.gov.uk

Somerset Prepared Roadshow Events 2024

This summer we held resilience roadshow events in Shepton Mallet and Queen Camel. Attendees had the opportunity to take part in a Flood Warden workshop run by the Environment Agency in the morning session. The afternoon slot featured experts from Avon and Somerset Police, Somerset Rivers Authority and Somerset Council covering a range of topics from flooding to Neighbourhood Watch. We have two more events coming up on 9 September at Mark Village Hall, and the 7 October at EMN Hall, Monksilver. There are more details [here](#) or email somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk.

Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Conference 2024

Another diary date is our annual resilience conference, which will be held on 6 November at Bridgwater and Albion Rugby Football Club. Further information and ticket booking to this free event which include lunch and refreshments is available [here](#).

Nominations for the Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Awards

The Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Awards recognise outstanding efforts from organisations and individuals who have made a significant impact in enhancing the resilience of our community. The scheme is now open for nominations of Somerset organisations or individuals who have made marked contributions to our community's resilience. This is a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge their hard work and dedication, and to showcase their achievements on a larger platform.

To make a nomination, please complete the simple form [here](#). The deadline for is 15th September, so don't miss this chance to recognize the unsung heroes in our community. Awards and commendations will be presented at the Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Conference on 6 November.

If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to contact us at somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk.

[Spark Somerset](#) have announced the launch of a brand-new campaign, Volunteer in Somerset - your time, your way!

The campaign aims to make volunteering more accessible and flexible for everyone by breaking down barriers and showcasing the diverse range of opportunities our county has to offer!

[Watch the campaign video](#) to see the inspiring stories and key messages behind this initiative.

For more information, check out the dedicated page on the Spark a Change website: <https://www.sparkachange.org.uk/volunteer-campaign>. You'll also find the campaign toolkit, packed with resources to help you attract new volunteers and champion social action in somerset.

While you're visiting, be sure to add and update your opportunities as they anticipate an increase in traffic throughout the campaign.

Water Situation Report

Water Situation Report – May, June, and July 2024

In total, across Wessex, for May, June, and July 2024:

2024	May	June	July
Fluvial	21	0	1
Tidal	0	0	0
Groundwater S Wessex	0	0	0
Flood Warning			
Fluvial	1	0	0
Tidal	0	0	0
Groundwater S Wessex	0	0	0
Severe Flood Warning			
Fluvial			
Tidal			
Totals	22	0	1

y, an average of 98mm of rain fell across Wessex in May (160% of the LTA), making it the 10th month in the series to have rainfall above the LTA. As a result, this has been the fourth wettest 3 months (March to May) and wettest 12 months (June to May) since records began in 1871. The soil moisture deficit (SMD) was recorded close to 0mm across most of Wessex during May, although small areas to the east of Wessex recorded a range of 11-40mm. This is notably lower than the SMD this time last year. The river flows in the north of Wessex mainly recorded normal and above normal flows, with only mean flows in May 2024. All sites recorded reduced flows at the end of May in comparison to the end of April. Groundwater sites across Wessex recorded between exceptionally high and normal levels at the end of May depending on location, though as with April, there was a decreasing trend. Reservoir levels in Wessex remained close to 100% full during May for Wessex Water, reporting at approximately 98% full which is similar to the levels recorded at the end of last year. Bristol Water

ted approximately 94% storage capacity which has remained steady throughout the month - this is similar to what was reported at the end of May last year.

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...outheast of the patch recording 71-100mm, and a very small area at the most western point of
...sex recorded 11-40mm. Most sites to the north and west of Wessex reported normal river flows in
...2024. The sites within the chalk aquifer reported above normal and notably high flows, the remain
...es in the south of Wessex also recorded above normal and notably high flows. The groundwater
...s varied across Wessex in June from normal to exceptionally high. Didmarton 1 (monitoring the
...or Oolite formation) recording the exceptionally high levels, while Oakley Industrial Estate
...toring the Chalk recorded normal levels. Reservoir levels in Wessex decreased over the month of
...with Wessex Water reporting reservoirs at approximately 89% capacity by the end of the month
...h is similar to this time last year. Bristol Water reported reservoirs levels at approximately 86%
...city by the end of June, which is also similar to this time last year.

...data not available at the moment.

Useful Information

Useful Contacts

Contact Floodline on [0345 988 1188](tel:03459881188) for up to date flood warning information or advice.

Contact the Environment Agency incident hotline on [0800 80 70 60](tel:0800807060) to report flooding, blockages in rivers or any other environment incident.

Where to find further information

For local weather information including weather warnings visit the Met Office at: www.metoffice.gov.uk

The Met Office's Community Resilience website: [Met Office Community Resilience](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/community-resilience)

To sign up for flood warnings: [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)

For river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels: [River, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels](http://www.gov.uk/river-sea-groundwater-and-rainfall-levels)

To find out more about preparing for flooding: www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding

[Wessex Area Water Situation Reports](http://www.gov.uk/wessex-area-water-situation-reports). Monthly reports are produced on [Gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Flood Re has been set up to help those households who live in a flood risk area find affordable home insurance. For more information contact your insurer or visit: www.floodre.co.uk

The National Flood Forum provide further advice and support at: www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Flooding - Find out the answers to frequently asked questions: [Flooding FAQ](#)

For Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Flood Plan templates: [BeFloodReady – Property Flood Resilience \(PFR\) | Helping Reduce Flood Risk](#)

Communities Prepared: Flood warden booklets and online training: <https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/>

Keeping In Touch

We need your help to keep our list of contact details up to date:

In the two short videos we describe why we need your contact details and how we will use them to help support you in your role as Flood Warden or Community Emergency Volunteer. We also explain why, how, and when our Flood Warning Duty Officer might want to contact you.

[Flood Warden Video 1](#)

[Flood Warden Video 2](#)

Please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk with your name, your community and contact number.

You have rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the supervisory authority for data protection legislation. The ICO website has a full list of your rights under data protection legislation, you can access this here:

[Your data matters| ICO](#)

For general information on how the Environment Agency treats your personal data and how to contact us, see our Personal Information Charter: [Personal information charter - Environment Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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