

What's new from the Wessex Flood Resilience team?

Welcome to the new revamped flood warden newsletter! As winter is just around the corner, this edition will focus on all things winter readiness; what we have been up to, what we have planned, and of course, what things you can be doing to be ready for winter.

With autumn well and truly upon us, rainfall has been most welcome after a very dry summer. Despite recent heavy rainfall we are still in drought and will be next year, but this does not mean that flooding isn't possible. More of that within this edition.

It's been great to deliver some of the first face to face engagement events since the start of the pandemic and it's been great to see so many of you at the West Bay flood warden training event and the Somerset Prepared Event. More engagement is being planned across the area and there are a few dates for your diary.

As this is a new way of delivering the newsletter we want to hear your feedback so please do let us know what you think!

But for now, I hope you enjoy the newsletter. The next one will be in Spring 2023.

Laura Lavery-Flood Resilience Team Leader



Winter Readiness

Flood Action Week

7th-13th November is Flood Action Week, the Environment Agency's annual campaign to raise awareness of flood risk and how to prepare.

Being prepared can significantly reduce risk to life, damage to property and the mental health impacts of flooding.

There are multiple ways you can prepare:

[How to plan ahead for flooding - Check for flooding - GOV.UK \(check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-for-flooding)

Preparing for Winter

Now is the time of year when our maintenance activities start to ramp up. You may see a lot more of our field staff out on the ground, maintaining, operating and inspecting our assets or even down on the coast carrying out tide watches as winter storms roll onto our coastlines.

You may also see our field staff and contractors carrying out seasonal vegetation management activities in and around our flood alleviation schemes that operate to reduce the risk of flooding to communities. We also carry out maintenance on some sections of watercourse where we use our permissive powers to carry out vegetation management to aid conveyance of flood water through areas where properties are at risk of flooding.

We carry out this maintenance with the help and guidance of our inhouse ecologists who advise us on the best times of year to manage these sites so we comply with the law, for example bird nesting season and the wildlife and countryside act. This ensures that we do not cause any damage to the habitat of other residents that share these habitats.

Here is some more information on the maintenance we carry out: [Reducing flood risk – the maintenance work we do to keep rivers flowing - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

If you are a riparian owner and you are carrying out any maintenance on your stretch of watercourse, you might also find this useful: [GardenRiverbankGuide-EmailVersion.pdf \(wessexrt.org.uk\)](#)

As always, if you see a blockage that could pose an immediate flood risk to properties please contact our [Incident Hotline Number on 0800 80 70 60](tel:0800807060)



Coastal readiness

The Wessex area is top and tailed with beautiful coastlines which draw in huge numbers of residents, businesses and tourists year-round, it also presents us with a considerable risk of flooding from the sea. We continue to have a big focus on coastal preparedness, both internally and with our partners to ensure we are as prepared as possible should we have a major coastal flood event.

We are undertaking a project to look at our coastal risk and preparedness across the Wessex area. Our project aligns with the Environment Agency's 2020 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and its vision "a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100".

Our coastlines are very different in the risks they present, with the north coast being from high tides and surges, and the south coast reacting more to swells and risk from coastal erosion. Our project will be working across both coasts to review and deliver improvements to ensure we are as effective as we can be in preparing and responding to coastal incidents through timely and effective forecasting, warning and informing.

The project is in its infancy at the moment, we are currently developing the

scope and timelines. We will provide more information as it develops, and begins to deliver the benefits which we will all feel across Wessex area.



Bridgwater Tidal Barrier

The Bridgwater Tidal Barrier project team has continued to be extremely busy developing the detailed designs for the scheme. The project will better protect 13,000 homes and businesses from tidal flooding and is in partnership with Sedgemoor District Council.

Current activities include:

- Ongoing engagement with landowners affected by the new downstream defences on the River Parrett at Chilton Trinity, Pawlett and Combrich;
- Planning public events including one to be held in St Mary's church Bridgwater on the afternoon of Thursday 30 November;
- Constructing the access track (and haul road) along the river bank to the Western abutment of the future barrier adjacent to Chilton Trinity;
- Producing detailed design drawings of banks, barrier and the operations building;
- Using Department of Education grants to, with partners WWT, educate on climate change and flood risk and 4 local schools.
- Installing river flow or level gauges and developing concept drawings for 10 fish and eel pass sites on the rivers Parrett and Tone.
- Website for more information: [Bridgwater Tidal Barrier \(sedgemoor.gov.uk\)](http://bridgwater.tidalbarrier.sedgemoor.gov.uk)

- Twitter page: @BarrierTidal
- Facebook Environment Agency Wessex



Chiswell Siren Test

A flood warning siren test was carried out successfully at Chiswell on Tuesday 18th October.

While the tests are simple to carry out, a lot of planning goes into ensuring that relevant stakeholders are made aware, to avoid causing confusion with a real Severe Flood Warning being issued.

The Environment Agency, local flood bailiffs and Dorset Council were present at the test, which was followed by a tour of the Flood Alleviation Scheme, to increase understanding of the site and the challenges faced.

Members of the public joined a subsequent tour of the scheme in the afternoon, ahead of the second siren test, to see the flood defences and get a better understanding of the procedures and systems in place protecting their community.



Slowing the Flow



which are a hedge
on top of an earth bank.

The Environment Agency has produced four short films with Cumbria Wildlife Trust explaining how we can slow the flow and help defend our communities from flood water. Find out more about some natural solutions to climate change.

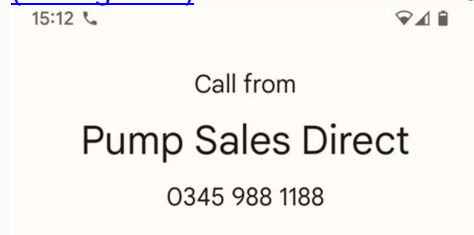
Flood Warning Service Issue

Some Android handsets registered to receive telephone calls from the Flood Warning System are incorrectly displaying a caller ID of "Pump Sales Direct". Customers may choose not to answer these calls because they do not

recognise or trust the caller ID and may therefore miss important flooding information. Text and email messages are unaffected. The Floodline number is 0345 988 1188.

The “Pump Sales Direct” name may appear instead of, or as well as, the Floodline number.

To sign up for flood warnings: [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings) or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188



Why we are still in drought?

The extended dry periods experienced over the summer months have left a water resource deficit. This is having a long-term impact on the environment, despite recent heavy rainfall, as ecology and habitats take longer to recover from drought stress.

Find out more here: [National Drought Group projections for winter water resources - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2018/01/24/national-drought-group-projections-for-winter-water-resources-creating-a-better-place/)



Down by the River

This film was made by Somerset Film for Somerset Rivers Authority. It captures how communities across the county have responded to the unique challenges flooding poses to each area of the diverse landscape.

What's coming up?

Flood Warden Training Event in Wiltshire this Autumn

We have a training day available in Wiltshire this Autumn. The day will be made up of presentations and tabletop exercises delivered by the Environment Agency Flood Resilience Team, Local Authority and Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service together with participation and support from other Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners.

- Wednesday 23 November, 10am-4pm, Guildhall, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Topics covered will include:

- An Introduction to Emergency Response
- Procedures and planning for Flood Wardens and Community Emergency Volunteers

- Understanding flooding and the role of the Flood Warden
- Flood risk awareness, dynamic risk assessment and how to stay safe

To book a place or for more information, please email floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk with the following information:

No of places required:

Name of attendee(s):

Community:

Upper Piddle Flood Risk Management Scheme Community Drop-In Session

The Environment Agency is currently working on a flood risk management scheme to reduce flood risk to the Piddle Valley in Dorset. We are hosting our first community drop-in session to introduce the scheme:

Thursday 17 November, 2pm-6pm, Piddletrenthide Memorial Hall

To find out more about the scheme head to our

Citizenspace: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/upper-piddle-flood-risk-management-scheme/>

Partner Updates

Dorset Council



Report Property Flooding and Highway Drainage issues

Please inform us of flooding to your property or area, you can also

request street sweeping and the clearing of road drainage gullies when considered necessary to reduce the risk of flooding.

Report Area or Property Flooding

This should be reported on the 'FORT' database, it is possible to report flooding by property or by area, this information may support an investigation. Report area flooding and property flooding on;

<https://swim.geowessex.com/dorset>

Sandbags

Dorset Council do not have a statutory requirement to provide sandbags, but in an emergency, sandbags may be available from stores located around the county. Store locations and further information can be found on the Dorset Council website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/flooding/sandbags-and-local-flooding-advice.aspx>

Road Gullies

Dorset Highways pro-actively inspect and empty gullies on the strategic network only, roads that do not form part of the strategic network or gritting routes are dealt with re-actively. Blocked gullies can be reported on the Dorset Council website or by telephone.

If an imminent storm could result in property flooding, please report by telephone on; 01305 221020

To report a blocked highways gully (maintenance typically within 28 days); <https://dorset-self.achieveservice.com/service/report-a-gully--drain-or-flooding-issue>

Street Cleansing

To request street cleansing; Road sweeping issues can be reported either by telephone on 01305 221040, or online to Dorset Waste Partnership; <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-litter/street-cleaning/street-cleaning-and-litter-problems.aspx>

(The link to DWP is now on the Dorset Council website).

Communities Prepared

Communities Prepared

Become a member and gain access to our new online hub!



Featuring: introduction sessions, self-led online learning, workshops, in-depth courses for coordinators, facilitated discussion sessions, forum, and specialised support.
All provided free to support your community resilience journey.

As this Autumn and Winter bring with them uncertainty and more extreme weather. We're pleased to share the new Communities Prepared online Community Hub, an unprecedented accessible digital resource that will encompass our resources and training modules all in one place, with community resilience in the face of crisis and emergency at its heart.

The hub is now live, with more and more content to be published over time in what is now a national offer, free at the point of access, and encompassing training across Flooding, Utility Volunteering and Crisis Management, with a member's forum in which to share experiences from others across the country.

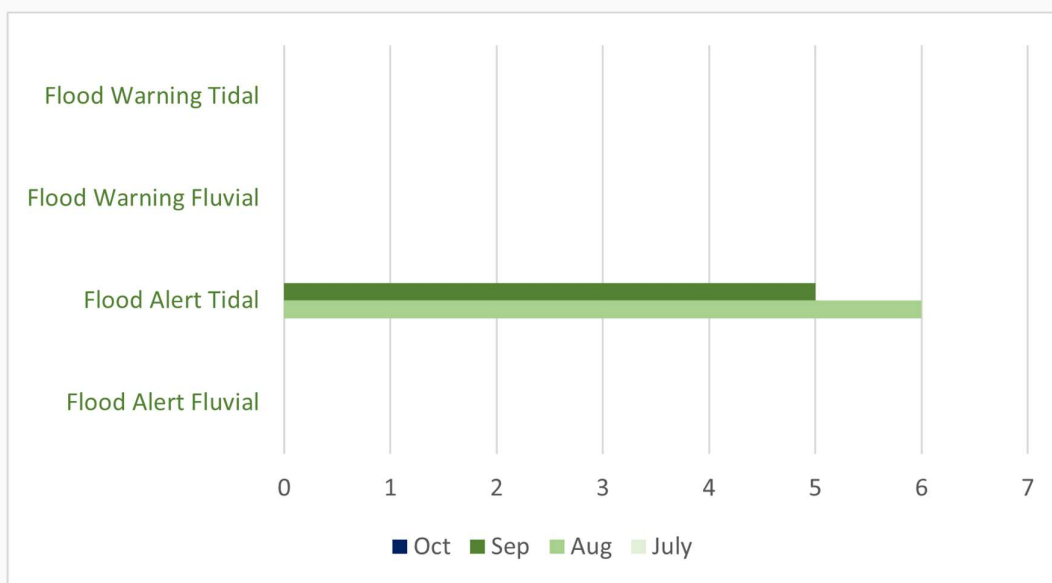
Register as a member with us to explore the platform and learn more by following this link: <https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/register/>

Feel free to email us at communitiesprepared@groundwork.org.uk if you have any questions.

Useful Information

Water Situation Report

In total, across Wessex, for the months of July-Oct we issued:



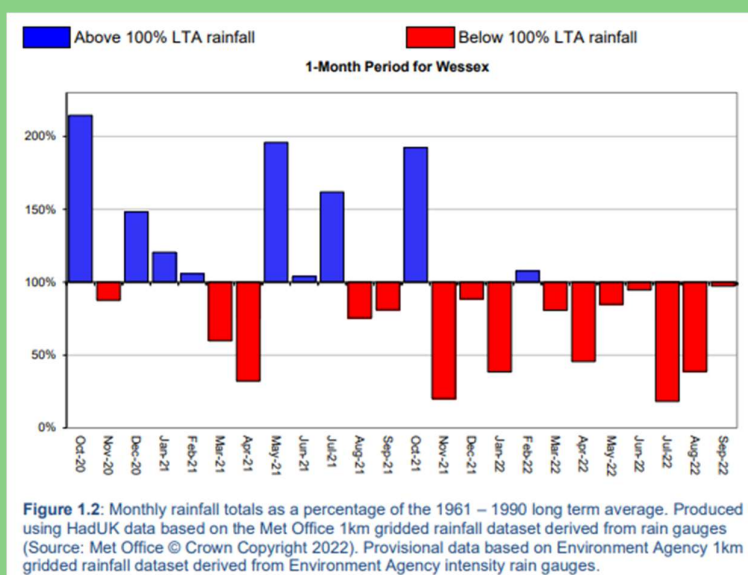
Wessex experienced a month of below average rainfall with 50 mm (88% LTA) falling throughout June. In July, Wessex saw the continuation of the below average rainfall trend first observed in November 2021. Only 10 mm (18% LTA) of rainfall fell throughout the month resulting in the second driest July since records began in 1891. The Wessex area received 26 mm of rainfall during August (39% of LTA) which is 'notably low' for the time of year. Rainfall in Wessex returned to 'normal' for September at 97% LTA (71 mm) after 'exceptionally low' and 'notably low' rainfall in July and August.

Soil Moisture deficit declined throughout June, finishing the month with a value of 102 mm. Soil Moisture deficit in July throughout Wessex continued to decline; increasing from 102 mm to end the month at 129 mm. This is more than twice the deficit observed during the same period in 2021. Soil moisture deficit fluctuated in August, beginning the month at 129 mm, recovering to 123 mm, before declining further to 132 mm. In September, the soil moisture deficit gradually decreased in the first half of the month towards 100 mm before increasing again in the second half to around 120 mm. This is near the historic maximum for the time of year (around 130 mm) and significantly higher than the LTA deficit and deficit this time last year.

Most monitoring sites within Wessex experienced low monthly mean flows during June. In July, all the monitoring sites within Wessex experienced low monthly mean flows. Most monitoring locations within Wessex experienced low monthly mean flows during August with Frenchay (Bristol Frome) recording its lowest ever flow. All sites ended the month with lower flows than observed at the beginning of August. In September, daily mean flows increased and decreased throughout the month in response to the wet and dry spells. This was less pronounced on the rivers situated in the more permeable Chalk catchments. The rainfall at the end of the month led to daily mean flows increasing at most reporting sites.

Throughout, June, July August and September, all monitoring locations expressed a steady continuous decrease in groundwater levels. Total reservoir storage decreased during June; Wessex Water began the month at 82% of capacity reducing to 70% by the end of the month. By the end of July reservoir levels dropped to 56%, while by the end of August those levels had dropped to 40%. Total reservoir storage continued to decrease throughout September, with Wessex Water ending the month on 38% and Bristol Water ending the month on 46%, which are both lower than the storage this time last year.

For more information: [Water Situation Report \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-report)



Know your Local Authority's policy on sandbags

BANES - see their policy [here](#)

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole - see their policy [here](#)

Bristol City Council - see their policy [here](#)

Dorset Council - see their policy [here](#)

Mendip District Council - see their policy [here](#)

North Somerset Council - see their policy [here](#)

Sedgemoor District Council - see their policy [here](#)

Somerset County Council - see their policy [here](#)

South Gloucestershire Council - see their policy [here](#)

Wiltshire County Council - see their policy [here](#)

Where to find further information

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

The Met Office have also updated their Community Resilience leaflet which contains some really useful information:

https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/business/public/-sector/community-resilience-leaflet_oct21.pdf

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

For river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels: [River, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels](#)

[Wessex Area Water Situation Reports](#). Monthly reports are produced on 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 [here](#)

[Property Flood Resilience Toolkit | The Flood Hub.](#) This toolkit contains all the resources you need as a basic introduction for your property to become more flood resilient. Click on each resource to download it and build up your toolkit!

Personal flood plan

Name

 Environment Agency

Are you signed up to receive flood warnings?
If not call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 to see if your area receives free flood warnings.

☐

Let us know when you've completed your flood plan by calling Floodline on **0345 988 1188**.
This will help us learn more about how people are preparing for flooding.

General contact list	Company name	Contact name	Telephone
Floodline	Environment Agency		0345 988 1188
Electricity provider			
Gas provider			
Water company			
Telephone provider			
Insurance company and policy number			
Local council			
Local radio station			
Travel/weather info			

Key locations

Service cut-off	Description of location
Electricity	
Gas	
Water	

Who can help/who can you help?

Relationship	Name	Contact details	How can they/you help?
Relative			
Friend or neighbour			

Be prepared for flooding. Act now

Personal Flood Plan Template

The personal flood plan includes a list of things you should do (like moving sentimental items to safety), and provides space for you to note down important contact details such as your utility companies and insurance

community flood plan

Parishes and communities working together

Community or group			
Address			
Floodline Quickdial Number		Which Environment Agency flood warnings are you registered to receive?	
Local flood warning trigger <i>i.e. when water reaches bottom of the bridge</i>			

Community Flood Plan Template

This flood plan template is for anyone involved in supporting communities or groups to improve their ability to plan for a flood

Flooding from groundwater

Practical advice to help you reduce the impact of flooding from groundwater



Prepare your property for flooding

A guide for households and small businesses



would your business stay afloat?

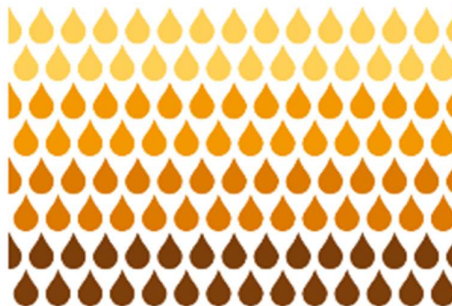


A guide to preparing your
business for flooding



What to do before, during and after a flood

Practical advice on what to do
to protect yourself and your property



Would you know what to do in a flood?



**FLOOD
ALERT**

PREPARE

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Visit www.gov.uk/check-flooding



**FLOOD
WARNING**

ACT

- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- Move things upstairs or to safety
- Move family, pets and car to safety



**SEVERE
FLOOD
WARNING**

SURVIVE

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

Visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding

#PrepareActSurvive

Useful Contacts

Contact Floodline on **0345 988 1188** for up to date flood warning information or advice.

Contact the Environment Agency incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60** to report flooding, blockages in rivers or any other environment incident.

Reporting flood risk and riparian responsibilities

If you are concerned about blockages, obstructions to flow in the river or know of cut vegetation being deposited in the watercourse, which can cause pollution, remember to ring our Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60 which is open and manned 24 hours a day. You will be given advice and guidance and the information you share will be recorded and passed to the relevant duty team who will be able to take any necessary actions.

If your community is affected by flooding please remember to share this information with us. Photos, times and description of flooding are vital in helping us understand how your community has been affected and what we can do going forwards, whether it be changes to flood warning thresholds or assessing your community for a scheme or property flood resilience measures.