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**Dear Flood Wardens, Community Volunteers and  
Town and Parish Clerks - Welcome to the Spring  
2022 Newsletter**

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**New Features on the Check for  
Flooding Service**

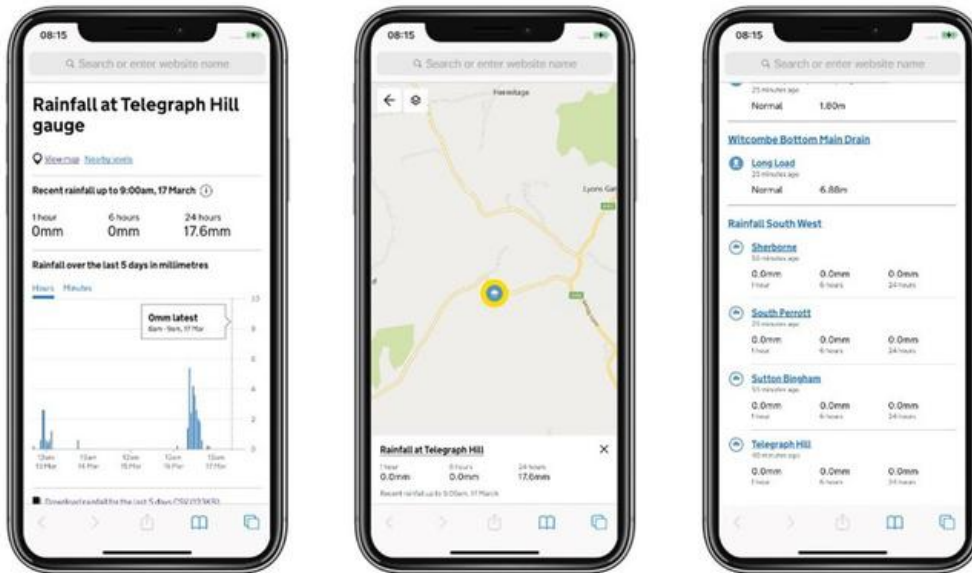
**New Rainfall Station Pages - GOV.UK Check for Flooding**

New rainfall pages went live on Check for Flooding on Tuesday, 29 March 2022 as part of continuous improvement. This has been something that has been highly requested through user feedback and the design has been tested with a range of users to ensure their needs are met.



The pages are fully accessible. They can be used with screen readers and all page interactions can be performed with a keyboard, including the chart. Along with the rest of Check for Flooding, the rainfall pages can be used from any device.

Users will be able to access the rainfall station pages from the station list and maps.



### Page features

- View the station on the map
- View nearby telemetry stations
- Summary of accumulation for 1, 6 and 24 hours
- Interactive chart showing hourly or 15 minute interval data
- CSV download to meet accessibility needs
- The option to share the page via social media or e-mail

### Future improvements

- Redesigned station list to improve performance
- Access to historical gauge data
- Tide times

For further information, get in touch with [faye.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:faye.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk) or visit the Check for Flooding site [Check for flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-for-flooding).

## 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](#)



## **Dorset Prepared Community Resilience Online Event March 2022**

Thank you for supporting the Dorset Prepared Community Resilience Online Event this year. The event was held over 5 days and attended by over 200 people with the first two days focussed on flooding, climate change and water management.

Presentations were delivered by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Bournemouth Council and Dorset Council, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Environment Agency, Communities Prepared, Met Office, Wessex Water, Dorset Police, Utility Companies, Dorset Mind, Wessex 4x4, Dorset Coast Forum - Weymouth BRIC (Building Resilience in Communities) together with community groups who shared their stories of working together to support their communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Topics included cyber crime, fraud, health, fire prevention, PSTN (public switched telephone network) switch off, working with volunteers, introduction to the Flood Warden role, the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service, Property Flood Resilience and many more.

All sessions were recorded and are currently in the process of being uploaded to the Dorset Prepared website. The majority of the sessions are appropriate for everyone, regardless of where your community is based, so please keep checking the website to see if there is a session recording you would find helpful to view.

If you would like to be kept informed about future training events, please email us at [floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) with your name, community name and community role.

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## Emergency Alerts!

Emergency Alerts is the UK name for notifications that are sent to a compatible mobile device, via cell broadcasting technology, to highlight risk to life. Watch this video to find out more

<https://youtu.be/9yLd2AjGzYI> or go to <https://www.gov.uk/alerts>.

The Environment Agency has been asked by the Cabinet Office to develop the capability to use this new government system to send Emergency Alerts for the most severe river and sea flooding incidents in England.



This capability will enable more of those at risk from the most severe flooding to be made aware so they can take appropriate action. The Emergency Alert will be received by most mobile devices in the target area that are 4 and 5G enabled and by those that travel into that area while the Emergency Alert is active. This will mean that we'll be able to reach those at highest risk, including those that we cannot currently through our existing warning routes, and ultimately save lives

This capability will be used in conjunction with Severe Flood Warnings in England and we are working towards having this capability available in spring 2022, following a national welcome message from the government

More information on Emergency Alerts can be found on the [gov.uk Emergency Alerts page](#) and in the YouTube video [UK Emergency Alerts - You Tube](#)

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## Small Grants Fund - Advice & Guidance



There's a huge variety of equipment available to support your community emergency plan and choosing the right thing can be a daunting task. To help you get it right check out our top tips for choosing wisely:

### 1. Identify the task

First make a list of the activity you'll be carrying out and identify the equipment you'll need to keep safe. This will help you focus on your particular needs and avoid buying items that go unused.

### 2. Check the rating, quality & lifetime of equipment

It's often tempting to go for the cheapest option but make sure you choose something suitable for the intended task; otherwise you could end up buying twice, or worse, have it fail and put you at risk.

Check if items like personal protective equipment are appropriately rated for your requirements and look out for endorsements such as the [British Standards Institute Kitemark](#) or [Trading Standards Buy With Confidence](#) logo.

Consider the lifetime of equipment before making a choice and identify any ongoing maintenance or training costs. Defibrillators for example, are available through a number of schemes with varying levels of future expenses and support.

### 3. Get in touch

If you're still unsure about a potential purchase - let us know! The Somerset Prepared Partnership has a wealth of independent, professional experience from the Emergency Services, Local Authorities and Voluntary Sector that we're keen to share. This includes information such as:

- Appropriate safety standards for personal protective equipment;
- What to consider when buying defibrillators; and
- Useful equipment suggestions to support your emergency plan.

We can also put you in touch with other communities across Somerset in a similar position to you. Just drop us a line at [info@somersetprepared.org.uk](mailto:info@somersetprepared.org.uk) and we'll do our best to help you in the right direction.

For the Small Grants Fund terms and conditions, and to download an application form, please visit the Somerset Prepared website [Somerset Prepared - Helping Somerset prepare, respond and recover from emergencies](#) and select the "Get Support" section then "Funding Support".

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Further to our mail out to you in April, this is a reminder that the 2022 Resilient Communities Fund is now open for applications. The fund operates in our **Central Southern England** network area.

This year's fund is worth £1million and will focus on responding to emergency events, in particular improving the resilience of vulnerable members of the community. Application forms and the fund guidelines are available at [Central southern England fund - SSEN](#). Please read the guidelines document before completing an application form.

The deadline to submit your application is **1st June 2022**. Decisions on awards will be made in Autumn.

If you are unsure who your distribution network operator is, you can find out [here](#).

To discuss a potential application, or for general information and advice about the fund, please contact Gareth Shields, Community Investment Manager on 01738 340142 or [gareth.shields@sse.com](mailto:gareth.shields@sse.com).

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## **Please help us keep your contact details up to date**



We need your help to keep our list of contact details up to date. In the two short videos – see links below – 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.

<https://youtu.be/tyjjSQ4aH-g>  
<https://youtu.be/YUKA9Gaulxc>

Please email us at [floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) with:

- your name
- community name
- contact number

E-mail us if you would like more information about how and why we contact Flood Wardens, Community Emergency Volunteers and Town Clerks, or about how we handle your data.

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# Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme

Creating a community resilient to flooding and coastal change



**We are delighted that the Secretary of State granted the legal powers to construct the barrier - the Transport Works Act Order (TWAO) - after a long and complex process. This is a major milestone for the Scheme and means we can now move forward to detailed design and construction of the barrier and the associated elements. Whilst the TWAO has now been granted, there is still a great deal of work to be carried out ahead of construction.**

We also started ground and archaeology investigations for the scheme in early January. The works will provide us with further information to help influence the detailed design of the scheme and investigate the archaeological potential of the area.

We recently held a successful open day for the archaeology investigations. All timeslots filled up fast and we received some great feedback. Each slot started with an introduction at the Somerset Brick and Tile Museum, followed by a tour of the excavations. Over 100 people joined us throughout the day, and visitors were highly appreciative of the opportunity to learn about local history, with several of our younger visitors even expressing an interest in archaeology as a career.

For more information on the project see:

[www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/1659/Bridgwater-Barrier](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/1659/Bridgwater-Barrier)

If you would like to receive future newsletters directly please contact:  
[bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Archaeology investigations have discovered coins dating back to the 1920s



Kiln dating back to turn of the 20th Century

## What we've been doing

While waiting for the decision on the TWAO, we have been busy working on several pieces of important work to help shape the detailed design of the scheme.

Including:

- We have appointed Atkins as our a consultant and Kier as our contractor to complete the detailed design phase.
- We have carried out ground investigations and archaeological surveys as mentioned above.
- We have completed topographical surveys both on foot and by drone.
- We have continued discussions with local landowners to explain the proposals and understand their views and any concerns.
- We carried out early ecological surveys in the local area, to help us to plan our detailed design and better understand the local environment. These included surveys for bats, water voles, great crested newts and habitat surveys.

February 2022

# Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme

Creating a community resilient to flooding and coastal change



## What we've been doing cont...

- We are engaging with local schools – we have been fortunate to attract some funding from the Department for Education to contribute towards the cost of constructing the barrier, and also to engage with local schools on the risks and dangers of flooding. Four local schools were identified as being currently at risk of flooding and will directly benefit from the Barrier Scheme. We are carrying out interactive sessions with the schools, engaging young people and talking to them not just about the scheme, but flooding and the impacts of climate change.
- We continue to work with our partners and to source additional funding to carry out work on items not directly included in the barrier scheme, for example landscaping and further enhancements to the natural environment.
- We are striving to reduce the carbon impact of our project and are considering the materials used and our methods both pre and during construction.

## What's coming up in the next six months?

We anticipate construction will begin in the autumn with site establishment and then enabling work in spring 2023 and it is likely to take around four to six years to complete all elements of the scheme.

We will hold a public exhibition later in the year to share more detail on the work we have carried out and our future programme. We look forward to seeing you then.

We will keep you updated as the Scheme progresses through the detailed design stage to construction.

For more information on the scheme, visit



<https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/bridgwaterbarrier>



Wessex Facebook page,



@BarrierTidal



Bridgwater.Barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk



Bridgwater Tidal Barrier



Conham Vale is a steep sided valley on the eastern edge of Bristol which flows down to the Bristol Avon river. This small catchment is highly urbanised and interestingly is affected by calcite deposits due to the local geology which clings tenaciously to the channel sides and assets such as trash screens. So hardened are the deposits, that the only way to get rid of them is to break it out by heavy plant and equipment. These calcite accumulations can cause blockages and thereby lead to flooding if they are not dealt with.

Another aspect of the catchment is that the stream is the boundary between Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. This is also compounded by the fact that some of the culverts and screens are maintained by Wessex Water as there is an overflow system into their surface water pipes. This does lead to some confusion at times because depending where the blockage is depends on which authority is dealing with it!

The Environment Agency continues to annually cut back vegetation in sections of open channel and clear trash screens.



### Why we cut the grass on flood defences



At this time of year you may see Environment Agency workers out and about cutting grass on embankments. When you see us you might wonder, is it really necessary? Especially when amongst the grass there may be pollinator friendly wildflowers and habitat for nesting birds. Follow this link to find out more [Why we cut the grass on flood defences - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#).





## Reducing flood risk – the maintenance work we do to keep rivers flowing

The Environment Agency operates and maintains approximately 78,000 flood and coast defence assets in England with a value of £26 billion. This includes: 7,000km of linear river and coast defences such as flood walls, embankments, channels and culverts - twice the length of the UK's motorway network.

For more information please visit [Reducing flood risk - the maintenance work we do to keep rivers flowing - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#).



## Educational day for people in Bridgwater



DEVON & SOMERSET  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



FCRM engagement colleagues teamed up with the RNLI and Fire and Rescue at their water safety event in Bridgwater on Friday, 29 April 2022.



People in Bridgwater tried out line throws, virtual reality headsets and flood quizzes while receiving information on flooding, the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme and how to stay safe around water.



## The Wessex Area Incident Team

The Environment Agency is a Category One incident responder. To ensure our incident response is professional, consistent and organised, Area Incident Teams have been set up across the country to manage our incident roles, preparation and response.

The Wessex Area Incident Team (AIT) works to put us in the best place to support others, provide tactical response to all types of incidents, and to deal with the increasing threats and natural hazards. We coordinate and assure all incident management activity, including training and exercising, Local Resilience Forum (LRF) engagement and deliver core preparation activities. We are a highly flexible team and regularly adapt to changing priorities to effectively deal with a wide range of incidents.

The AIT provides the overview; assuring our incident planning activity and response. They share situational awareness and best practice with duty officers, escalate incidents in a consistent way, and support duty officers by helping them to be better prepared than ever, and by delivering Tactical First Response (TFR) during office hours. TFR involves providing a Daytime Area Base Controller (ABC) role, cross-cutting activities (e.g. planning and logistics) and escalating the response to Duty Teams as needed. The AIT oversees the resilience of our various incident groups and work with the leads for each of the incident roles (called 'Delivery Leads') to ensure a) we have enough people, and b) everyone in a role is competent and confident to undertake it.

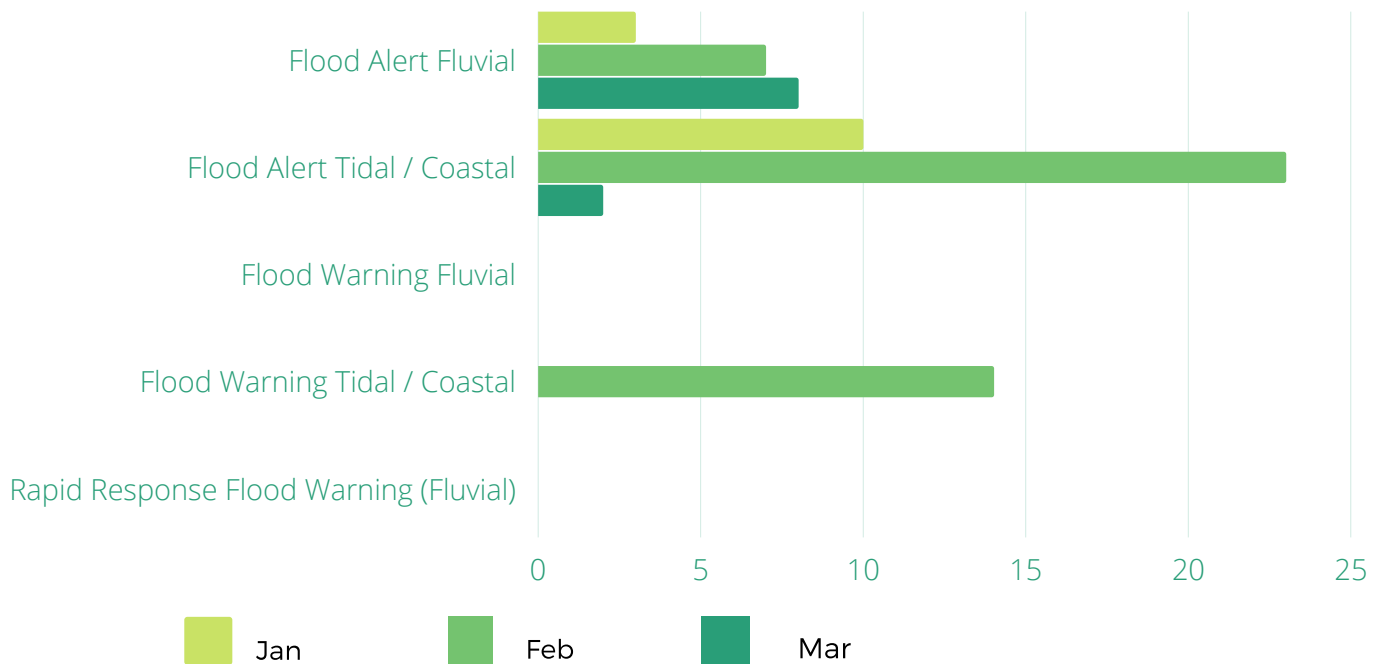
Many teams and individuals have supported incident management and have achieved so much in improving how we prepare, respond, and recover from incidents. Area Incident Teams are part of a wider suite of options designed to work together to put incident management at the heart of the organisation, make us more agile and enable everyone to get involved in ways that people find rewarding.



# 2022 Water Situation Report



In total across Wessex in the last three months we issued:



## Winter/Spring 2022

The first three months of 2022 have on average been 'normal'. There have been 'normal' amounts of rainfall. Soil moisture deficit is showing a slight increase from 4mm in February to 21mm at the end of March and Groundwater levels have generally increased. The total reservoir storage by the end of March was 100% for Wessex Water and 94% for Bristol Water.

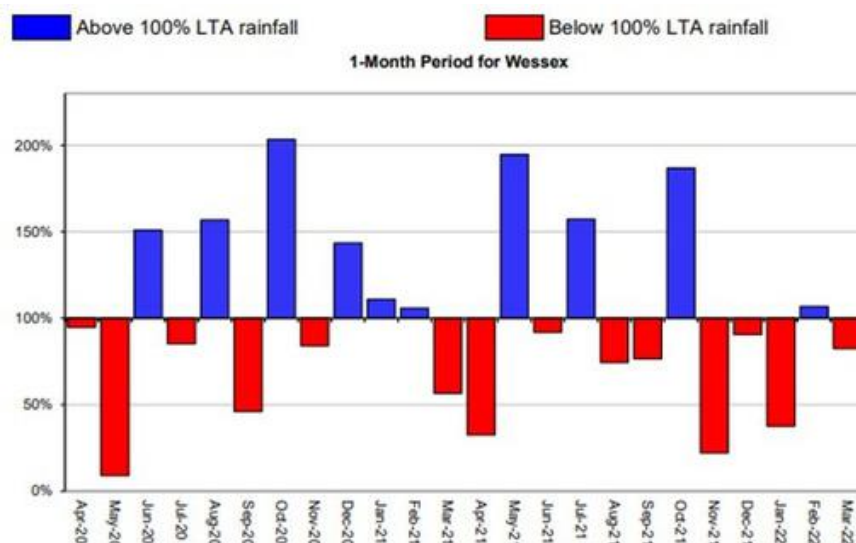


Figure 1.2: Monthly rainfall totals as a percentage of the 1961 – 1990 long term average. Produced using HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office © Crown Copyright 2022). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges.

The Wessex region received an average of 37 mm of rainfall during January 2022. This represents only 38% of the long term average (LTA) rainfall for January. The majority (88%) of rainfall occurred during the first ten days of the month with the largest volume of 28 mm falling within the West Somerset Streams catchment. The Hampshire Avon experienced a particularly dry month, where the average rainfall throughout the catchment equalled only 28% of the long term average. The unusually dry January resulted in 19 of Wessex's 22 catchments expressing 'Exceptionally low' rainfall during the previous three months.

There was rainfall throughout the month of February but particularly between 12 – 20 February when 58% of the month's rain fell. The West Somerset Streams which received 'above normal' rainfall equates to 136% LTA (120 mm). This was an eventful month with Storm Dudley causing spells of heavy rain closely followed by Storm Eunice which brought with it very strong winds leading to the Met Office issuing a very rare Red wind warning. This caused very large waves and surge along both the North and South Coast of Wessex but thankfully the peak of the storm surge did not coincide with the peak of high tide.

The majority of the rainfall in March occurred during three events at the start of March, followed by a predominantly dry second half of the month. Rainfall across Wessex varied from 63% LTA (West Somerset Streams and Brue catchments) to 96% LTA (Middle Dorset Stour and Upper Dorset Stour catchments).

Groundwater levels generally increased at all the Wessex Area reporting sites, with the exception of the more responsive Chantry borehole (monitoring the Old Red Sandstone) which gradually receded. The below average (86% LTA) cumulative rainfall over the past 6 months has meant current groundwater recharge since the start of the water year (October 2021) has been lower than the previous two winters.



## Where to find further information

For local weather information including weather warnings visit the Met Office at: [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://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](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/business/public-sector/community-resilience-leaflet_oct21.pdf)

[River and sea levels and to sign up for flood warnings](#)

[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](http://www.floodre.co.uk)

The National Flood Forum provide further advice and support at: [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://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!

Section	Details	Notes
Emergency contacts	Name, Address, Phone	
Utility companies	Name, Address, Phone	
Insurance	Policy Number, Contact Details	
Other important contacts	Name, Address, Phone	

## 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 Quickidol Number	Which Environment Agency flood warnings are you registered to receive?

## 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



### What to do before, during and after a flood

Practical advice on what to do to protect you and your property from flooding



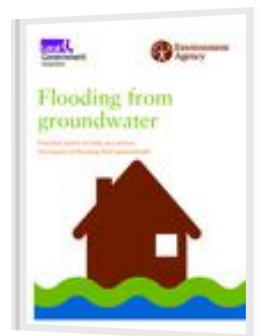
### Would your business stay afloat?

A guide to preparing your business for flooding



### Prepare your property for flooding

A guide for householders and small businesses to prepare for flooding



### Flooding from groundwater

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

# Flood Warnings - do you know what to do?



## 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](http://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

## 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.

## Keeping in touch



If you are a new Flood Warden or have received this Newsletter from your Town or Parish Clerk, please contact the Wessex Flood Resilience Team at [floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) so that we can update our records and sign you up to receive the Newsletter and invitations to future training opportunities.

[Subscribe to the Flood Warden Newsletter](#)



The Environment Agency will contact you in relation to your role as Flood Warden or Community Volunteer. We will only share your contact details with members of the [Local Resilience Forum](#) if relevant to support you in your role as Flood Warden or Community Emergency Volunteer. We will not transfer the personal data that you provide outside the UK and you have the right to withdraw consent for us to hold your data at any time.

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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