

Autumn 2017

# Flood Risk Management

## Newsletter

We are Warwickshire County Council's Flood Risk Management team, and we take the lead in understanding and reducing local flood risk across the County, working in partnership with other agencies, services and communities which are at risk, also helping them to help themselves. This protects the lives and properties of the most vulnerable, and enhances economic growth, making Warwickshire a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

In the last six months flooding has been limited to individual properties. Warwickshire's farmers have been preparing for potential water scarcity rather than flooding. It has been a relatively dry period (see "how much rain?"). However, flooding has still been on our TV screens. Heavy monsoons brought widespread flooding in South Asia with over 1,200 deaths across India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Hurricanes Harvey and Irma brought flooding to the states of Texas and Florida respectively, on a scale not seen in the USA since 2005. Closer to home, in July flash flooding caused damage to around 50 properties in the Cornish fishing village of Coverack, and in October over 200mm of rainfall in 24 hours brought flooding to rural areas of Cumbria.

These events and the first Met Office named winter storms have provided us all a reminder to be as prepared as possible for potential winter flooding.

Coventry, Solihull Warwickshire (CSW) Resilience team are responsible for coordinating the multi-agency response to flooding in Warwickshire. Detailed advice on what to do before, during and after flooding is available on their [website](http://www.cswprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding/). Please take time to review this information to ensure you have taken all the necessary steps: [www.cswprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding/](http://www.cswprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding/). Useful advice is also available at [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)

### How much rain?

- The National Hydrological Monitoring Programme (NHMP) produces a monthly [UK Hydrological Summary](#) which you can sign up to by email. Focusing on rainfall, river flows, groundwater levels and reservoir stocks, it summarises hydrological conditions at the end of the month, and provides this in a historical context.
- Another useful website is [www.gaugemap.co.uk](http://www.gaugemap.co.uk). Here you can search for river gauges in your area, and view how the rivers water level has changed over different time periods, from a day to a year.

### News in Brief

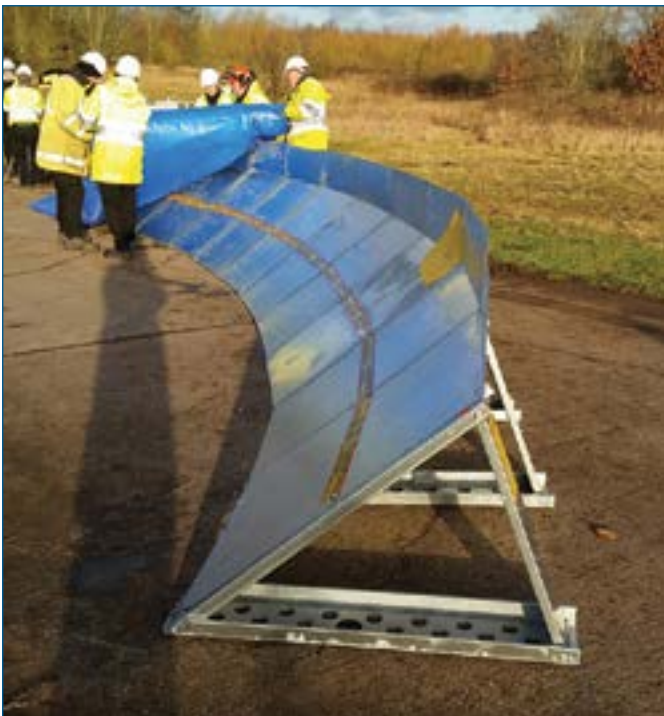
- **The Snitterfield Bypass Culvert** scheme is now complete. A walkover and lunch was held with guests including Nadhim Zahawi MP on Friday 21st July.
- £48,000 of funding from the Defra NFM Competition has been allocated for a new **Natural Flood Management (NFM) project in the Fillongley area** (see page 3).
- We are currently accepting applications to our [Small Scale Flood Alleviation Grant Scheme](#). We are looking for applications for up to £5,000 per annum for Warwickshire groups, residents and businesses for new works or studies to remove or mitigate flood risk within Warwickshire.
- **High Risk Culvert Mapping** in the boroughs of Nuneaton and Bedworth, and North Warwickshire has been completed. It is likely that on the ground condition assessments will now follow.
- In the last three months we have responded to **195 major planning consultations**, including at key sites such as the Rugby Mast Development. We have also published updates to our [Flood Risk and Drainage Standing Advice](#).

# Events

## Stratford Temporary Barrier Exercise

On Tuesday 7 November, Stratford's Waterside will be transformed as the Environment Agency's (EA) field team carry out a temporary flood barrier deployment exercise.

The EA are supporting communities remaining at risk of flooding, purchasing 40km of temporary barrier which can be deployed at suitable sites nationwide during a flood. Stratford has been identified as one of those suitable locations.



EA Flood Barrier

The exercise, which will start at 7am, will provide an opportunity for the EA to test their barrier deployment plan and procedures, train their staff and test working arrangements with partners so they can quickly and safely erect the barriers when needed during a flood with minimum disruption.

Waterside will be closed to traffic for most of the day for the exercise and to allow Warwickshire County Council to carry out drainage investigation and maintenance works. Pedestrians will also be restricted from walking along the areas immediately in front and behind the barrier, which span between the Encore Pub and the junction of Waterside and Chapel Lane, for health and safety reasons. The businesses on Waterside will still be accessible.

**Emma Smailes, Operations Manager from the Environment Agency said:** "This is a major test of our operational equipment, and although we have carried out numerous barrier deployment exercises at our training depots, doing it on location will give our field team invaluable experience.

"It is still important to remember that we can never fully protect against flooding and deployment of temporary barriers to a specific community is not always guaranteed. Local residents and businesses should always prepare in advance by checking their flood risk, signing up to flood warnings and finding out what they can do to protect themselves and their property by visiting [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188."

The EA will have staff available during the exercise to provide members of the public with information about access restrictions, alternative routes and general flood advice.

For more information please email [Enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Other upcoming events

### [The Rivers Trust Autumn Conference](#)

**Thursday 9th November, Castle Donington**

This is a free event which this year is focused on exploring the delivery of Natural Flood Management and sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS) to help build flood resilient communities (find out more about SuDS in our [planning advice](#) for developers).

### [Flood protection: the role of planning](#)

**Thursday 23rd November (AM), Warwick**

The team are facilitating this half day seminar, which is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) West Midlands' CPD programme. Content will include the role of the Environment Agency, developers and Lead Local Flood Authorities, and how to actively engage with developers. Attendance: £72+VAT for non-members of the RTPI (lunch included).

# Schemes update

## Funds for Fillongley to fight flooding

£48,000 of funding from Defra has been allocated for a new Natural Flood Management project in the Fillongley area. The project will be led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, with close support from the Flood Risk Management team and the Flood Action Groups at Fillongley and Nether Whitacre.

The scheme is one of 34 projects nationwide to be funded through the Environment Agency's highly competitive community Natural Flood Management projects fund, and is set to reduce flood risk to downstream properties in Fillongley, Nether Whitacre, Over Whitacre, Whitacre Heath, Shutstoke and Hoggrills end.

Natural Flood Management involves the alteration, restoration or use of landscape features to manage the sources and pathways of flood waters, often including the temporary storage or slowing of flows during periods of heavy rainfall.

Measures may include flood attenuation pools, use of floodplain meadows, and woody debris or "leaky dams" to slow the flow. Knowledge of the local land and drainage will be gathered from landowners, farmers and residents to identify issues and potential solutions.



Flooding in Fillongley

The project will be used as a demonstration to engage people in developing and implementing Natural Flood Management measures, and will provide a learning resource for future projects across the county. This scheme will benefit 326 homes, 24 hectares of habitat and 5km of watercourse.

### **Cllr Jeff Clarke, portfolio holder for the environment, said:**

*"While our resources are reduced, the issues we face such as flooding do not diminish in any way so we have to look at other ways to fund the necessary work. This is good news and an endorsement of the proactive approach that we have with various partners to bring resources in to Warwickshire."*

### **Jim Finnegan, Flood & Coastal Risk Programme Manager from the Environment Agency, said:**

*"Natural flood management is an important part of our approach, alongside traditional flood defences and helping homeowners to improve their own property resilience. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to flooding and this scheme is a fantastic example of how we can use a variety of measures that work together to reduce flood risk."*

## Eathorpe PLR scheme insurance benefits

The [Spring edition](#) of the newsletter included an article on the completion of the Eathorpe Property Level Resilience (PLR) scheme. Those benefitting were pleased with both the quality of products used and the level of service. Since installation, we are encouraged to hear that residents have also benefitted from lower insurance premiums and excesses, often through Flood Re: a government scheme set up to help those households who live in a flood risk area find affordable home insurance.

### **Homeowner and Eathorpe Flood Action Group member Owen Bishop commented:**

*"Since we have been flooded our household insurance premiums had increased from around £400 to £1600 pa and our broker said that they would advise us to stay with the same company. The National Flood Forum told us about the Flood Re scheme and gave us the name of several brokers that specialised in flood risks. We have now reduced our premium by about 50% and got better cover. Other villagers have achieved similar savings."*

The team are currently progressing with further PLR schemes in the villages of Ladbroke, Cherington and Kites Hardwick. Find out more about FloodRe at [www.floodre.co.uk](http://www.floodre.co.uk)



# Flood Action Group Focus

## Residents Against Flood Threat (RAFT), Southam

The Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Flood Risk Management team and National Flood Forum (NFF) support a number of Flood Action Groups across the county. One of these is Southam, which WCC and NFF have recently engaged with. Here group member Pam McConnell provides an update on flood risk in Southam and the activities of the group.



Flooding in Southam

In the past 20 years there have been three significant floods of the River Stowe in Southam. These took place in 1998 (April), 2007 (July) and 2016 (March). All these were recorded as 'one in 100 years' events.

The River Stowe rises in Napton and is a tributary of the Itchen, which is itself a tributary of the Leam. It flows through the centre of Southam from Daventry Road to Welsh Road West, and flooding mainly occurs around the 'bottleneck' areas of the five bridges within the town. The oldest bridge still in its original form is Brown's Bridge on Banbury road which dates from 1710.

The properties significantly affected by flooding are in Pound Way, Stowe Drive, Tattle Bank / Brownsbridge Road, Bridge Court, Willow Gardens and access to the newly built estate in Wattons Lane. Several properties in these areas were damaged by flooding in the three events mentioned above, and many now have installed property level resilience measures, (such as flood barriers,) that can be deployed in the event of a flood threat.

The Stowe has multiple "riparian owners" (see the WCC explanation of and advice on riparian ownership at <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/riparianownership>) making the organisation of maintenance complex. When there is persistent heavy rain, it cannot cope with the high volume of run-off water entering it from nearby roads and housing estates. In flood, the town centre can be virtually cut off, as most access roads cross the river.

After the 2007 flood, campaigners from the town's Flood Action Group (Southam RAFT) worked with the Town Council to arrange the installation of an early warning system, located on the Warwick Road bridge. This system alerts those registered with it of the rising water levels, by sending them a text message, providing pivotal time for homeowners and businesses to prepare, often by putting PLR measures in place.

After a period of relative inactivity, keeping the previous RAFT'S group name for consistency, we are now part of the network of Warwickshire Flood Action Groups supported by WCC and the National Flood Forum. We are currently developing our Flood Action Plan, and held a multi-agency meeting in August. Any residents in Southam that are concerned about the risk of flooding should seek advice from WCC and the National Flood Forum. If anyone would like to join the town's Flood Action Group please contact us on [southamraft@gmail.com](mailto:southamraft@gmail.com)

**P A McConnell**

## The Blue Pages

The Blue Pages is an independent directory of property flood products and services put together to advise and inform the public of what's available to help reduce the risk of flooding to homes and business.

In the directory you will be able to search different categories of flood products and services. At the top of each category page you will find a short description of what the product or service should do. If you have any questions you can contact the National Flood Forum Helpline on 01299 403055. [www.bluepages.org.uk/](http://www.bluepages.org.uk/)

Back editions of this newsletter have now been added to our [web pages](#), and the team are currently preparing further web page updates which will take place in January, potentially including the new map of **flood risk assets** mentioned in the Spring newsletter. Please contact us if you have any feedback which you would like incorporated into the page updates.