

Autumn 2018

Flood Risk Management

Newsletter

We are Warwickshire County Council's (WCC's) Flood Risk Management team, and we take the lead in understanding and reducing 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.

Hottest summer on record?

During the weekend of the 28th May, severe rainfall across parts of the West Midlands caused significant flooding and damage to homes in Birmingham and Solihull. The events were extremely localised, with some areas experiencing only 3mm of rainfall in 12 hours, compared to other regions with 58.6mm in just 60 minutes¹. The events were exacerbated by a period of dry weather beforehand, leading to flash flooding in parts of Warwickshire, including Rugby, Earlswood and Long Compton. Despite this extreme rainfall event at the end of May, the summer of 2018 has been announced as the joint hottest on record, along with 2006, 2003 and 1976². Most of the UK has suffered from extremely hot temperatures and less than average amounts of rainfall³. The warmer weather caused several problems on the river networks, with many levels dropping drastically, and requiring the Environment Agency (EA) to assist with rescuing fish populations struggling to move upstream⁴.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/27/flash-floods-close-roads-in-parts-of-the-midlands>

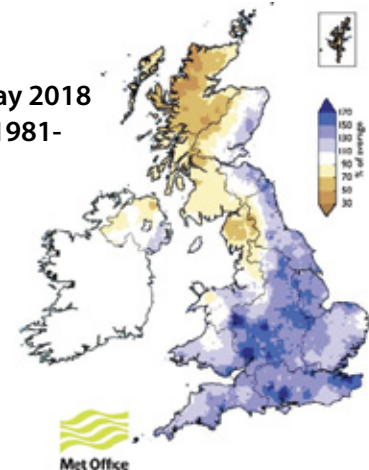
² <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/2018/end-of-summer-stats>

³ <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/news-and-media/blogs/uk-hydrological-status-update-early-july-2018>

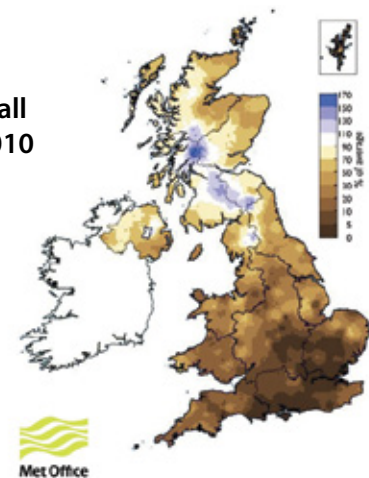
⁴ <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2018/06/29/summer-has-started-what-does-that-mean-for-the-water-situation-in-england/>

Rainfall maps for spring (March-May) and June

March 2018 - May 2018 rainfall as % of 1981-2010 average



June 2018 rainfall as % of 1981-2010 average



News in brief

- On Tuesday 17th July WCC Flood Risk Management (FRM) team hosted the English, Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC). The RFCC meetings were established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Councillor Jeff Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, welcomed the committee and outlined the importance of flood risk in Warwickshire, and Michael Green, Flood Risk Management Team Manager, presented completed Property Flood Resilience schemes in the county: good practice and lessons learned for the future. The meeting was a great opportunity for industry experts to meet and discuss flooding across the county. Michael also presented to the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) Surface Water Management conference in London on Wednesday 18th October. The presentation was well received and generated a lot of interest and questions.
- The team have served multiple Section 14a notices under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA), to undertake site walkovers to identify the mechanisms of flooding, and to identify possible interventions and / or solutions.
- During August our contractors completed aerial drone surveys in parts of the county, to collect topographical data to use in our flood models to identify areas at risk of flooding, and to help build business cases to obtain funding for potential alleviation schemes. The drones give very accurate survey data for a wide area at lower cost than traditional surveying methods.



- Marston Lane Allotment Association has installed an attenuation tank and a series of land drains, to reduce the amount of flooding and prevent excessive damage to crops and produce, using funding from our Small Scale Flood Alleviation Scheme.



Similarly, Stockingford Allotment Association has also built a new soakaway with an accompanying pipe wall with their grant money.



We encourage local communities at risk of flooding to apply for a grant to help aid flood alleviation schemes and studies. Please see our website for further details about funding from ourselves and external partners <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/grants#floodsgrant>

Events

- On Thursday 23rd July Austrey Flood Action Group (FLAG) hosted a meeting with High Speed 2 (HS2) to discuss the potential local impacts of HS2, along with members of the FRM team. Austrey lies in the path of the HS2 development, in which a high speed railway connection is planned to run between London, Birmingham, East Midlands, Leeds and Manchester. Austrey is at risk from surface water flooding. The group were concerned about the impact that the large scale development would have on their local flood risk. Therefore, they organised a meeting with HS2 and their contractors to discuss possible alleviation schemes. The meeting entailed a presentation from the FLAG, followed by an open discussion regarding the Flood Design Criteria and Design Development. This gave the group an opportunity to voice their concerns to HS2, whilst building a stronger working relationship going forward.



- On Wednesday 26th September WCC hosted a Flood Information Evening for Flood Action Groups, and members of local Parish and Town Councils at Fillongley Village Hall. The evening began with the opportunity for attendees from across Warwickshire to engage with each other and to discuss their experiences of flooding and share knowledge. Michael Green also presented on Ordinary Watercourse Maintenance. The presentation highlighted our responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in relation to watercourse maintenance, as well as

recommendations for local landowner engagement. This was followed by a presentation from the EA regarding their approach towards maintenance, and opened up discussions on how to engage with landowners with regard to maintenance. The EA highlighted: different types of maintenance; things that categorise a flood risk on a watercourse; and many other topics. The evening closed with time for questions and clarifications on certain aspects, and an open discussion for theme ideas for the next information event.

- On Thursday 11th October our Drainage Engineers joined County Councillor Andy Wright to conduct a walkover in the catchment area that feeds the Penmire Brook in Grendon. The walkover helped to identify possible locations for Natural Flood Management (NFM), with a view to attenuating peak flows in times of flood to better protect the residents of Grendon. The walk proved to be a bit longer than anticipated, approximately 10 miles, but several sites were identified as potential spots for NFM measures. The data captured during the walkover will now be used to develop a flood model, which will allow us to begin the process of developing a business case to obtain funding for a scheme. WCC FRM team would like to thank Cllr Wright for his time and significant local knowledge.



Cllr Wright and Kevin Blount, WCC Drainage Engineer, discussing possible locations for NFM

Flood Action Group Focus

Wellesbourne and Walton Flood Action Group

"The group came together as a result of the NFF's public meeting in January and held its first meeting in February to understand the process required to develop a Flood Action Plan. Two further group sessions took place in March and ironically, one meeting coincided with the highest level of the River Dene since March 2016 and no doubt helped to concentrate the minds!"

Starting with a draft document, the group worked together to agree and prioritise the Flood Action Plan's key discussion points, covering four main areas: the brook, the river, drainage and common issues such as mapping and information provision.

We arranged the first "Multi Agency Meeting" (MAM) in May and submitted the Flood Action Plan to the appropriate partner agencies.

That first MAM was well attended and helped the group to start to establish good working relationships with the agency-partners, as well as reviewing the agencies' answers to the questions and issues raised in the WWFAG's Plan. There were a number of actions to be taken by both WWFAG and the agency-partners, the most important being the WCC offer to walk a stretch of the brook with group representatives to identify and clarify likely flood risk management actions. These were reviewed at the second MAM in September.



Over the summer, Wellesbourne Parish Council, acting on behalf of WWFAG, submitted an application for a grant under Warwickshire County Council's Small Scale Flood Alleviation Scheme to fund a hydrological survey across the affected areas. This has now been approved and the group can start the process of appointing the right survey supplier.

We also invited the neighbouring Shipston Area FAG to the group's August meeting and the group was hugely inspired by how successful Shipston had been. There was valuable learning in terms of what the priorities must be and how they had been achieved and WWFAG have quickly recognised the need to drive the process themselves and to structure and resource the group on a more formal and action-oriented basis.

The group are planning a Local Awareness event, most likely in late November, in conjunction with the EA and other Agency partners, as they want to be sure the wider community is engaged as early as possible.

These have been the first steps on our long journey, but we feel that we've had good guidance and made a positive start."

Stephen King – Chair of Wellesbourne and Walton Flood Action Group

Shipston Area Flood Action Group

Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) have been holding their regular meetings to provide partners with updates on their progress and plans for the future. The group have organised walkovers of their NFM installations with attendance from EA's Flood and Coastal Risk Manager Ian Jones, WCC representatives and other professional partners. The group were praised for their passion and knowledge on the sector, improving their local communities' resilience and providing data that will further develop the wider use of NFM in flood risk reduction. Shipston are now working towards completing their final installations for phase 1.