

Spring 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 surface water 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.

Introduction

We received a report of a canal embankment overtopping in Long Itchington on the 24th January 2018 causing concern to the local residents and pub owner nearby. Our Drainage Engineer met with the Canal and River Trust and the Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Resilience officer to investigate the flooding. There was no immediate risk to life or property, and the canal continues to be monitored daily by the Canal and River Trust. On the same day, a blocked culvert in Hartshill was cleared by the team and our jetting contractors to avoid flooding to 54 properties in Nuneaton. WCC's contractors are often called upon to remove blockages and a build-up of silt deposits, increasing the capacity of drains and the culverts and thereby reducing the risk of flooding. Typical of the work we do was illustrated earlier in March when our teams were called upon to remove blockages in a drainage system in Mancetter. The pictures show the debris WCC removed from the drainage system saving a number of properties from flooding.



How much rain?

December 2017 saw the arrival of two big storms across the UK: Storm Caroline and Storm Dylan. Storm Dylan was the likely cause of localised flooding in Warwickshire over the Christmas holiday. On the 28th and 29th December 2017 there were a number of reports of flooding within the county, most of which were external. Areas impacted included Long Compton, Nuneaton, Bedworth, Aston Cantlow, Shrewley, Henley-in-Arden, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and Sambourne. December was a drier month than average for parts of the UK, although East Anglia and the South East saw higher than average rainfall. The start of the New Year saw the arrival of Storm Eleanor on the 2nd and 3rd January, bringing significant rainfall.¹

¹Met Office <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/summaries>

News in brief

- As part of the partnership Community Flood Resilience Project working alongside the National Flood Forum, the team have been visiting primary schools across the county, including St Nicholas' School in Kenilworth, St. Gregory's Catholic School in Stratford-upon-Avon, and Coten End Primary School in Warwick. The team have been leading and delivering interactive sessions on flooding, including discussions on the water cycle, the causes of flooding, and what communities can do to help reduce the impact of flooding during a flood event.
- New Flood Action Groups in Long Itchington and Wellesbourne and Walton are being supported by the National Flood Forum and the Flood Team. As the groups progress to their first Multi-Agency Meeting the flood team, together with other FRM authorities, will discuss how to reduce flooding in the villages.
- The Flood team have been busy progressing our jetting and CCTV programme, clearing pipes and identifying problems to help resolve blockages. Works have been completed at sites in Long Lawford, Church Lawford, Welford-on-Avon, Bearley, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Long Marston, Austrey, Bedworth and Nether Whitacre.
- The County Council have so far awarded around £30,000 worth of grant funding this financial year to 8 successful community groups up to the end of January as part of the Small Scale Grant Alleviation Scheme. The grants have covered a range of activities, such as CCTV surveys and drain jetting, acquiring emergency equipment, hydraulic modelling and the installation of new land drainage schemes. The grant scheme will be running again from April 2018, offering successful applicants the chance to receive up to £5000 per scheme. Please see our website for further details about funding from ourselves and external partners <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/grants#floodsgrant>

UK Flood Barriers

UK Flood Barriers are one of the suppliers we use to provide Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures to properties within Warwickshire. Property Flood Resilience measures are tailored to suit the needs of individual properties and typically consists of items such as flood doors, non-return valves, air bricks, sump-pumps etc. The aim is to make these properties, and the people who live in them, more resilient to flooding.

We have been informed that, as from 10th April, UK Flood Barriers ceased to trade and the company are being placed into liquidation. Following liquidation, UK Flood Barriers will unfortunately not be in a position to continue to deliver PFR projects for us. We are working hard to understand the full implications of this to the residents of Warwickshire.

If you are concerned yourself please do contact the Flood Risk Management Team directly using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

More Funding Announced for Communities in Warwickshire

On 27th March Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced that nationally 25 new schemes would receive a share the £36 million announced in the Autumn Statement to improve flood protection in the UK.

We are pleased to be able to report that these have included a number of communities within Warwickshire: Galley Common, Grendon, Fillongley, Bermuda, Lower Brailes and Welford.

We clearly welcome the announcement of this additional funding and will be working with our partners, in particular the Environment Agency, to turn this funding allocation into fully developed proposals to deliver maximum flood risk benefit to these vulnerable communities.

Events

Shipston Natural Flood Management MP Visit

"Stratford upon Avon MP Nadhim Zahawi spent the morning of October 27th 2017 visiting the Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) to gain a more detailed understanding of the group's plans and activities for Natural Flood Management installations within the Stour Valley Catchment. Natural Flood Management interventions are designed to slow the flow of heavy rainfall in the hills of the upper catchment from reaching the 36 watercourses which feed the River Stour above Shipston." SAFAG



"During my very positive meeting with the Shipston Flood Action Group, I had the opportunity to visit Campden House and view the new Natural Flood Management (NFM) installations. NFM can be a much more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible way of protecting communities and livelihoods from flooding, particularly with regards to its capacity to slow the flow of water, improve water quality, and increase natural habitats and consequently biodiversity. This scheme is an example to other sustainable flood management schemes in Warwickshire and beyond" Nadhim Zahawi MP for Stratford-upon-Avon.



"Nadhim Zahawi has retained his interest and support for the group and joined members at the Flood Re Local Heroes award ceremony held at the Palace of Westminster on 28th November 2017 where SAFAG made the shortlist of 6 finalists from almost 200 entrants nationally." SAFAG

Other past events

November was a busy month for the WCC Flood team, with the drainage engineers attending a multi-agency walkover in Southam and the Countywide Flood Information Evening event in Long Itchington.



On the 10th November the Southam RAFT (Residents Against Flood Threat) Flood Action Group (FLAG) organised a walkover with the Environment Agency and FRM Team. Flood Action Groups in Warwickshire are supported by the County Council to increase community resilience to flooding through a grass-roots approach.



The team also co-ordinated the latest Flooding Information Evening on the 21st November in Long Itchington, where a new flood group has recently emerged. Following the successful Natural Flood Management themed event in Bidford in July, this event focused on how flood groups can positively influence the planning process, with presentations from our own sustainable drainage planning officers and industry professional consultants WSP. There were over 40 people present representing around 20 communities around the County. We are currently planning to hold another similar evening in June; details of the event will follow later this year.

Flood Action Group Focus

Welford FLAG update

Welford Flood Action Group (FLAG) have followed the Multi-Agency approach to successfully increase partnership working between Flood Risk Management Authorities in the area. Welford-on-Avon, not dissimilar to many other areas of the county, experience flooding from a main river (the River Avon) and from surface water. The increase in the level of the Avon during high rainfall events causes heavy siltation of the surface water and highway drainage systems, therefore decreasing the ability of such systems to take surface water.

During a site visit with Warwickshire's FRM and County Highways teams, the FLAG provided invaluable local knowledge to assist in identifying areas of the highway drainage system which should be prioritised for future investigations and cleansing, with the eventual aim of alleviating the impact of surface water flooding in the village. The three parties agreed the following courses of action.

1. WCC Flood Risk Management team to deliver the investigation phase through a CCTV and jet cleanse of the identified high risk areas. From this, siltation will be removed from the system, and a comprehensive plan can be coordinated, via a series of recommendations in the final report, for areas of future improvements (e.g. drain collapse, need for extra highway gully).
2. County Highways to assess the recommendations made by Flood Risk Management, via cost-benefit analysis, and to make the necessary improvements to the highways drainage capacity.
3. Upon completion, all parties will report their findings and actions, and assess the potential for 'Phase 2' investigations and works further into the village.

The teams are keen to continue working in partnership with local communities to help alleviate highway and surface water flooding in the county. Flood Action Groups can provide the basis for this to be accomplished. For more information on the community engagement project in Warwickshire, contact flooding@warwickshire.gov.uk, or visit <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/frm>.

"This group [Welford FLAG] was formed a couple of years ago and meets regularly to identify and instigate actions to help alleviate the flooding threats in the village. It is recognised that some threats will always be present and only a limited series of actions will be viable. For example the river will, from time to time, flood. Defences to protect Welford would not be possible because of the local geography.

There are two cameras recording the river level at Binton Bridges. One camera is managed by the Environment Agency and is available online at visionlink <https://www.vision-link.co.uk/Welford-Bridge.php>. Farson Digital Cameras have a second camera which looks at Binton Bridge and also other cameras on the River Avon both upstream and downstream to enable further viewing if required. It may be of some comfort to know that a lot of work has been taking place upstream which should hold back flood water and allow a more controlled run off of excess water.

Following the last meeting of the Flood Action Group and representatives of a number of local government agencies, Warwickshire County Council instructed contractors to clean and flush existing pipes and ducts to facilitate a more efficient run off of water. Recently these contractors, Three Counties Drainage, excavated the pipework on the Binton Road near the Four Alls. The ducts were found to be completely blocked and after two days of jetting with high pressure pumps the sludge was removed. This will eventually allow water to run off Binton Road and travel into the river below the Four Alls.

Further work had been carried out in Church Lane and water can now run into the river more easily. Jetting has been completed in and around Pool Close and a plan is being formulated to reinstate a ditch from Synder Meadow to allow flood water drain into the river. Further actions are planned in other parts of the village. A Flood Resilience Plan is being formulated and will be published next year."

Welford FLAG