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FUNDRAISING WALK-A-THON

On 1st September

Some of our staff are raising funds for the National Flood Forum by doing a 30-kilometre Walk starting at the Shrewsbury Cricket Club and ending at Pentre.

Please support them –

[Read more on the GoFundMe page and see who is taking part](#)



Follow us on



SUMMER FLOODING IN 2018

The National Flood Forum has been busy this summer after being called in by the Environment Agency and Worcestershire CC to support those who had suffered flooding to their homes in Birmingham and Worcestershire. We also received many other calls to our helpline from different parts of the Country that had also suffered.

Flooding shatters people's worlds turning their everyday lives upside down, and we know only too well at the National Flood Forum that the initial shock and devastation that people face is only just the beginning of a very protracted period that must be lived through somehow. On average, it takes 6 to 18 months for flooded people to get back into their homes and sadly we often see this go well beyond this time.

Peoples first likely contact to start the process of reinstating their home, after they have logged their claim with the insurance company, is with a drying company. In Worcestershire, some people were found to have had a dehumidifier dropped off; many didn't have anything, but the actual stripping out of the building, including for some people the disposal of their flooded possessions, did not happen for weeks after.

Many were told they wouldn't need alternative accommodation as they would be back in their homes in around a month's time, however as expected by the National Flood Forum, and what was clearly apparent when we were recently back in the area, this was simply not true. We heard of residents camping on relations sofas and trying to carry on with their jobs as well as moving on the process of reinstatement of their homes. One family were asked to split up, one half to stay at the wife's parent's home and the other half at the father's parent's home. One couple had been asked if they could do without a skip and take all soaked damaged goods to the dump in their car!

This is a small snap shot of life after flooding and the many issues people face. We continue to go back to this area and have heard of people's insurance being retracted due to some anomaly, usually something that has not been clearly discussed or pointed out to them when taking out the insurance policy, and often because a particular question was not asked. This leaves people in the devastating circumstance of having to face clearing and reinstating their own houses without having a clue where to start and what they need to do, and of course the inevitable huge cost to bear that needs to be found.

All this pressure mounts up on an already traumatised individual and starts to cause physical and mental health issues. We were told by several, that dealing with the aftermath had caused their blood pressure to go sky high and their GP's were concerned and had to put them on medication with follow-up monitoring. Mental health issues such as depression were evident, and many tears were shed from men and women in our initial recovery trailer and in our follow-up surgeries. We found people had already had enough, they felt knocked down at a time when they are so vulnerable, the fight to explain and make progress was too much and they are giving up. Several people told us they felt like criminals, that they were out to get as much as they could from the situation, when nothing could be further from the truth, all they want to do is just be helped and supported to sort out their lives by sympathetic, understanding human beings who have a willingness to assure them that all will be sorted for them within an organised and efficient process.

In parts of Birmingham that we were called to, people had no insurance at all, often due to its expense, but also, we were told by many, by constant refusals to insure. Our office is looking to help people gain insurance through our helpline. Sadly, many homes had a metre of water throughout and coping with what they needed to do was seriously overwhelming. We saw people who had scabbled to find, borrow or buy dehumidifiers that were too small to be anywhere near adequate. The community in this area is tightly knitted, and we noted discussions held by neighbours on the street, sharing experiences, passing on ideas of next steps and supporting each other as best they could.

Businesses were also badly affected with the loss of contents; a chemist was doing a rapid clean up to remain open for people to access vital medication. Other areas of Birmingham had suffered flooding before and were aware of the process they were faced with going forward, they were understandably more focused on what was to be done to reduce the risk of any more flood events.

Two National Flood Forum staff are being developed in flood recovery. This has been the first time they have experienced being alongside the National Flood Forums recovery lead in the aftermath of a flood:

Rebecca Boulton

“As someone who has been working with Flood Action Groups for almost 2 years, the recovery work we undertook in both June and August gave me a whole new perspective on flooding. In June, the destruction was hard to miss as roads full of skips and possessions put outside houses indicated how much people had lost. During this recovery work, we listened to residents describe the flooding and start to paint a picture of just how quickly everything happened and how frightening it must have been. During the week, we witnessed people at their most vulnerable, which hits home, and you are only hoping there is something you can do to support them. When returning almost three months later, the pain was still highly prominent, and it was heart-breaking to hear the trauma people are still going through. It was emotionally difficult for me to leave after a couple of days in the areas, however, I can’t imagine how hard it was and still is for those who were affected. I only hope that we eased things a little.”

Sanjay Johal

“My personal experience of recovery was one of sadness and determination. It emphasised the stress that people who flood are under. It was upsetting to see people who had lost everything trying to rebuild their lives but finding obstacles in the way that were causing them distress. The most startling aspect of recovery was the time that it takes for insurers to deal with the myriad of issues that residents are left to deal with after the flood waters have receded. The delays in resolving the issues and returning people home to a ‘normal’ liveable standard caused a lot of stress, anxiety and pressure to the residents. The destruction and devastation left after a flood event is felt by homeowners for many, many months after the initial flood event. What was also startling was the lack of empathy that residents seemed to receive when trying to deal with all these issues themselves; this lack of understanding and support drove some people to the brink of tears and made them feel as if they were stuck in a giant hole that they could not climb out of.”

National Flood Forums HEATHER SHEPHERD



ECCLESHALL FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Eccleshall, near Stafford, has long suffered from sewer manholes overflowing in storm conditions and, in one of the main streets, up to 10 business premises flood with dilute sewage on a regular basis. The problem occurs from a quadrant of the town being served only by a combined sewer and, to exacerbate the situation, new development has been permitted which, when complete, will allow up to 10 litres/second of additional surface water to enter the combined system via two hydro brakes. Flooding, when it occurs, happens very quickly, and then goes almost as fast.

At the time the new development was permitted, Severn Trent Water, were unaware of the problem so Eccleshall Flood Action Group was formed with the aim to get residents reporting the floods and to enable Severn Trent Water to understand the issues more comprehensively, allowing them to look into a viable solution to get polluted water off the streets of the town.

Staffordshire County Council supported those at flood risk by publicising a scheme to provide Small Scale Flood Alleviation Grants of up to £5000 to provide measures to benefit the environment and the community.

In November 2017, the Eccleshall Flood Action Group put in an application to provide flood boards to the doorways of 10 businesses affected by flooding in the past (including the Eccleshall Post Office) and, in May 2018, it was announced that we had been successful. Three quotations were sought, and an order placed. Using a local builder to do the fitting and the support of Eccleshall Parish Council, to administer payments, all the work has been completed within budget and we now hope that flooding of business premises will be a thing of the past.

Eccleshall Flood Action Group are aware that they need to continue working with Severn Trent Water to fund a more permanent solution and one of the objectives in the future will be to motivate the community of Eccleshall to report floods individually to Severn Trent Water to show the real scale of the problem.

Chris – Chairman, Eccleshall Flood Action Group.



MINSTERLEY FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Serious flooding happened in a particularly bad flood prone area of Minsterley, along with the centre of the village in 2012. Following the completion of a flood alleviation scheme in the worst hit area, the community was still extremely concerned that the scheme did not address the major issues caused by the Minsterley Brook overtopping its banks. The Brook was filled with detritus, including tree branches, whole trees and shrubs, which was allowing natural silts to accumulate around them causing obstructions to the natural flow, and causing bank erosion.

The Environment Agency had serious concerns as to the removal of these obstructions, due to the high content of heavy metals evident from their toxicology test report on the silts contained within the river and the effects to aquatic habitat upon disturbance. There was also an issue for them in being able to provide the toxicology reports, so in order to work around this the Parish Council agreed to support the financial cost of a private toxicology report. Eventually small works were approved in one of the sensitive areas.

Unfortunately, the brook overtopped in late 2014, it was a lesser flood effecting the road, and the alleviation works helped in modifying the flood water, however it was noticed that detritus from the river blocked the gully grids preventing flood water passing through the newly constructed drain.

In 2015 Shropshire Council made available the help and support of the National Flood Forum who met with the affected residents and Parish Council representatives. They facilitated the formation of the Minsterley Flood Action Group that is made up of flood affected residents and we have also involved our farmers and industrialists, firstly to assess the extent of the problems and bringing the benefit of their experience from working nationally with other Flood Action Groups. Minsterley Flood Action Group followed the advised structured process, and when sufficient information was gathered of the community's flood experiences, and an action plan formed, the National Flood Forum set a Multi-Agency meeting to embed a partnership approach to understanding the issues and constraints and work together to reduce the flood risk.



The National Flood Forum was essential for us, as they have the expertise and knowledge to contact and bring the right people from flood risk management authorities who have an interest in helping our community. As a Flood Action Group, we need to give information to enable the National Flood Forum to give us a focus on the issues and legislation that is applicable in our instance, so producing information was key. We gained historic records of flooding events, flood flows, photographs, old drawings marking the existence of watercourses, information gleaned from the older members of the community and we visited the Council archives to establish probity of folklore information, old railway construction plans, Country Estates long since dispersed, all of these may have records of major flooding events, which changed the course of watercourses, or highways to avoid constant disruption to local commerce.

In Minsterley it has been established that the river known as the Minsterley Brook, flows in an unnatural course from the village centre to its confluence with the Rea Brook at Malehurst, constructed after the huge deluge in May 1811 which caused great devastation in the Rea Valley West, South West of Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The Brook is held in levees, East of the township.

By keeping the partnership informed of potential flooding issues which have arisen in our locality we as the Minsterley Flood Action Group can help prevent further residents becoming affected by flooding, creating peace of mind for those living within the vicinity of water.

Local knowledge is imperative when considering further development of the built environment, but local planning authorities and consultants do not always take due cognisance of local observations because of other demands ignoring basic infrastructural needs.

The involvement of the National Flood Forum has also helped with procurement of affordable property insurance and advice on products that may help give more time to move possessions and may also help to stop flood water entering properties, and practicalities of recovering from the initial flood occurrence.

We continue our resolve to ensure our residents and environment are protected from flooding events, but we recognise that no one can legislate for the prevention of deluges similar that which took place 1811!

Doug from Minsterley Flood Acton Group

FRIENDS OF THE CORVE AND TEME (ACTION GROUP)

Friends of the Corve and Teme (FCT), Ludlow's Flood Awareness and River Environment Group, was established in June 2016 with the intention of monitoring the rivers Corve and Teme and implementing actions to alleviate the possible consequences of flooding of land and properties in and around Ludlow.

"We talked about using local knowledge to develop and implement a Flood Awareness Plan; we agreed to collect data to better inform actions by individuals, local authorities, responsible agencies, landowners and companies; we take advice in scrutinising new development applications, to see if they meet or improve upon Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) specifications; and we liaise with Shropshire Wildlife's 'Slow the Flow' initiative", said Rosemary, Chairman of FCT. "But our real successes have been in establishing good working relationships with our relevant agencies and local organisations, listening to residents, and setting achievable targets".

For instance, by 6.00am on Sunday 26 May 2018, torrential rain resulted in 8" of water accumulating at the lowest point of one of Ludlow's streets abutting the River Corve. This was high enough for residents to alert neighbours to move their cars. 'Fountains' had gushed from manhole covers, one of which was the combined water and sewage pipe, and gullies were blocked with mud and debris.

On the following Thursday, 31 May, residents again experienced high levels of water in the road. Difficult conditions were exacerbated by drivers ignoring the 'Access Only' signs: tempers were frayed. This flood came from surface water only. The drains could not cope with heavy rain falling so quickly. No drains were blocked: the river was low enough for all the water to be taken away as quickly as the drains would allow. No water came up from the river into the road. But houses were flooded and individuals and families distressed.

A meeting was quickly arranged with our representative on Severn Trent Water, who met and listened to residents. This was followed by a site visit with residents, FCT, the Environment Agency, Shropshire Highways, Shropshire Flood and Water Management Team, and Severn Trent Water.

As a result, Severn Trent Water has arranged CCTV/tracing of the combined sewer and surface water and checked the connectivity of the relevant highway gullies. Shropshire Highways will arrange for drains on two sides of the flood plain to be jetted out immediately, and would also schedule-in the drains to be surveyed and cleaned as necessary four times a year. The Friends said that if they were given advance notice of when the cleaning was to take place, they would ask locals to move their cars. The Highways Authority would put up “no parking” cones the day before.

Planning permission has recently been granted for a petrol station adjacent to the flood plain. This is now in existence, and residents fear its raised level contributed to drainage problems during the storm. Our representative from the Environment Agency offered to look into this, to see if work should be undertaken on the arches of Corve Bridge. Tree work was a possibility, and decisions would be made with regard to both potential flooding and biodiversity. Discussions with a long-established resident led to the Environment Agency flagging up the need to clear vegetation from one of the arches.

“In themselves, these are small maintenance initiatives”, said Rosemary. “But, in the words of a well-known supermarket, ‘Every little helps ...’. The National Flood Forum’s support and advice has been invaluable. Our next step is to make Friends of the Corve & Teme is to communicate to our community and encourage local people to send us photographs of affected areas. We began life as a ‘river group’, but are finding issues with surface water, drains and planning applications need to be addressed.

Ludlow Town Council has also invited Friends of the Corve & Teme to a meeting to discuss Contingency Planning for Ludlow.

Many years ago, in his poem, “Song of the Three Rivers”, Frances Brett Young wrote:

“Teme is Severn's wild, sweet daughter,

A wayward child; and her limpid water

Gushes and wells from the gentle rills

That trickle from the Kerry hills”

Our local rivers are so special, and so dangerous!

Friends of the Corve and Teme (FCT), www.f-c-t.org.uk

Pednormead End Flood Fair

Monday 17th September
from 12 noon till 8pm
at Chesham 1879
Tennis and Squash Club

- Come and find out about flood risk and history in Chesham
- What flood risk management could be implemented in Pednormead End
- Find out from the Environment Agency what you can do about flooding



Chesham Town Council



Marlow Flood Fair

When: 18th September 2018 from 12:00pm to 8:00pm

Where: Court Garden House, Pound Lane, Marlow, SL7 2AE

Marlow is at risk of flooding, as was illustrated most recently in July 2017. Buckinghamshire County Council and our partners invite you to the Marlow Flood Fair, where you will get an opportunity to talk to flood risk management experts and contribute to their work.

There will be a variety of stalls for you to visit covering topics such as;

- The different types of flooding that could affect you
- What you can do to protect your property or business from flooding
- What flood projects or schemes are going on in Marlow
- Which organisations are involved and how they work



MAKING YOUR VIEWS COUNT

The Environment Agency is developing an **England Flood and Coastal Erosion Flood Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy** on behalf of Government. This will set out how flood risk will be managed over the next few decades, so it is a real opportunity to influence change.

The Agency is asking for people's views to help shape the Strategy, a draft of which will be published for consultation early in 2019 alongside a policy paper from Defra. Whilst the National Flood Forum is represented on a range of working groups, we also need your input. The more that we can demonstrate that there is a demand for change, the greater will be our influence.

The Environment Agency has gathered an enormous amount of information and views about flood risk management, which can all be found at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/fcerm-national-strategy-info/>. This can be a bit overwhelming and time consuming to read; so a number of flood groups have considered what they think are the **Key Issues for people at risk of flooding** and have developed a **Charter** outlining what needs to happen. These documents are attached; we would welcome your input and thoughts.

To help make things as straightforward as possible for people we would be grateful if you could answer the questions below:

Question One – We would welcome any comments on the [Key Issues document](#)

Question Two – We would welcome your say and any comments on the [Charter](#)

Question Three – *What is working well in terms of how flooding is managed at the moment?*

Question Four - *What change would you like to see happen to how flooding is managed in the future?*

Question Five – *What do you think is needed to make these changes happen?*

How can I have my say?

People prefer different ways of talking to us, so we have developed some alternatives:

1. You can email info@floodforum.org.uk
2. You can fill in an online [questionnaire](#)
3. You can Join in an online WhatsApp Group [NFF My flood risk future](#)

If you are interested in becoming involved in more detailed discussions, either as an individual or through your flood action group, please let us know or join the National SuDs Flood Action Group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1546007772175317/?source_id=183784121133

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



FLOOD EXPO

12th & 13th September

NEC, Birmingham

MARLOW FLOOD FAIR

18TH September

Court Garden House, Pound Lane, Marlow, SL7 2AE



19th & 20th September

Hall 5, NEC, Birmingham,

GIVE US AN UPDATE

If you are one of our affiliated Flood Action Groups, have there been any changes in contact details? We would love to get an update from you with any news or activities from your Group.

Drop Jean a line here at the Bewdley office

jean.timmins@floodforum.org.uk



We'd love
to hear
from you!