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A Must Read!



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Wishing You All A Merry Christmas From the National Flood Forum



Welcome to this Christmas edition of the National Flood Forum Bulletin.

As we head towards Christmas and the New Year, it has been a very wet autumn and winter so far, with water tables and rivers full everywhere. Whilst media attention has focussed on flooding in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, peoples' homes and businesses have been affected across the country from early summer onwards. Often, the numbers in each place have been small, but our advice line has been at full stretch since October, and we are very conscious that the stress caused by weeks of wet weather is often not appreciated or understood; So our thoughts go out to everyone affected.

Date for your diary - we are pleased to announce our national conference which will be held at the National Railway Museum in York on Thursday 5th March. *Flooding – What next?* will focus on drainage in all its many guises; urban and rural, SuDS, riparian ownership and management. What needs to happen next and how do we get there? This should also be a great opportunity to meet others and network. We look forward to seeing you there.

We have a new Government installed and we have written to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rebecca Pow MP and held meetings with Defra and Environment Agency about how people can be better supported, what a step change in our level of ambition for managing flood risk might look like and how we might turn that in to action. It is still early days. We have also invited the Minister to launch our conference.

On 5th November we launched the [Communities Flood Risk Charter](#) in the Churchill Room in Parliament.



This has been well received and is a useful focus for action. By way of example, we wrote to each political party asking for their support for the Charter. Whilst we only received a response from the [Liberal Democrat Party](#) on polling day, many of you also used the Charter to write to your parliamentary candidates, asking them what they would do to help flood risk communities. Thank you.

On the same day we met with Jer Buckley, Brian Hunt and Tony Maguire from the Irish Flood Forum who were on their way to see how flood risk is managed in the Netherlands. They have many of the same issues as we do; surface water flooding, getting insurance for everyone, development pressures, funding, increasing flood risk due to climate change, and so on and are particularly interested to learn about the range of approaches by communities in different countries.

Thank you also to those of you who have help us to raise funds to replace our old vehicles with new ones. We hope to announce the replacement of one of these in the New Year and will look to replace the other later.

Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas and a dry New Year.

My priorities for the National Flood Forum



By Daniel Johns, new chair of the board of trustees, National Flood Forum

I am honoured and delighted to have recently become chair of the National Flood Forum board of trustees. I am also thrilled to be working with Phiala Mehring as my vice-chair, whose passion and experience of flooding in her local community complements very nicely my background in central government working on flood risk and environmental policy.

I have known and respected the NFF for more than a decade, since my time in the Defra flood management team where I led their work on

investment and flood insurance following the 2007 floods. I was also in regular contact with Paul and the previous chair, Andy Johnson, in my next role leading the Committee on Climate Change's work on adaptation. On behalf of the trustees and staff I would like to thank Andy for his tireless efforts over the past eight years to take the Forum's prominence and impact to a whole new level.

My priorities for the National Flood Forum are three-fold:

- Generate more funding to support our mission.
- Help more communities at risk to become more flood resilient.
- Build a louder voice for communities at risk in Westminster and Whitehall, and in local and regional decision-making forums around the country.

These priorities fit very neatly with my 'day job' or overseeing Anglian Water's work on flood risk management and sustainable drainage, as part of making the east of England resilient to climate change. There is huge scope for the NFF to work with the water industry, as they already do with Anglian Water, from December when companies secure funding for drainage and wastewater projects for the next five years.

We cannot be complacent about the NFF's future. Since funding from central government was withdrawn in 2008, the NFF has relied on winning project funding from grant giving bodies and the generosity of individuals and flood-related organisations. As a small charity, modest amounts of money can make a massive difference. So as an initial focus I will be doing what I can with my fellow trustees and the NFF's leadership team to secure longer-term, more sustainable sources of funding for our work. You can help, by following us on Facebook and Twitter, promoting our work both personally and professionally, and becoming [a Friend of the National Flood Forum](#)

We are in a climate crisis and the science is very clear; we can expect more flooding, more often. There has never been a more important time for the National Flood Forum to be working with communities across the country, to help, support and represent people at risk. I am excited to take up this challenge and look forward to meeting our partners, community groups and everyone else involved in our work in the weeks and months ahead.

NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM CONFERENCE
WILL BE HELD ON THE 5th MARCH 2020
AT THE YORK RAILWAY MUSEUM
Leeman Rd, York YO26 4XJ
MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

New Trustee – Introducing Bob Haddon



Bob retired in 2016 after running a successful Home Improvements company which he set up in 2005.

This was a complete change of career after spending 25 years in retailing starting as a branch manager. He then spent a four-year spell in Jersey helping to set up a new sister company and returned to the mainland in 1986, progressing to a Senior Operations Manager, responsible for 240 stores.

In his early working life, he spent time in Engineering and the military (Army 7 years). During his time being involved in the “flood community” he was nominated and short listed for the Flood Re Local Heroes Award (November 2017)

He has presented to the NFF National Conference in London (February 2017) on Communities working with Developers. He also made the opening presentation at the 1st NFF Community Groups regional conference with a presentation on the Shifnal Flood Partnership Group in Birmingham (November 2018) and fully endorses the work of the NFF

He believes he has acquired and learned local knowledge about working with Developers on SUDs since Jan 2014 and is actively involved in strategic planning for a community at grass roots level on creating a holistic approach to protecting and reducing the risk of flooding in his local community

He has a direct approach of analysing facts and finding solutions on flooding and people may consider him rather tenacious on flooding issues. He works effectively, participating at all levels from grass roots to specialists and professionals. He also believes that he demonstrates integrity, confidentiality and fairness when participating in discussions/meetings

He was personally involved in the flooding of 2007 and was displaced for 18 months until the reinstatement of his family home and is passionate about ensuring that what he learnt from his experiences can be of a benefit to others

Bob is currently Chairman of the Shifnal Flood Partnership Group in Shropshire - info@shifnalflood.org and their progress to date includes creating a community group with an emphasis and belief that you need to work actively and effectively in partnership with organisations and agencies.

The Shifnal Flood Partnership Group are involved in extensive work on developing and creating a Catchment Based Flood Modelling programme for their community which is affected by flash flooding from a Local River and also surface water flooding. Their most recent initiative is to create a new community group called “The Friends of the Wesley Brook”

Friends of the Wesley aims to conserve, protect and improve the Wesley Brook and its surrounding for the benefit of the community, wildlife and the wider natural environment.

This new community group will ultimately develop into the public face of the Shifnal Flood Partnership Group and lead to the creation of a local flood resilience team which would respond to the local community in the event of flooding (Shifnal Flood Resilience & Recovery Team)

The plan is to create a contingency plan which would be put into operation in the event of a flood warning and also would act as a local flood recovery support team

Bob is extremely interested in helping the flood community and feels that reducing the risks of flooding for the long-term benefit of communities needs to be a concerted effort with our partners in all of the agencies concerned with flooding

Add Your Voice to Ours by becoming a Friend of the National Flood Forum

To bring about real change we need to demonstrate that this is something that hundreds and preferably thousands of people feel strongly about. Join the Friends of the National Flood Forum to support our campaign for change



[Click Here to Join](#)

The Flood - 26/27th October 2019 Hereford. Part 1

Where to begin?

The flood alert phone call I suppose. The call that always comes when it rains in Wales. The call that directs you to the flood alert website that used to have accurate information with precise predictions of river heights and times at the measuring stations along the Wye. But there hadn't been the same flood alerts recently. Over the past couple of years, they had become rambling, woolly narrative works of fiction that no longer looked like they were the words of an expert at the Environment Agency, but a story concocted by an intern. No heights, no times, no information after the event to keep on record. The flood alerts that had become so useless that it hardly seemed worth looking. But living right on the banks of the River Wye, I'd always have to check. And on 26th October 2019, there are measurements again and times.

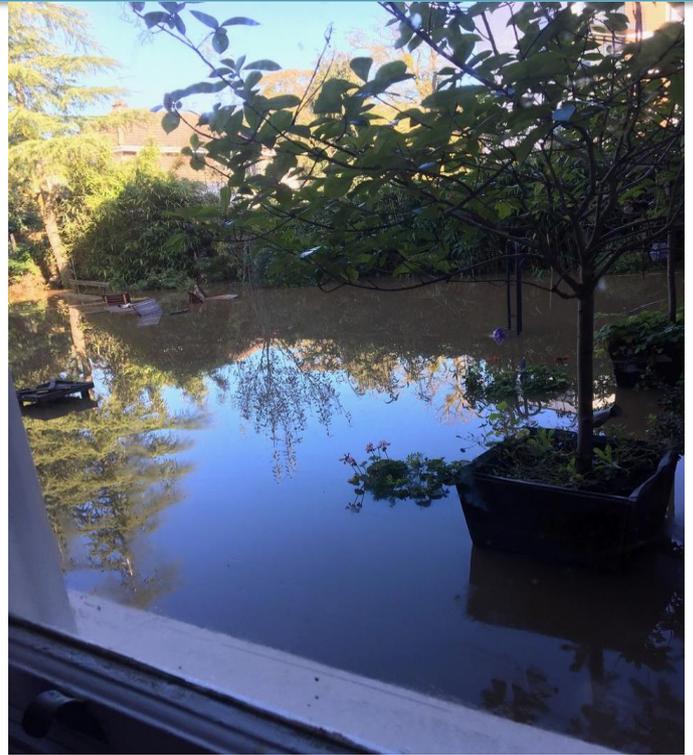
They look big but no bigger than previous years and thanks to the information I feel safe and able to take appropriate action.

Or did it start when the phone rang again early evening, the alert changing to a warning? Stupidly not really aware of the difference between an alert and a warning I checked the levels on the website again. Still big (I can't remember the exact numbers but peaking on Sunday morning). The flood warden arrived minutes later. 'It's going to be as big as '98' he said. 'Ring me if you need me' and left his number. As big as 1998 meant nothing, we moved in in 2011. So, I've got no point of reference and had been given no instructions to do anything specific. Later, I realised we should have moved the car to high ground and got out anyone vulnerable, but we had no idea and no guidance. There is no flood drill. We aren't prepared. And, as we later discover you can't prepare for this.

We haul out the flood defences. Find the bolts. Put them in place. There is still no sense of danger. It just feels routine. Every October and December, on go the defences and we watch the water come nowhere near the house.



Or did it start at 2.30 am? Waking up, watching a computer screen and realising that the levels up stream at Hay and Bredwardine haven't peaked but are still rising. Waking my husband, wading out into the cold water to



check the defences. We run a B and B. Anxious guests asking to borrow wellies to move a car. Still no sense of danger. We have defences. They are in place.

Our house is 'back to front' with a very large front garden with the house backing onto the river. While the river level looks ok, it's odd to realise that the front garden is a lake and the house is getting cut off from the road. But it's 4am and we are so cold and tired. And the water is peaking in the morning and we'll be ok.

Waking again at 6.45. Some electrics gone and the river is rushing by. Peeping out you can only see water but it's still nowhere near the house or the flood defences and it's peaking this morning. So, when it starts coming up through the kitchen floor we don't panic.

We just start lifting everything low to tabletops and onto sofas. It'll be over soon. We'll be ok.

But it doesn't stop, it just keeps rising. We evacuate our B and B guests feeling very embarrassed. 'Sorry we can't do breakfast I say, 'We've got no electricity'. It never occurs to evacuate ourselves. It's peaking this morning after all. One socket in the house is still working so we keep the mobiles charged and have coffee.

We moved our disabled dog upstairs and try to distract the springer spaniel who is staying with us. The cat exits through an upstairs window and balances along the fence and we wait on the first-floor landing for the water to peak 'this morning'.

Yes, it has definitely started.

And it will end soon because it's going to peak this morning. That's what the experts say, and no one has told us anything else. So, we wait. But it just keeps coming, inching up through all the floors in all the rooms. And nothing feels stable

anymore. It's all moving. Solid floors shifting under my feet. Like when you stand at the shoreline and the retreating tide takes the ground away. But this isn't retreating, the floor is rising. Imperceptibly slowly but logs from the fireplace are floating and the summerhouse doors have been forced open and our possessions are floating around outside. The wheelie bins have turned over and are banging against the house. Outside the water is moving towards the river. It's not the river flooding it's the ground water trying to escape to the river. Inside the house it's the same, the rising water is flowing towards the river and is trapped inside by the flood defences. The water can't get out and now it's rising faster.

We ring 999. They say there's a fire engine in the road. That someone will come. When they do, we are politely asked 'would you like to be evacuated?' Still no real sense of emergency. They say it's a bit tricky and they'll need a boat. They come back with an inflatable canoe as our gate is too narrow for the boat. It must be 10.30 and the water is still rising. We ask them to take down a fence panel and bring the boat in.

When will it end? At this point I relinquished control. It takes two trips to get the family and the dogs out. But there's no plan. 'Where are you evacuating us to?' I ask. 'The top of the road' they say. For them it ends there. At the top of the road. Officials in high vis; a yellow line against the brown flood water. A new river where our road used to be.

There was no onward plan. No community centre for us to go to, no makeshift shelter, no cup of tea, no collection of names and contact numbers for follow up. Just a hand down from a boat and it's over. A press pack snapping shots.

By some miracle a good friend arrives. She sweeps us up and bundles us into her car. Another friend says we can stay at her house for the night. It'll be over soon.

It doesn't end. It didn't end. Later we discover that the water kept rising and peaking late afternoon. It raised up all the floors, entered the sockets, crept up the furniture, knocked a radiator valve open, distorted and damaged everything and everywhere. We think of water as something cleansing but

this water contaminates everything it touches leaves a filthy, dangerous residue as it recedes. Even after the flood retreated the damp keeps rising, up the walls, up the curtains, into the books, threatening the pictures and the contamination remains. The devastation is unconscionable. Fortunately, you don't realise this when you first return and take and look inside.

8 weeks on, I now realise that this is where it begins....

What began? The fight, the desperation the trauma. The feeling of being totally abandoned, swept aside, washed downstream with the flood. A phone call to the insurer triggers a deluge of actions required. No idea what order things need doing in, no concept that we can't return or that each time we do return the panic will trigger and the floors will seem to move under our feet. Only the dawning realisation that we have lost all our income and don't know what to do.

No contact from an authority, no guidance, no help or way markers of how to cope. An overwhelming feeling of sadness, of desperation of everyone offering help but no way to process what help is required.



No national news coverage, outside the vicinity no one knows it happened and it gets forgotten quickly. Moving from house to house, 1 day here, 5 days there becomes 10 days, 2 weeks in another. Loss adjustors shake their heads, suck their teeth, use words like 'enormous' and 'uninhabitable'. Despite widespread flooding in Herefordshire the incumbent MP is not visible, too busy championing his own impending campaign, I guess.

Another flood in Yorkshire weeks later but now political pressure sees a national emergency spoken of, grants for future flood resilience promised (but not for forgotten Herefordshire, our floods too early, too easy to forget). Unless you are a victim of the flood. You don't forget. Kind words come 'hope you'll be home soon', 'keep dry' and 'chin up'. 'I won't be home for nine months' you say, 'my entire life has either been washed away or packed into boxes'. There is no longer 'home'.

And so now with the house emptied and the driers installed the recovery can commence. All we can think of is that what the insurers are promising (we'll return your home to just how it was), is a pointless project. It will never be the same. The ground moved under our feet.

What we need is help and support and an understanding to plan a different future. We are hoping that the NFF will be our allies.

Article by Polly – Herefordshire.

The National Flood Forum's, people's flood recovery services is available to be brought into a flooded area immediately after a flood event through Local Authorities and the Environment Agency. This professional service recognises and acts on the many issues people face in the immediate aftermath of a flood event and can remain in place for the long-term support that flooded people will need



There have been several important announcements recently regarding property protection measures, termed Property Flood Resilience.

1. A grant scheme for properties recently flooded to encourage owners to reduce the impact of flooding and/or lessen the chances of water getting inside. Please note that not all properties flooded in 2019 are eligible for the grant and that the details of the grant scheme are different to previous years. However, we are aware that some local authorities are running their own grant scheme; it may be worth contacting them.
2. A new [CIRIA Code of Practice](#) that sets out in detail how property protection measures should be undertaken. This is a weighty manual, but if you are thinking about taking measures to better protect your property it is highly recommended that you have a look to see how things should be done. A Homeowners Guide is due out in 2020.
3. A new British Standard for Property Flood Resilience measures, BS 851188, has been launched. This higher standard will replace the Kitemark PAS 1188 in due course.
4. A new Environment Agency Procurement Framework allows local authorities and other organisations to use a standardised approach to purchasing property flood resilience measures. This will hopefully mean that local authorities do not have to reinvent the wheel all the time and the quality of schemes will improve.
5. In their Quinquennial Review, Flood Re are proposing that there will be the option for insurance companies to reduce the price of property insurance policies where property flood resilience measures are in place. They are also proposing that where a claim is made there could be an opportunity to encourage and support betterment (putting things back better). Both of these measures are subject to approval by Government and they would be voluntary measures for each insurance company, funded by Flood Re.

So, is everything in place for perfect property flood resilience schemes? Almost. The missing piece is an accreditation system for the surveyor who evaluates the flood risk, takes account of the building construction, works with the householder to understand their needs and specifies the measures to be undertaken and installed, followed by signing-off the works once completed.

A Social Gathering

On the 27th November, some Kent Flood Action Groups met for a social gathering to introduce themselves to each other (representing the areas of Hildenborough, Ightham, Tunbridge Wells, Headcorn, Collier Street and Five Oak Green). This was a chance to have some food, drink and chat about what each Flood Action Group have been up to in their areas. The evening went well and all groups who attended were pleased to have the chance to get to know one another better.



How You Can Help the National Flood Forum

We need your support and your donations....

Flooding rips families apart, it forces you out of your home, destroys your treasured mementos & possessions; constrains living normality and becomes all consuming.

Getting back into your home often takes a year or more; flooding is more than cleaning out with a mop & bucket! If the flood isn't enough to contend with, restoring your home can be full of issues causing unimaginable distress.



The physical toll on mind and body is profound and recovering from the ordeal is aligned to a similar process

as that of bereavement. Children suffer quietly, noticing the stress parents are under and the fear that this frightening event may happen again when it



rains is all too real. Pets and their owners suffer from separation as many rented

properties will not accept animals so they must be taken to animal homes.



That's why we need to ensure the **National Flood Forum** is here for people to talk to; to guide and support, to help navigate around the stumbling blocks, and most importantly, as a charity that really does understand exactly what it is like to have been flooded.



RECYCLE YOUR USED CARTRIDGES AND RAISE MONEY FOR THE NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM - ITS FREE AND EASY TO DO



WE CAN'T DO IT ON OUR OWN!

Every penny you raise will help our work to reach out to more flood-affected people. Every 'Like' or 'Share' you give us will help us. Perhaps you know someone who has been flooded, or you were flooded yourself. Maybe you've seen more flooding stories than ever before on the news and recognise it's a problem that's not going away.

Whatever your motivation to support us.

WE THANK YOU



The **National Flood Forum** is here to help flooded communities work productively in partnership with flood risk management to help reduce their risk of flooding, to act on insurance issues, to help them see that there is a life after flooding; to support them by bringing their voices together with others in England and Wales to work towards change.

"Being affiliated to the National Flood Forum really helped us to be taken seriously as a group from the start. It was also very useful to have the updates about the other groups and initiatives that were happening in other parts of the country. Keep up the good work." CREATE, Cherry Burton, East Yorkshire