Wessex Flood Warden Newsletter
Autumn 2021

Dear Flood Wardens, Community Volunteers and Town and Parish Clerks - Welcome to the Autumn 2021 Newsletter

We have TWO on-line resilience events packed full of training, videos, live sessions, resources and guidance coming up in October.

The scope is wide with many different agencies participating to help support you and your communities be better prepared and resilient when planning for, and faced with, emergencies. Please take a look, sign up and take part.....

Somerset Prepared Resilience event 4th – 22nd October 2021

Please register your interest for the event. If you would like to sign up you'll receive a bag from Somerset Prepared with useful items including a printed copy of the programme schedule.

Please click on the link below to register your interest and see a full copy of the programme with the wide range of contributors and subjects that will be available. The Somerset Prepared 2021 Poster is also available through this link to download and share: Somerset Prepared 2021 Event

Wiltshire & Swindon Prepared Resilience event 27th & 28th October 2021

Please register your interest for the event by emailing floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk or renate.malton@wiltshire.gov.uk

We are very pleased to be working closely with partners of the Local Resilience Forum to deliver a wide range of topics for communities.

For full details of the sessions, resources and programme on offer, click the following link: Wiltshire & Swindon Prepared Resilience Event 2021

A new addition to the Wessex Flood Resilience Team!

Hello, I'm Hayley Hills and I have recently joined the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience team as an Engagement Officer. I have been working for the Environment Agency for the past two years as an Engagement Officer for a project creating an intertidal area on the edge of Poole Harbour. Prior to this, my husband and I ran a community café in Poole. In these roles my experience is that communities and people are the heart of places, and when working together can create a better and more resilient place. It has been so lovely to hear more about the roles of Flood Wardens and Community Volunteers and the passion you have for your own communities and the community cohesion you encourage.

As an Engagement Officer I will be working with communities across Wessex to help them prepare for flooding and become more resilient by helping develop individual and community flood plans; supporting and encouraging people within communities to join the flood warden network; and promoting the Flood Warning Service so people and communities are better prepared for flooding. During a flood I support the area incident team in the role of Area Engagement Officer to ensure clear and accurate messaging is conveyed.

I am excited to be starting this role and am looking forward to seeing you over the upcoming prepared events and, in time, meeting you in person to understand how I can support you to support your local communities.

Know your local authority's policy on sandbags

BANES - see their policy here
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole - see their policy here
Bristol City Council - see their policy here
Dorset Council - see their policy here
Mendip District Council - see their policy here
North Somerset Council - see their policy here
Sedgemoor District Council - see their policy here
Somerset County Council - see their policy here
South Gloucestershire Council - see their policy here
Wiltshire County Council - see their policy here

Salisbury River Park Project

The Salisbury River Park scheme is a partnership project between the Environment Agency, Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council delivering flood risk, biodiversity, amenity and regeneration and growth benefits. It is phase 1 of a wider River Park masterplan that has been developed by Wiltshire Council, with input from the Environment Agency and other organisations. The scheme involves the creation of small flood embankments, flood control structures, an enlarged river corridor through the central car park area (as shown in the image below) and the creation of new wetland areas within Fisherton Recreation Ground. New amenity areas as well as new and improved footpaths and cycle paths are being provided. Flood risk will be reduced to the area to the west of the Summerlock Stream between Ashley Road and the A36 as well as areas around Castle Street and the city centre itself.

Planning permission for the scheme is expected to be granted shortly, and the detailed design work is well underway. The project is supported by funding from Central Government (through Flood Defence Grant in Aid), the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. We are also currently seeking the additional funding we need, which is expected to be finalised shortly. We are intending to start construction in early 2022, with the majority of the works occurring in the summers of 2022 and 2023 and completion in December 2023. Further information can be found at www.salisburyriverparkphase1.com

We need your help!

We look after the Flood Information Service and regularly gather feedback from people who use it. This helps us make improvements and ensure it has all the information needed at times of flooding. As a result of the feedback we have received so far, we will be launching our new service, Check for Flooding, in October. This service addresses some of the main pain points with the current service, has a new platform, design and navigation that makes it simpler and quicker to find information. It's accessible, optimised for mobile, and new features can be developed sustainably.

Over the years, we've gathered helpful feedback and information on how people affected by fluvial flooding use the service and what their needs are. But we have a gap in how people affected by coastal and tidal flooding use the service. So we've put together a short survey and would appreciate any responses to help us fill this gap.

Please click here to take part in the survey.

Thank you.

External Digital Services

Bath Flood Barrier Exercise

A number of Field Incident Support Officers (FISOs) - supported by Wessex Field Teams from Bradney, Chippenham and Warmley - carried out a deployment exercise on 8th September 2021 using our INERO demountable flood barrier.

This TDDP (Temporary Defence Deployment Plan) was carried out alongside the River Avon in Bath, where high levels can impact upon local residences.

The barrier was erected to test suitability to the location, time to deploy, effectiveness and also to train personnel from different departments who hold the FISO incident activated role. This will provide additional resilience across the area. The entire exercise was conducted with Covid-safe measures in place.

We found the barrier was another great tool in our kit and, despite the differences to other types of barrier, proved to be manageable and quick both to erect and to pack away.

Nationally we hold 8 kilometres of this INERO brand and we now have an additional number of staff trained to mobilise and deploy it when needed.

Meet one of our Flood Incident Duty Officers (FIDOs)

Hello, my name is Richard Shillito. I've been working for the Environment Agency since 2003 and have done a number of roles within Flood and Coastal Risk Management in that time. I've held a standby duty role since 2004. Initially I was a Flood Warning Duty Officer (which you may have read about in the last newsletter), before moving across to the Somerset Flood Incident Duty Officer (FIDO) role in 2007, and have been doing that role ever since.

The Flood Incident Duty Officer is a tactical command and decision making role, directing activities to manage and reduce the impacts from flooding. We're on duty 24 hours a day and have a rota so we do the role approximately 1 week in every 6. For resilience we always work in pairs. I'm a Somerset FIDO but work alongside colleagues covering the Bristol Avon and Blandford patches in Wessex area.

In my operational area of Somerset, we have a wide variety of river catchments and flooding that ranges from very fast reacting rapid response catchments in West Somerset, to much longer duration flooding on the levels and moors, and a long coastline with tidal flooding too.

The FIDO can be a very busy role. We receive a huge amount of information from various sources, such as our extensive river level telemetry network, webcams, weather, tidal and flood forecasts, and also calls in from partner organisations like the Internal Drainage Board, and from members of the public. If you make a call to the Environment Agency Incident hotline about a river or flooding, then it will come through to us. We evaluate all the relevant data and make the operational decisions and arrange the response. This could be making adjustments to any of our flood risk management structures, flood alleviation schemes or pumping stations, arranging for blockages to watercourse to be cleared or even deploying additional pumps and barriers during flood incidents.

It's a very varied role where you need to know your area well, but you still don't know what call is going to come in next and what response will be required. You always need to be on your toes and ready to respond to whatever it might be. It certainly keeps it interesting!

Somerset Rivers Authority's (SRA) Annual Report - Somerset Prepared

The SRA's Annual Report for 2020-21 has just been published. It concentrates on the SRA's many achievements over the past 12 months and also covers progress on some bigger themes and projects since the devastating floods of 2013-14.

Hundreds of places across Somerset have benefitted from extra flood protection and resilience works funded by the SRA. In 2020-21, the SRA spent £3.344 million on actions designed to protect people, properties, businesses and roads, while enhancing local environments, in accordance with the objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan.

Everyone in Somerset is affected directly or indirectly by issues with flooding, so the SRA invests in a wide range of actions countywide to reduce flood risks and increase local resilience when floods do occur.

See the full report on the SRA's website. Start at Somerset Rivers Authority Annual Report 2020-21 - Somerset Rivers Authority

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Please help us keep your contact details up to date

We need your help to keep our list of contact details up to date. In the two short videos – see links below – we describe why we need your contact details and how we will use them to help support you in your role as Flood Warden or Community Emergency Volunteer. We also explain why, how and when our Flood Warning Duty Officer might want to contact you.

https://youtu.be/tyjjSO4aH-g
https://youtu.be/YUKA9GauIxc

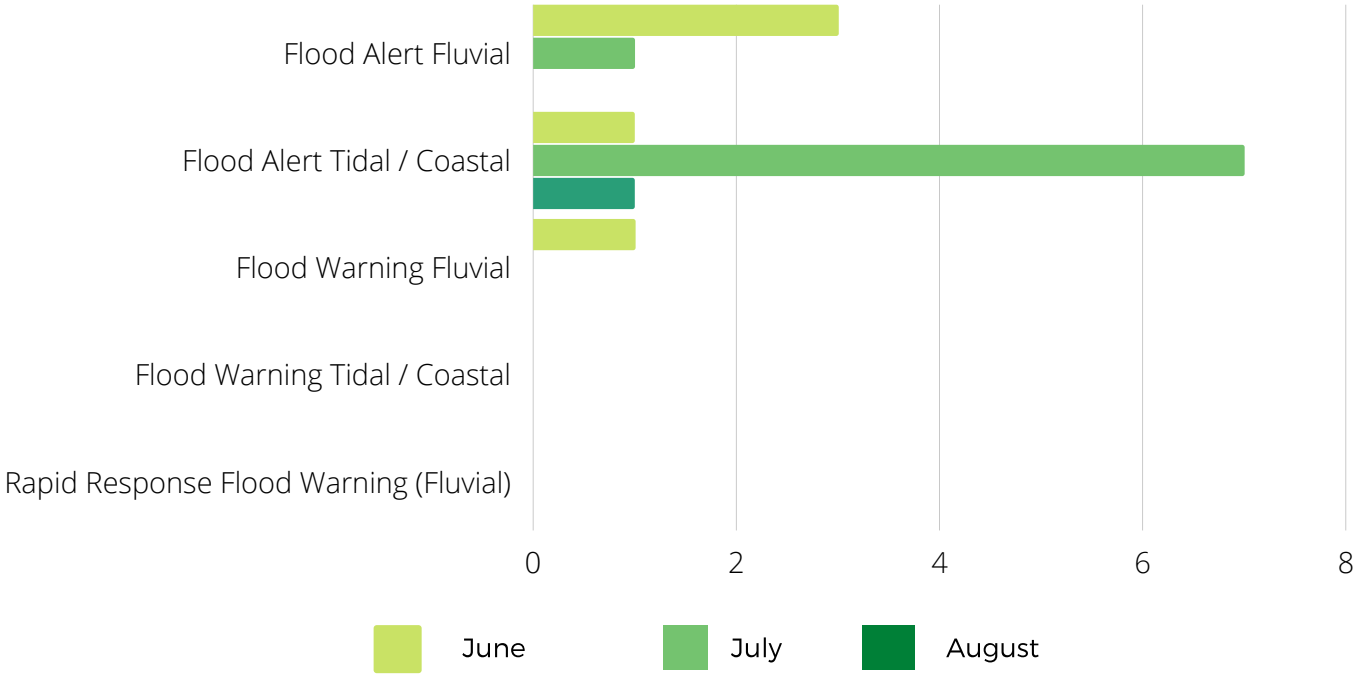
Please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk with:

·your name
·community name
·contact number

Email us if you would like more information about how and why we contact Flood Wardens, Community Emergency Volunteers and Town Clerks, or about how we handle your data.

2021 Water Situation Report

In total across Wessex in the last three months we issued:

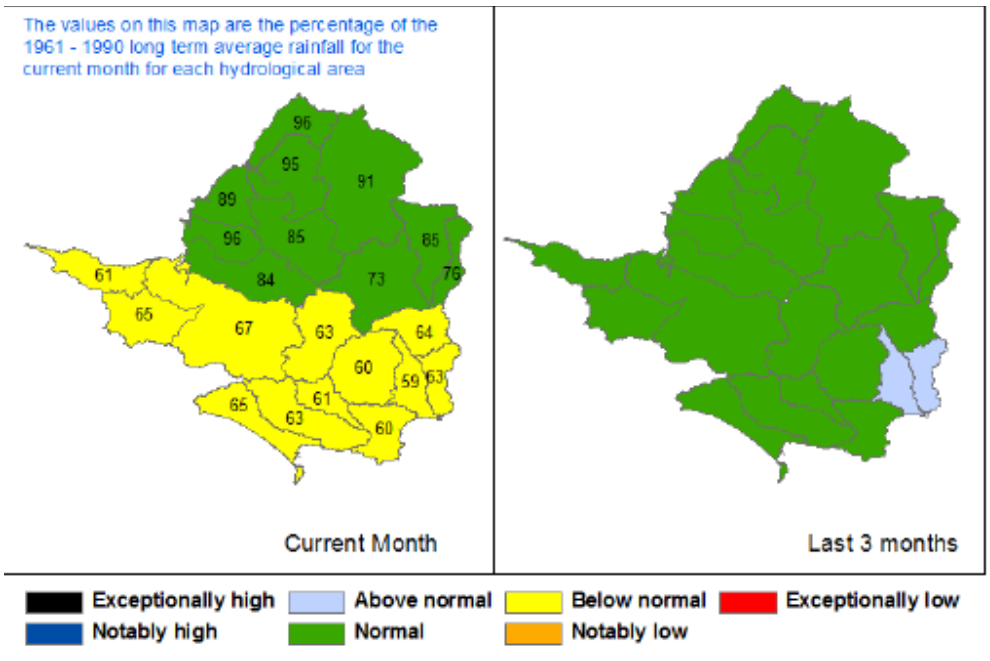


A PRETTY AVERAGE SORT OF SUMMER?

Summer 2021 has been largely unremarkable, with near average rainfall and perhaps surprisingly, temperatures above average in both June and July.

Both rainfall and temperature figures were far from evenly distributed however. The EA's raingauge at Priddy near Wells in Somerset saw a very wet day on the 9th of August where over 40mm of rain fell in 24 hours. Meanwhile, less than 30 miles away at Tisbury, just over 1mm fell in the same period. These inconsistencies are not at all uncommon during summer months, leaving both farmers and gardeners looking at 'average' rainfall figures with disbelief.

Average Summer '21 Rainfall in Wessex as a percentage of Long Term Average.



A similar situation can arise with average monthly temperature. Many people in Wessex would characterise the summer as rather grey and disappointing, and would be surprised to see that average temperature for central England (CET) came in considerably above average in both June & July. However both months saw fairly brief heatwaves with temperatures soaring to the mid-30s which significantly raised the monthly averages.

	Long Term Average	2021 Average
June	14.1C	16.14°C
July	16.5C	18.03°C
August	16.2C	16.3°C

Where to find further information

For local weather information including weather warnings visit the Met Office at www.metoffice.gov.uk

River and sea levels and to sign up for flood warnings

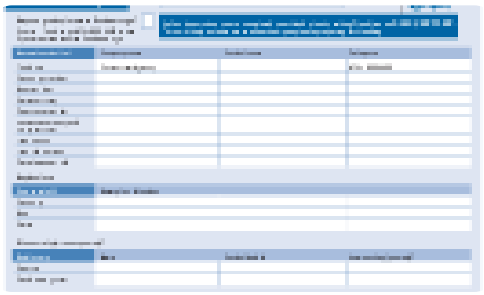
Wessex Area Water Situation Reports. Monthly reports are produced on Gov.uk

Flood Re has been set up to help those households who live in a flood risk area find affordable home insurance. For more information contact your insurer or visit www.floodre.co.uk

The National Flood Forum provide further advice and support at www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

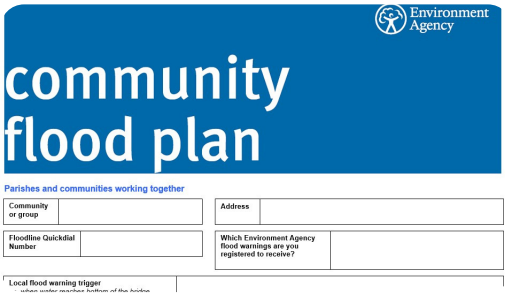
Flooding: Find out the answers to frequently asked questions here

Property Flood Resilience Toolkit | The Flood Hub. This toolkit contains all the resources you need as a basic introduction for your property to become more flood resilient. Click on each resource to download it and build up your toolkit!



Personal Flood Plan Template

The personal flood plan includes a list of things you should do (like moving sentimental items to safety), and provides space for you to note down important contact details such as your utility companies and insurance



Community Flood Plan Template

This flood plan template is for anyone involved in supporting communities or groups to improve their ability to plan for a flood

What to do before, during and after a flood

Practical advice on what to do to protect you and your property from flooding

Would your business stay afloat?

A guide to preparing your business for flooding

Prepare your property for flooding

A guide for householders and small businesses to prepare for flooding

Flooding from groundwater

Practical advice to help you reduce the impact of flooding from groundwater

Flood Warnings - Do you know what to do?

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Visit the flood warning information service

- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- Move things upstairs or to safety
- Move family, pets and car to safety

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

Useful contacts

Contact Floodline on **0345 988 1188** for up to date flood warning information or advice.

Contact the Environment Agency incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60** to report flooding, blockages in rivers or any other environment incident.

Reporting flood risk and riparian responsibilities

If you are concerned about blockages, obstructions to flow in the river or know of cut vegetation being deposited in the watercourse, which can cause pollution, remember to ring our Incident Hotline **0800 80 70 60** which is open and manned 24 hours a day. You will be given advice and guidance and the information you share will be recorded and passed to the relevant duty team who will be able to take any necessary actions.

If your community is affected by flooding please remember to share this information with us. Photos, times and description of flooding are vital in helping us understand how your community has been affected and what we can do going forwards, whether it be changes to flood warning thresholds or assessing your community for a scheme or property flood resilience measures.

If you have received training on the Severe Weather Information Management (SWIM) system you can record information directly at www.swim.geowessex.com. SWIM has recently changed its name undergoing a significant upgrade – it is now called FORT standing for Flood Online Reporting Tool, better reflecting what it actually does.

We are working to improve the way Wardens and Flood Groups can feed information into the system. Wardens will be able to enter and maintain their own contact details, they will be able to add more detailed flood extents onto the map and will be able to share a link with members of their community which will allow the public to upload photos and videos directly into their community flood report.

Alternatively you can email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk

Keeping in touch

If you are a new flood warden or have received this newsletter from your Town or Parish Clerk, please contact the Wessex Flood Resilience Team at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk so that we can update our records and sign you up to receive the newsletter and invitations to future training opportunities.

Subscribe to the Flood Warden Newsletter

Why not forward this Newsletter to a friend?

The Environment Agency will contact you in relation to your role as Flood Warden or Community Volunteer. We will only share your contact details with members of the Local Resilience Forum if relevant to support you in your role as Flood Warden or Community Emergency Volunteer. We will not transfer the personal data that you provide outside the UK and you have the right to withdraw consent for us to hold your data at any time.

You have rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the supervisory authority for data protection legislation. The ICO website has a full list of your rights under data protection legislation, you can access this here: Your data matters | ICO

For general information on how the Environment Agency treats your personal data and how to contact us, see our Personal Information Charter:
Personal information charter - Environment Agency - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)