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Flood Warden Winter Newsletter 2024

1 message

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Welcome



Winter Newsletter 2024

Welcome to the Flood Warden Winter Newsletter 2024!

It has certainly been a wet start to 2024, so wet in fact that rainfall amounts in Wiltshire have been the highest since records began in 1871.

As the Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for Flood Recovery and Incident Management, I know we have a lot of work to do with communities and partners to understand what happened, what we can learn, how we can do better and ultimately become more resilient to flooding. I know many of you reading this have experienced flooding within your communities, and this edition has a focus on how to access immediate flood support, whether that be from funding grants to emotional and wellbeing support, considering the devastating impacts flooding can bring.

We are working on plans for on the ground engagement that will give you the opportunity to speak to us and tell us what happened, but in the meantime please do report flooding. It's a really important way for us to understand the extent and nature of any flood event. As always, please do send in your feedback and let us know your thoughts on this newsletter. The next edition will be in May 2024.

Andrea Summers

Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for Flood Recovery and Incident Management

Flooding Information/Support

The Importance of Reporting Flooding

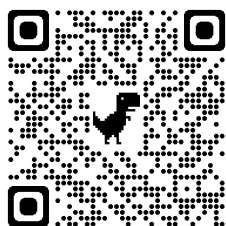
We understand it is a difficult time when people are affected by flooding and their priority will be to return to their homes as quickly as possible.



However, we would encourage those affected to report property flooding as close to the event as possible.

During a flood event if it is an emergency, please contact 999 to report flooding.

The best portal for non-emergency reporting is [FORT- Home \(geowessex.com\)](https://www.geowessex.com); you can also access this via the QR code below. This information provided is then shared with the risk management authorities to ensure it goes to the correct organisation depending on the source and impact of flooding.



During flooding events it helps us to deploy staff to the right areas to investigate the situation, so that we can understand the impacts on properties or communities and prioritise our response.

Reporting flooding helps organisations work together to support those affected by flooding. By gathering information, specific issues impacting residents and communities are identified and recurring issues highlighted. The evidence from flood reporting is crucial in planning effective maintenance and justifying business cases for potential long-term solutions.

Flood Wardens can provide reports for multiple flooded properties and add flooding reports on FORT, if you need more information on this please contact floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk

Grants for Household Recovery

The Government's Flood Recovery Framework is used in exceptional circumstances to support councils and communities following severe flooding. [This has been activated](#) for the areas most affected by Storm Henk.

Councils can access this Government funding if 50 or more properties in their local authority area were internally flooded between 2 – 12 January 2024.

[Wiltshire Council](#) and [Somerset Council](#) have opened applications from residents who have been affected. Other areas may still be assessing their eligibility; if you have been affected please contact your local authority for more information.

If eligible, the following help may be available:

1. Flooded households in eligible affected areas can apply for up to £500 cash to help with immediate costs.
2. Households and businesses significantly affected will be eligible for 100% council tax and business rates relief for at least 3 months.
3. Small-to-medium sized businesses in eligible affected areas can apply for up to £2,500 from the Business Recovery Grant to help them return quickly to business as usual.
4. Eligible flood-hit property owners can apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding via the Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.
5. Farmers who have suffered uninsurable damage to their land will be able to apply for grants of up to £25,000 through the Farming Recovery Fund towards repair and reinstatement costs for farmers adversely affected by exceptional flooding.

Contact your local authority for further information.

Insurance

Flooding is a traumatic experience, and the stress can be intensified when home or contents insurance isn't in place, or where the insurance claim process proves difficult.

If you experience flooding and are not insured, contact your local authority or the [National Flood Forum](#) for advice and support.

If you are insured, follow your insurers advice about actions to take. The Association of British Insurers provides information for [householders](#) and [businesses](#) about the claims process.

Build Back Better is a relatively new scheme that offers householders the chance to install Property Flood Resilience measures up to the value of £10,000 when repairing their properties after a flood. This way the next time the area floods their home will be better prepared to keep as much of the water out as possible. Measures can also be installed so that when water does enter it is easier, quicker and safer for families to clean up and move back in – often in a number of days rather than many months.

A growing number of insurance companies are offering Build Back Better policies, with many of the major insurers already signed up to the scheme. You can check to see if your insurer is one of these here: [Build Back Better - Flood Re](#)

The British Insurance Brokers' Association, The Association of British Insurers and Flood Re have worked together to create an [online directory](#) designed to help find insurance for both residential and commercial properties. If you are struggling to access insurance, contact the [National Flood Forum](#) for support and advice.

Emotional Impacts of Flooding

The effects of flooding can be devastating, to your home and your wellbeing. Being displaced from your home and losing sentimental possessions can have a huge impact on your mental health.

There is support available if you have experienced flooding. Please find some useful resources on recovering from a flood here: [Flooding and health: advice for the public - GOV.UK\(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The NHS offers a free Talking Therapies service for those affected by flooding. Please find information on accessing mental health support following a flood here: [How to find local mental health services - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

The Environment Agency offers support and guidance to help you prepare for and recover from flooding. Please contact wessexenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk for more information.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

Installing Property Flood Resilience (PFR) equipment at your home is a great way of protecting it from flood water. There are two elements to PFR. Resistance measures involve implementing physical barriers such as flood doors or flood boards onto the outside of your property, to prevent water from entering. Resilience measures entail installing internal equipment such as hard, waterproof floors and raised electrical sockets, which reduce the impact of flood water and make it easier and quicker to recover from the damage caused. It is preferable to prevent water from entering your property, therefore resistance measures are the most effective.

Information on finding suitable measures for your home is available at thefloodhub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Property-Flood-Resilience-PFR-booklet.pdf

To ensure that PFR equipment fulfils its purpose, it is very important that it is checked regularly and maintained. If you have equipment installed, it is advised that you practice setting it up, so that it can be easily deployed in the event of a flood. Information on maintaining your PFR equipment is available here: [PFR Health Check \(double sided\) \(thefloodhub.co.uk\)](#). This is also a useful checklist to go through [Flood Resilience checklist \(thefloodhub.co.uk\)](#).

If you move into a new home where there is existing PFR equipment, please make sure it is still in good condition and functioning properly. Similarly, if you move house and leave PFR measures behind, please ensure that the new owners are made aware of it and how to deploy it.

If you have previously been flooded, funding might be available from your insurer as part of the Build Back Better scheme, where you can receive financial support to make your home more resilient to future flooding during the recovery process. [Build Back Better - Flood Re](#)

Grants for Community Initiatives

There are grants available to support community emergency volunteer schemes, or for equipment or training that helps communities to be better equipped to deal with emergencies.

The Wessex Water Foundation offers grants for community and environment-related projects:
<https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/visit-and-learn/funding>

SSEN's Resilient Communities Fund aims to help communities become more resilient in the face of storms, severe weather and prolonged power interruptions. The fund is currently closed but may open for applications again: [Resilient Communities Fund - SSEN](#)

[Community Foundations](#) are locally based charitable organisation that distribute grants to support community needs.

Many Councils offer advice and support about locally available grants:

BANES: [funding_journal_-_february_2024.pdf](#) (bathnes.gov.uk)

BCP: [Funding for voluntary groups and charities](#) | [BCP \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Bristol: [Grants for voluntary and community organisations](#) (bristol.gov.uk)

Dorset: [Grants and funding for communities](#) - Dorset Council

Hampshire: [List of grants and funding](#) | [Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](http://hants.gov.uk)

Somerset: [Community Funding Sources](#) (somerset.gov.uk)

<https://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/get-support/funding-support/>.

South Gloucestershire: [Community grants](#) | [BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](http://beta-southgloucestershire.co.uk)

Wiltshire: [Area Board Grants](#) - Wiltshire Council

EA News

Flood Wardens - Contact Details

One of the important roles in our response to flooding incidents is carried out by our Flood Warning Duty Officers (FWDOs). FWDOs are on duty 24/7 monitoring river levels, groundwater levels and sea conditions. With the recent wet weather, there have been times where we have been responding to multiple flood incidents simultaneously across our Wessex operational area. Our priority is always to ensure we issue flood warnings at the right time to people at risk and the emergency services.

There may be times when our FWDOs contact Flood Wardens. This may be because they feel their decision making will benefit from some local knowledge or they have information to share with you, but it will always depend on how busy circumstances are at the time. They may not contact you every time there's a flood alert or warning. In those situations, the first time you hear from us may be the flood alert or flood warning.

If you need to share information during a flood, then please ring our incident hotline 0800 80 7060. The main reason we need you to contact us is to report flooding. In an incident, our FWDOs won't be able to comment on your Community Flood Plan. If you are called by one of our FWDOs it's important not to save their number as a point of contact and instead use the hotlines to ensure you can always reach us when different officers are on shift. You can find out more about the importance of reporting flooding in our article above.

Find out more about why we need your up to date contact details in this short video: [Flood Warden Video2](#)

If you would like support writing your community flood plan, our Flood Resilience team (floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) can help.

Flood Action Guides

Across Wessex we are supporting communities who are dealing with the immediate aftermath of flooding. If your community has been affected by the flooding in Wessex, or if you want to raise awareness and preparedness in your community about flooding, we can provide printed guides for you to share with your community.

They include:

- Flood Action Guide (adapted for your community)
- Recovery Flood Action Guides
- Personal Flood Plan
- FloodRe leaflet (helpful insurance guide)



- Flood Warnings (know what to do and when)

We will shortly be sending out copies of our Recovery Flood Action Guide to all Parish and Town Council Clerks, as well as our Flash Flood Action Guide to all communities identified as having a higher risk of flash flooding.

If you would like this information for your community, please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Gooseum Rhyne Reservoir Improvement Scheme Update

We hosted our last consultation event in October 2023 where we shared our updated proposals with everyone. Based on the valuable feedback that we received we have been reviewing other options to see how we can minimise our impact on the community.

We have developed an alternative approach that is to make changes so that the area is no longer classified as a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act 1975. This will mean that we won't have a significant impact on the local community, but at the same time we can retain the existing protection from flood risk.

Please come and meet us at our next drop-in event to know more details about this new option and ask us any questions you may have.

Public drop-in event details

Date: Friday, 23 February 2024

Time: 1pm to 4pm

Venue: Jubilee Hall Room, Old School Rooms, [1 Station Road, Congresbury, BS49 5DY](#)

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at gooseumreservoir@environment-agency.gov.uk or call us on 03708 506 506.

Partner Updates



How can the Fire Service help during flooding?

When storms and flooding occur, the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre is normally 'flooded' with calls from residents looking for help. This is why we spend time during quieter periods educating and encouraging those whose homes, businesses and travel might be affected, to make a flood plan and ensure they know how to [prepare](#). If flood wardens were able to share the advice below with communities, prior to or during flooding, this might help expectations of the fire service.

The fire and rescue service may not always be able to help in the event of a flood. While a property may be flooded, there has to be a certain level of water before we can pump it away, and we have to be able to pump it somewhere without it having a detrimental impact elsewhere. This often means waiting until the rain has stopped or the river level has fallen. As such, a fire crew will not automatically be sent when a call is made. Depending on the volume of calls, we may be able to send an officer to assess the situation and, if they feel that we can assist, they will call for a fire crew.



The fire service can only help in certain situations, such as if there is a risk to life, or water is affecting electrics, leading to a risk of fire. Please only dial 999 if these risks exist. More information on preparing for a flood, expectations and links to helpful resources can be found on the [DWFRS website](#).

Railway Flooding

Flooding is being seen more frequently due to increased rainfall from climate change and urbanisation. Flooding can severely impact the railway in several key ways:

When flood water rises above the rails, trains have to stop;

Water on slopes adjacent to the railway can increase the risk of a landslide causing a derailment. This effect is similar to making your sandcastle on the beach too wet;

Flooded rivers can increase erosion on railway bridges, meaning it is a risk to keep them open;

Fast flowing flood water can wash away the bed of stones (ballast) that support the tracks, making in unsafe.

Therefore, as a Flood Warden, if you notice flood water going towards or on the railway, or can see the line is flooded, or railway drainage is blocked, be the saviour and contact the Wessex Incident Control Centre (WICC) to report this. This observation must be made from a safe location outside of the railway boundary. The key details the WICC needs to know include:

- You are a Flood Warden;
- The town/parish you are in;
- The street name and/or postcode (if applicable);
- If possible, give a what3words;
- The floodwater's location relative to the railway (i.e. what distance away? Is the track higher or lower than the water?);
- Is the floodwater still or moving?.

Having this information will help keep the network and passengers safe during flood events.

Water Situation Report

Water Situation Report October, November and December 2023

In total across Wessex for October, November and December 2023.

2023/2024	October	November	December
Flood Alert			
Fluvial	31	47	81
Tidal	18	15	15
Groundwater S Wessex	0	5	3
Flood Warning			
Fluvial	18	43	85
Tidal	9	14	1
Groundwater S Wessex	0	2	9
Severe Flood Warning			
Fluvial	0	0	0
Tidal	0	0	0
Totals	76	126	194

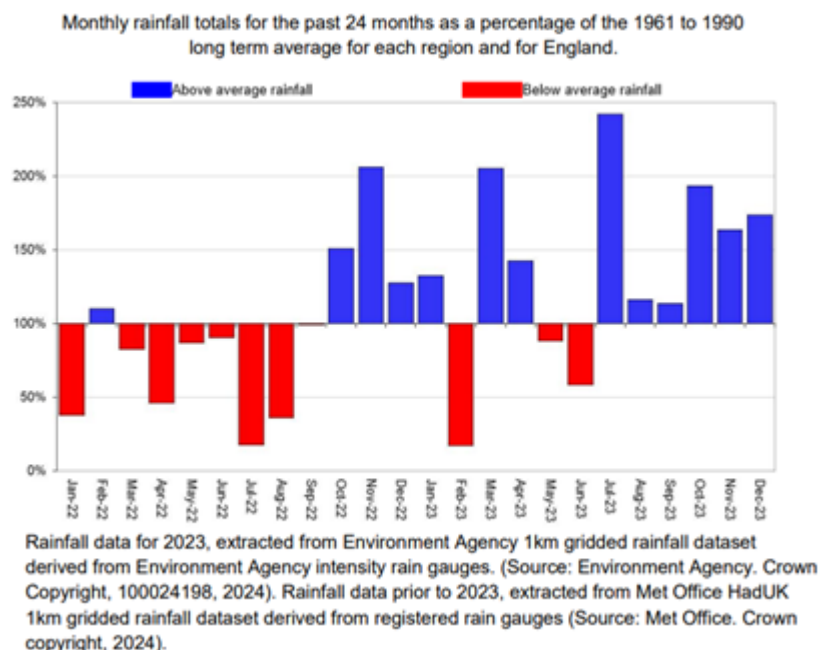
In October, Wessex received above average rainfall for the fourth month running with an average of 155mm falling, which is 194% of the long-term average (LTA). Wessex received 137mm of rainfall during November (164% LTA) which is the 26th wettest since our records began in 1871. The start of the month was significantly wetter, with 52% of the month's rain falling between the 1st and 10th of November. Wessex received 164mm of rainfall in December (174% LTA) which is notably high for the time of year.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD) increased early in October before decreasing in the last few weeks to nearly zero by the end of the month, resulting in the month being lower than the LTA. The SMD remained consistent throughout November, ending the month between 0-10mm. This is 6-25mm lower than the LTA. Soil moisture deficit remained close to zero for all of December.

In October, the rivers with chalk catchments had monthly mean flows that were mostly above normal, while the Asker at Bridport recorded its highest monthly mean flow since recording began at the site in 1996. In November, half of the rivers had notably high flows, while the other half had exceptionally high flows. The daily mean flow at all sites fluctuated throughout November in response to the heavy rainfall events, with levels receding toward the end of the month due to drier weather. In December, the monthly mean flows at most sites across Wessex were either notably high or exceptionally high, by the end of the month there was a clear divide in flows; South Wessex ended the month with notably high flows, while most sites in North Wessex ended the month with exceptionally high daily mean flows.

The groundwater levels at monitoring sites in Wessex receded or stayed stable in early October, but all but Chitterne Down were increasing by the end of the month due to recharge from rainfall in October. Generally, the groundwater levels at monitoring sites in Wessex increased throughout November due to heavy rainfall. The increasing trend continued into December, with groundwater levels at most monitoring sites in Wessex seeing an overall increase due to recharge from rainfall in December and the preceding months. Wessex reporting sites ended the month with levels ranging from normal, at Woodyates and Delcombe, to exceptionally high, at Didmarton.

There was an overall increase in reservoir levels during October. The total storage at the end of the month was 86% for Wessex Water and 76% for Bristol Water. Reservoir levels continued to rise during November due to rainfall events, by the end of the month, both Wessex and Bristol water had reservoir levels ~25% higher than the previous year. Reservoir levels remained close to 100% during December for both Wessex Water and Bristol Water.



For the full water situation report visit: [Wessex Area Water Situation Reports](#).

Useful Information

Would you know what to do in a flood?



**FLOOD
ALERT**

PREPARE

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Visit www.gov.uk/check-flooding



**FLOOD
WARNING**

ACT

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



**SEVERE
FLOOD
WARNING**

SURVIVE

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

Visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding

#PrepareActSurvive

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.

Where to find further information

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

The Met Office's Community Resilience website: [Met Office Community Resilience](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/community-resilience)

To sign up for flood warnings: [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)

For river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels: [River, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels](https://www.gov.uk/river-sea-groundwater-and-rainfall-levels)
[Wessex Area Water Situation Reports](https://www.gov.uk/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: [Flooding FAQ](https://www.gov.uk/flooding-faq)

For Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Flood Plan templates:

Keeping In Touch

We need your help to keep our list of contact details up to date:

In the two short videos 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.

[Flood Warden Video 1](#)

[Flood Warden Video 2](#)

Please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk with your name, your community and contact number.

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Environment
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floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk

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