

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Flood Warden Newsletter

'Natural Flood Management (NFM) uses and emulates natural processes and features to reduce the risk of flooding....

...These processes protect, restore and mimic the natural functions of catchments and floodplains to slow and store water and also help provide wider environmental benefits''

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Flood Warden Newsletter, which is focussed on Natural Flood Management (NFM). I'm Aly Maxwell, the Environment Agency's Wessex NFM Advisor.

The aim of NFM is to increase infiltration of rain into the land, slow the flow and hold water back upstream. This will reduce and delay river peaks, thus contributing to reduced flood risk to communities, property and infrastructure downstream.

NFM approaches can start in the field the moment rain falls and can be applied across the whole catchment and landscape. NFM and Nature Based Solutions (NBS) measures are often small scale, low cost and simple interventions. Their benefit is gained when delivered in combination, with the effect accumulating at scale across a landscape or catchment.

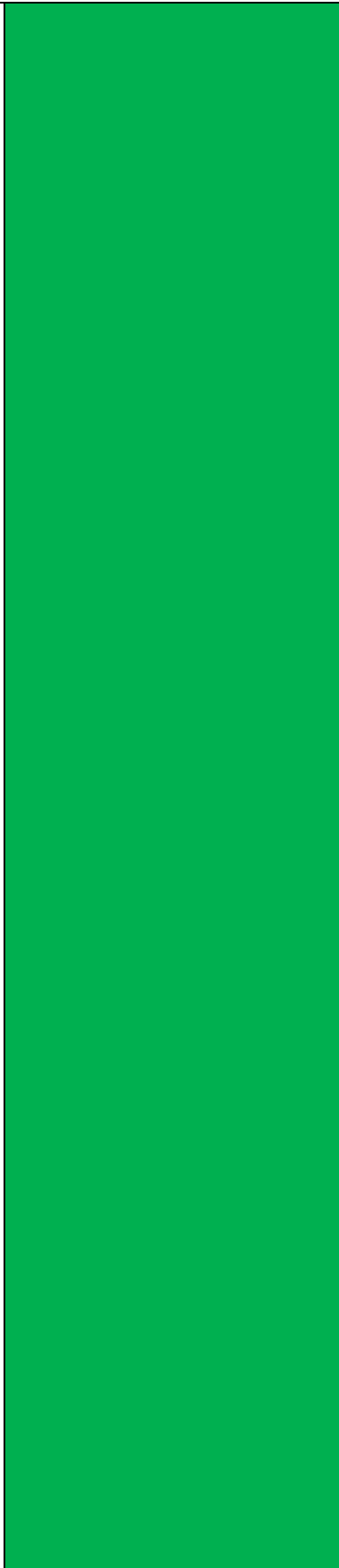
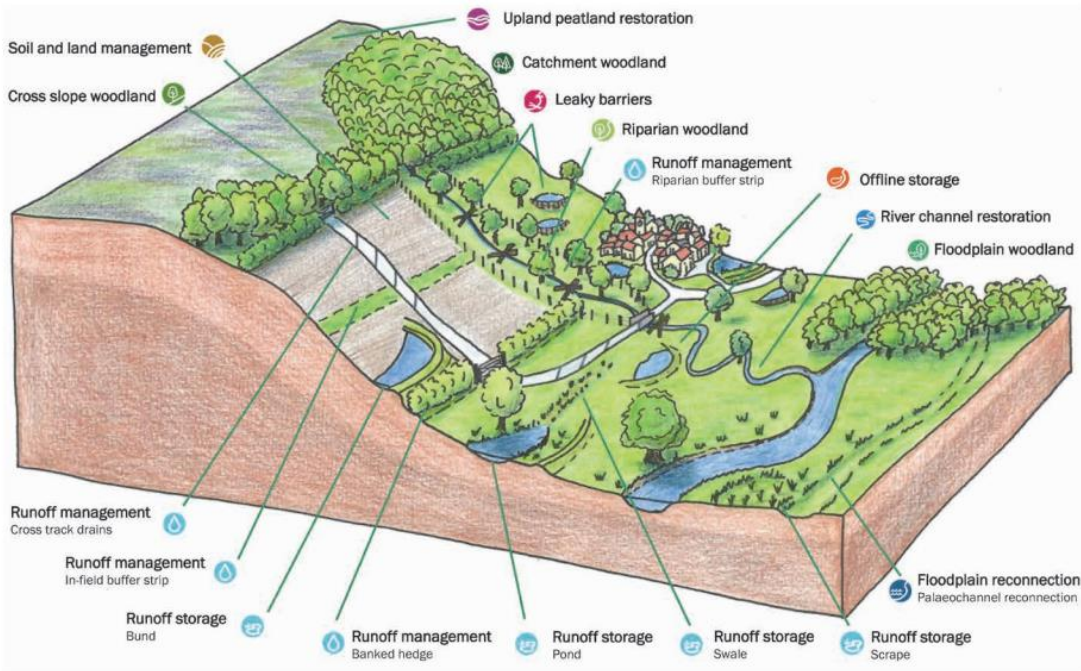
NFM and NBS measures not only work to reduce flooding but can also deliver wider environmental benefits such as increased biodiversity, improved water quality and improved resilience to drought.

NFM is no Silver Bullet. During periods of prolonged heavy rainfall, extreme rain events and repeated storms, flooding is still likely to occur, but implementing NFM measures in the right places can reduce the extent, frequency and duration of flooding and its associated impacts to communities and property.

*Find out more about NFM at our upcoming Lunch & Learn session with Aly (**Thursday 24th April 12:30pm**)*

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Natural Flood Management

Types of Natural Flood Management

There are many interventions or Nature Based Solutions. These can be categorised into the following groups:

Measures that increase infiltration into soils such as tree planting and land use change



Measures to intercept and attenuate surface water flows such as leaky ponds, buffer strips, bunds and cross drains on tracks.



Measures to reduce drainage effectiveness such as field drain blocking and deculverting



Measures to slow the flow in stream such as leaky dams and river restoration



Measures to slow the flow across floodplains such as re-meandering and wetland creation



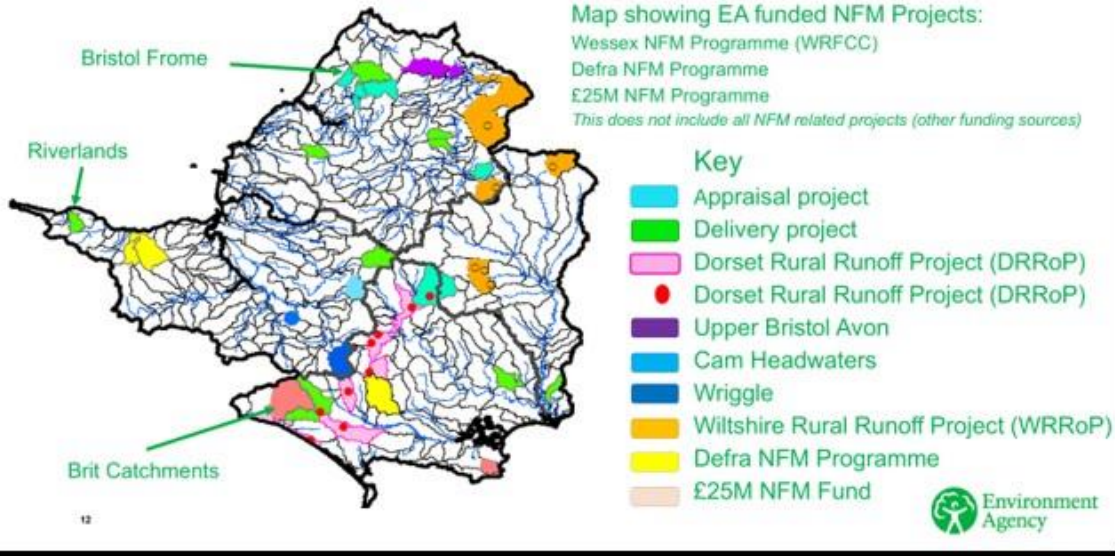
Measures in urban spaces such as permeable pavements and sustainable urban drainage systems



Environment Agency Natural Flood Management Programme

Below is a map of Environment Agency funded (Defra or the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee) NFM projects across Wessex. Partnership working is key for successfully engaging with landowners and land managers and delivering measures on the ground. The Wessex NFM Advisor works closely with the Catchment partnerships in Wessex (Dorset, Somerset, Bristol Avon and Hampshire Avon) and works closely with partner organisations to advise on external NFM projects, while also supporting these partners to deliver EA funded projects as part of the Wessex NFM Programme.

Wessex NFM Programme 2017-2024



Case Study: Wriggle Headwaters

The Wriggle NFM project funded as part of the Wessex NFM programme is led by Yeovil Community Rivers Trust.

Following repeated flooding in Chetnole, the Wriggle project is focussing on the headwaters of the catchment. The project is working closely with landowners and delivering nature-based solutions to slow the flow such as leaky ponds, bunds and wooden structures.

The Rivers Trust have also supported the development of the River Wriggle Improvement Group. Landowners, farmers and residents in the group are working together to identify issues and opportunities to contribute to flood management while also enhancing the wider local environment.



Further Reading

Further information on NFM from the Catchment Based Approach Initiative:

[What is Natural Flood Management? - CaBA](#)

Gov.uk Summary of evidence from NFM studies:

[Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

More information on NFM from the Flood Hub:

[Natural Flood Management \(NFM\) | The Flood Hub](#)

NFM Manual:

[The Natural Flood Management \(NFM\) manual - GOV.UK](#)

Environment Agency News and Events

Lunch and Learn Sessions for 2025

We are very happy to continue our monthly 'Lunch and Learn' sessions supporting flood wardens and community volunteers throughout 2025.

After a break, sessions are starting again this month, and we have outlined a couple of upcoming dates below. There are more sessions to come with topics including riparian responsibilities and property flood resilience. Stay tuned as we will email out reminders closer to the time.

- Thursday 24 April 12:30 (Online) – Natural Flood Management with Aly Maxwell, Environment Agency NFM Advisor
- Thursday 5 June 12:30 – 15:30 drop-in (Bridgwater and Blandford Offices) – To celebrate National Volunteers week, come and have tea and cake with us, see our incident rooms, check out our information displays and chat with your Flood Resilience Team about the role of the flood warden.
- Thursday 19 June 12:30 (Online) – PFR with Steve Malpass, Environment Agency PFR Project Manager

Online sessions start at 12:30 and last 30mins with extra time for questions.

To join the online sessions you can use the following link: [Join the meeting now](#).

The June face to face session being held in both our Bridgwater and Blandford offices is an informal, drop in session and we would be happy to welcome you anytime between 12:30 - 15:30. To visit us, please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk and let us know which office you will attending.

The Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme



Somerset
Council



Environment
Agency

The Bridgwater Tidal Barrier (BTB) Scheme is a flood protection initiative designed to reduce flood risk by constructing a tidal surge barrier and associated downstream defences. With a design life of 100 years, the scheme not only protects the community but also creates an environmental corridor featuring wetlands and heritage elements, linking both sides of the river.

This transformative scheme looks to safeguard over 11,300 homes, 1,500 businesses, and vital community networks unlocking lasting economic, social, and environmental benefits for future generations.

To keep communities informed as the project enters its construction phase, we are launching the BTB Scheme Facebook page.



We invite you to follow our Facebook page at [Bridgwater Tidal Barrier | Facebook](#)

Did you know you can now book to visit the BTB Construction Site?

Join us for a free site visit to explore this major national infrastructure project up close.

What's included?

- A short briefing and a guided visit to the designated viewing platform
- Insights into how the barrier will protect 11,300 homes and 1,500 businesses

When and where?

- Monthly visits from April – September
- Kier Site Office, Saltlands Lane, Bridgwater, TA6 3JS

Reserve your spot via TryBooking: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EPOS>

You can also sign up to our quarterly newsletter. bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk Previous publications can be found [here](#)

Partner Updates

The Resilient Frome Project

The Resilient Frome is a partnership project working with Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Wessex Water and Environment Agency. It has six workstreams aimed at improving flood resilience in both rural and urban areas across the **Bristol Frome catchment**. One of these workstreams focuses on **Natural Flood Management (NFM)** in the Frome headwaters, the Laddon and Bradley brook. It is funded by the **DEFRA Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme** until March 2027.

Working with local farmers and landowners, we are implementing a range of measures that work with nature to reduce peak flood levels during heavy rain. Measures include installing **run-off storage bunds** and building **leaky dams**. These help regulate and direct water away from streams to floodplains or storage areas during heavy rain, increasing the time it takes for rainwater to flow downstream. These methods are cost-effective and sustainable, supporting flood management while improving water quality and creating important habitats for wildlife. So far we have installed around 23 storage areas and around 88 debris dams. **Resilient Frome** is also supporting farmers by providing advice on managing soil, their most valuable asset. Good soil management helps reduce nutrient and sediment loss to watercourses and produces healthier soils, benefiting crop productivity.

Over the remaining two years the Resilient Frome is also aiming to:

- Retrofit some pilot Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SuDS) within schools, industrial sites and highways across the Frome.
- Deliver a river enhancement scheme and
- Develop an Innovative Funding Mechanism for SuDS or link with existing mechanism to engage with private sector funding.



Met Office Training prospectus January to June 2025



Community responders and the voluntary sector play a crucial role in the resilience of the UK. This training prospectus is aimed at those who work or volunteer in the local community to make them more resilient to severe weather events.

The Met Office have a key role under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to provide information to Category 1 and 2 responders but also to warn and inform the public around severe weather. The courses contained in this prospectus will provide an opportunity for community responders and the voluntary sector who collaborate closely with local responders to increase their knowledge and find sources of information to assist them as they respond to severe weather.

This prospectus outlines the courses available for the first half of 2025 and includes dates when they will be delivered and details on how to register for a course. There is no fee to attend a course, but it is necessary to register so that you receive joining instructions and handouts.

How to Book:

To book, click on the date of the course you wish to attend from the calendar below and you will see the course registration link. After completing the registration, an invite will go into your calendar. Joining instructions and handouts will be emailed to you a week or so before the course is due to take place.

Calendar of Courses

Met Office Information, Products and Services		18 June
Summer Weather Hazards	24 April	22 May
Climate Change and Community	06 May	26 June

Met Office Information, Products and Services

This 1½-hour course will look at the wide variety of weather information, products and services that are available to community responders and the voluntary sector to aid them in their role. It will include a look at the services available during periods of severe weather but also other information that may be helpful.

Summer Weather Hazards

This course is designed to provide further information about specific weather risks associated with summer, which is often one of the more active seasons of the year. Over the 1½ hours we will look at the risks and the products provided by the Met Office for community responders and the public along with selected examples of previous events.

Climate Change & Community

This 1½-hour session will set out to explain Climate Change to community responders and the voluntary sector, what the current state of the climate is within the UK and around the globe, plus a look at what the future climate may hold. This will lead to an increased knowledge around the issues and potential impacts we may face in the future and where further information can be found to assist with planning and preparation.

National Consortium for Societal Resilience Webinars

We look forward to welcoming you to the upcoming National Consortium for Societal Resilience [UK+] 'How to... communities' webinar series held jointly with the [Resilience Beyond Observed Capabilities Network+ \[rboc.ac.uk\]](https://rboc.ac.uk) (RBOC+). A gentle reminder that attendees **must register** for each webinar - please use the links below.

'How to... communities' webinars are especially aimed at local community resilience groups but everyone is welcome to attend, so please share widely within your networks.

#1 How to retain volunteers

Date: 6th May 2025, 4.30pm-6.00pm (UK time)

Register: via this [MS Teams link \[events.teams.microsoft.com\]](https://events.teams.microsoft.com)

#2 How to address flood risk

Date: 2nd June 2025, 4.30pm-6.00pm (UK time)

Register: via this [MS Teams link \[events.teams.microsoft.com\]](https://events.teams.microsoft.com)

#3 How to respect animals and cultures in disasters

Date: 25th June 2025, 7.30pm-9.00pm (UK time)

Register: via this [MS Teams link \[events.teams.microsoft.com\]](https://events.teams.microsoft.com)

#4 How to support the wellbeing of volunteers

Date: 1st July 2025, 4.30pm-6.00pm (UK time)

Register: via this [MS Teams link \[events.teams.microsoft.com\]](https://events.teams.microsoft.com)

NCSR+ / RBOC+ webinars are designed for resilience practitioners, resilience partnerships, partner organisations, and communities to share insights and lessons on developing societal resilience.

Somerset Prepared Events 2025



Community Emergency Plan Writing Workshop – Bawdrip Village Hall 30th April
2025 6-9pm

This practical workshop is aimed at Somerset Parish, Town, City Council and community group representatives. Somerset Prepared partners will help your community kickstart its emergency plan, think through local risks and discuss how to reduce their impact. There will be a demonstration of property flood resilience equipment from EVAG - the Rotary's Emergency Volunteer Action Group, plenty of chance to network and share expertise and lots of tea and cake. Get in touch on Somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk to find out more.

Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day – Taunton Racecourse Conference Centre 15th October 2025
9.15am-4pm

Join us for a day filled with workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities. Learn how to keep your community safe and prepared for any situation - with a special focus on flooding. This is a chance to connect with like-minded individuals and experts in the field and get support to build local resilience. There are a wide range of workshops on offer across the day that include sessions on groundwater flooding, starting an 'Adopt a Drain' Scheme, and a workshop on planning for and responding to emergency events with disability in mind. As usual we also have a large networking space filled with stands from difference services and businesses that can help build your community's emergency preparedness and resilience. Find out more and book your ticket here: <http://bit.ly/3YaSO81>

JOIN SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY & THE RSPCA IN THE LIBRARY FOR

Flooding advice & family crafts



YEOVIL - SAT 28 JUNE 10 AM - 12.30PM
CHARD - TUES 8 JULY 10 AM - 12PM
ILMINSTER - WEDS 9 JULY 10 AM - 12PM

Flooding-focused drop-in session at your local library with craft activities for all ages. Drop in for advice and information on flooding, safety and emergency preparedness for you and your animals. For more info contact bel.deering@somerset.gov.uk




SOMERSET PREPARED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE DAY 2025

Wednesday 15 October 2025

9.15am - 4pm

Taunton Racecourse Conference Centre, TA3 7BL

Help Somerset become stronger and more resilient.

Parish, Town, City Council and Community Group representatives are invited to attend this free resilience and emergency planning-focussed event. The day features a wide range of workshops networking opportunities and equipment demonstrations.

Book your free ticket here:
<http://bit.ly/3YaSO81>



somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk
www.somersetprepared.org.uk



Somerset Rivers Authority Update

SRA Somerset partners working together

A new £3.2million programme of flood risk reduction works across Somerset has been approved by the Board of Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA).

Dozens of different places will benefit from a wide range of schemes and activities.

Projects include River Parrett dredging and silt-monitoring, Somerset Levels and Moors main river maintenance, King's Sedgemoor Drain bank-raising, Natural Flood Management countywide, moves to address flooding problems in Bridgwater, Frome and Watchet, nine investigations into complex local flooding issues, and extra cleansing for 25,000 road gullies.

There's funding for the continued employment of the SRA's community engagement team, who will continue to work on numerous projects, including further investment into very localised flood monitoring and early-warning systems.

£200,000 for the SRA's Community Flood Action Fund will help people with good local knowledge of flooding problems to get things done.

Somerset Rivers Authority is a partnership of Somerset Council, the Axe Brue and Parrett Internal Drainage Boards, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, and Wessex Water.

The SRA enables partners to go above and beyond their usual schemes and activities and do extra work on local priorities.

More information: [summaries of all actions in the SRA Enhanced Programme 2025-26.](#)



SRA funded dredging of the River Parrett near Moorland, January 2025 (above)

Somerset Communities Act to Adapt to Climate Change



Somerset Wildlife Trust's 'Act to Adapt' programme is empowering communities across the county to prepare for our changing climate through locally-tailored Climate Adaptation Plans.

These plans identify practical actions to build resilience against flooding, drought, and heat while benefiting wildlife and wellbeing. Natural Flood Management features prominently, with communities prioritising actions such as:

- Protecting and creating wetlands
- Implementing sustainable drainage systems
- Installing rain gardens and water harvesting
- Planting strategically-placed trees to slow water flow
- Creating ponds to capture and store rainwater

Our recent work with Minehead, Wells, Poldens, Under Hamdon Parishes, Glastonbury, Spaxton and Burnham-on-Sea demonstrates a growing interest in nature-based solutions to flooding challenges.

Get involved in our upcoming events:

- Under Hamdon Parish launch: 5th May, 11am - 5pm - Kingsbury May Festival 2025
- Frome workshop: 13th May - 6:30pm - 9pm - Frome Town Hall
- Frome consultation: 7th June - 12 - 5pm - Frome Carnival Family Funday
- Frome consultation: 14th June - 10am - 4pm - Frome River Festival

To learn more about Act to Adapt or to start your own adaptation journey, contact Natalie Barnett, Climate Change Adaptation Officer: natalie.barnett@somersetwildlife.org

We want to hear from you

Do you have a success story from your community that you would like to share with other Flood Wardens and Community Volunteers? Our Flood Warden Newsletter or Lunch & Learn sessions are great places to share your learning and expertise. We would love to hear from you. Email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk



Water Situation Report

Water Situation Report – January, February and March 2025.

Flood alerts and warnings issued in total, across Wessex, for January, February and March 2025:

2024/2025	December	January	February	March
Flood Alert				
Fluvial	20	75	38	0
Tidal	10	16	1	10
Groundwater S Wessex	0	5	0	1
Flood Warning				
Fluvial	8	68	24	0
Tidal	1	7	0	0
Groundwater S Wessex	1	6	1	0
Severe Flood Warning				
Fluvial	0	0	0	0
Tidal	0	0	0	0
Totals	40	177	64	11

Following a dry end to 2024, we started the year in January with a return to wetter weather. Wessex saw 154% of the long term average rainfall and most of this largely fell over a few days at either end of the month with nearly half of the rain falling during Storms Éowyn and Herminia. At the end of January groundwater levels at most monitoring sites were notably high and increasing.

February saw an average of 76mm of rain across Wessex. This was 116% of the long term average. Despite this still being above the Long Term Average, it still offered some respite and outside of Chalk catchments, most catchments reported normal mean monthly flows.

With January's high groundwater levels, the majority of sites within Chalk catchments still reported above normal mean monthly flows. The majority of groundwater monitoring sites across the south of Wessex, including sites monitoring the Chalk aquifer ended February reporting between normal and above normal levels. The only exception was Woodyates which recorded notably high levels.

Read the full water situation reports here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-local-area-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](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/community-resilience)

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

For river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels: [River, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels](#)

To find out more about preparing for flooding: www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding

[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](#)

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

[BeFloodReady – Property Flood Resilience \(PFR\) | Helping Reduce Flood Risk](#)

Communities Prepared: Flood warden booklets and online training:

<https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/>

New booklet - Your Watercourse: rights and roles:

[Your watercourse: rights and roles | Engage Environment Agency](#)

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

No longer a Flood Warden? - [Unsubscribe](#)



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