

*Editor's Note:* Hello to one and all. We are keeping busy at the National Flood Forum, with new projects starting, continued support of our flood groups across the country and the helpline providing assistance for anyone who has any flood-related questions.

In this issue we have two articles from groups in Hampshire, an area that suffered flooding in 2013/2014, which was underreported at the time. Many hundreds of residents suffered terribly after the floods and these two articles highlight how they

were affected and what positive work has happened since as a consequence of their flooding.

This month also includes an update on SuDs. As ever, if you have anything you'd like to contribute to the bulletin, please contact me: [hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk). In particular, if you have pictures to go with your article it is always much appreciated!

*With best wishes, Hannah*

## Group Receives Queen's Award



**Congratulations BFPG!**

Congratulations to the Bodenham Flood Protection Group, an affiliated National Flood Forum group, as they have received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This is highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The award was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and recipients are announced each year on 2<sup>nd</sup> June – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

The Chair and Secretary of the group, Tony and Babs Mitchell were invited to represent the group at a Royal Garden Party on 20<sup>th</sup> May attended by the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

## The National Flood Forum invites you to save the date!

### Flooding Resilience Community Pathfinder Conference - Lessons Learnt

**2 December 2015 | One-Day Conference | SOAS, University of London**

*In partnership with Defra, CIWEM and Collingwood Environmental Planning*

Defra, CIWEM, Collingwood Environmental Planning and the NFF are planning a one-day conference to celebrate and disseminate the *Defra Flooding Resilience Community Pathfinder* scheme. (More information [here](#).)

The conference will encourage community involvement in delivering flood risk management and will highlight case studies showing how this can be done.

#### Join us in December to...

- celebrate what has been achieved by the *Defra Flooding Resilience Community Pathfinder* scheme so far
- hear about the scheme's key findings
- meet up with and learn from fellow practitioners.

Speaker programme will be published shortly. For more information or to sponsor the event please contact [katerina@ciwem.org](mailto:katerina@ciwem.org).

**We hope to see you there in December!**

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in the bulletin are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the National Flood Forum.*

## Supporting and representing flood risk communities

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## Voice\* of the Flood Risk Community

### Budds Lane, Hampshire: Our Experience so far

By Budds Lane Flood Action Group

Many of the discussions and opinion sharing following the Romsey floods of February 2014 were in isolation, without any real direction and perhaps focussed more on finger-pointing rather than constructive dialogue. Businesses and residents in the Budds Lane area felt that there was responsibility to be taken by various agencies but that the most effective way to achieve this was to meet and work together to make the local voice heard.

The National Flood Forum was instrumental in bringing together those who had been affected locally and the relevant agencies with whom dialogue and discussion would be useful. The Environment Agency (EA), Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) have since met several times with the 'Budds Lane Flood Action Group'.

Now, the group has seen a good working relationship built up with the agencies and a degree of progress on some key issues. However, what the process has also enabled us to do is to

know who to contact for what and to hold agencies accountable for promised works and release of funding.

HCC have ensured the clearing of 'Ordinary Water Courses' and ditches, the EA is seeking to finalise funding for the 'cat flap' barrier on the River Test at Greatbridge and TVBC have confirmed their future support for emergency measures should they become necessary.

Another positive element of the Flood Action Group has been the co-operation between local businesses and residents. For example, all businesses on the Frobisher Industrial Estate within Budds Lane have agreed to contribute to the cost of an emergency flood barrier that can be deployed within minutes if major flooding looks likely.

The Group is also working on the establishment of an Emergency Action Plan to set out clear procedures for the management of any future flooding event.

Although some of us may not be around next time if the events of February 2014 really are a 1 in 80 years' occurrence, we would still rather be prepared!

\***Voice** (*noun*): a particular opinion or attitude expressed.

**Your Thoughts...Your Opinions...Your Letters...**

### Flooding, The Causeway, 2014: Hope at the end of the tunnel?

By Mavis Sawdy (Causeway and Mainstone Flood Action Group)

I was first flooded on Christmas Eve Day 2013. I went away for Christmas and stayed away for a couple of weeks while carpets were taken up and driers put in. I returned and lived for 6 weeks upstairs while downstairs was being (noisily!) dried out. On the day the driers were due to be taken away, around 7th February, the water came in again and when the big storm hit on February 14th it became clear that I (and the cats) could no longer stay there. My neighbour kindly offered sanctuary but after the fifth time water flooded into the house

(at its worst to a height of about 9-12"), I had to relocate – for what proved to be 7 months.

Although I live on the banks of the River Test, it was not the river that was the cause of the flooding, at least not where my house is. It was a combination of excessive surface water pouring down from Pouncefoot Hill, inordinately high ground water levels, blocked ditches/culverts and a broken river bank further upstream, which combined in a torrent that hit The Causeway to such an extent that for a while it was not possible to distinguish between it and the river. All of it

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## Flooding, The Causeway, 2014: Hope at the end of the tunnel? Continued...

came through the three houses in its path – mine and my two neighbours’ at formal multi-agency meetings.

During the flooding the main characteristic of the authorities’ response was lack of co-ordination and poor communication. No-one ‘official’ talked to me directly although there were constant (and very irritating) automated phone messages warning me I was in danger of being flooded – that stopped being funny after a while. Sandbags were incorrectly placed by inexperienced army and navy cadets; no-one seemed to be in charge, it was all very confusing. The local vet very kindly agreed to take my two elderly cats on an emergency basis; then, much to my relief, an offer to rehome them came from relatives in Herefordshire. After settling the cats I sought alternative accommodation for myself.

I decided to have my house ‘tanked’ – the floor was dug up, stones put in, electric pumps installed and a narrow canal was dug all around the (lower) ground floor perimeter with an outlet pipe on to The Causeway. That was all concreted over and waterproof flooring was laid; a waterproof membrane was also put about a third of a way up the walls before replastering and all the electricity points were raised above the flood water level. It was expensive and time-consuming; although I was appreciative of the speed with which Test Valley Borough Council approved my application for the maximum repair and renew grant, it only covered about a third of the cost.

I spent most of the 7 months I was away negotiating with the insurance company’s loss adjuster; the electricity, gas, water and phone services; and keeping an eye on a property, which resembled a building site for most of that time. I returned to a renewed but empty house – it took another couple of months for everything to be sorted (and then it was Christmas again!). My front-door flood protection was only installed in February 2015.

Since then, the residents of The Causeway and Mainstone have set up a flood action group which, with the invaluable help of the National Flood Forum drew up a flood action plan. The plan is based on residents’ questions/concerns, which is discussed

The meetings provide a forum where sensitive and often complex issues can be aired in as ‘neutral’ an atmosphere as can be achieved. They have been important in establishing the residents’ views as integral to agencies’ planning. They have enabled the drafting of an agreed Emergency Flood Action framework, with known local points of contact between professionals and residents, should the need arise again. At the most recent meeting held in May, the results of the Hampshire County Council Feasibility Study were published. Two main technical solutions at a total budget cost of £650,000 were presented. If these solutions were fully implemented, Hampshire County Council have stated that "this would contain the level of water experienced during the 2013/14 flooding". Efforts in the next 3 months will now focus on fund-raising and business case justification prior to the next meeting in early September.

*Would you like to share your group's story? If yes or for more information please email: [hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk)*

Already it is over a year since I was first flooded and it has become clear that it will take much longer for engineering solutions to be installed on the ground. The joined-up nature of drainage systems and sewers means that one cannot be viewed in isolation from others – plus an array of agencies (and, crucially, budgets) are involved with all the complexity of communication that implies. I have made my own house as flood resilient as possible but The Causeway and surrounding area remain a high flood risk. Some ditch clearance and pathway widening has taken place facilitated by the discussions at the multi-agency meetings. To that extent they are democratic and I would encourage others to use the services of the NFF to set them up in all affected areas.

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## Sustainable Drainage Systems: Brief Overview of Changes

Many flood groups have genuine and serious concerns about the impact on new developments on their flood risk. This can be for a number of reasons, though one of the main concerns we hear is: where will the water go once it is all tarmacked over? In recent months there have been a number of changes to planning policies with regards to sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to alleviate this impermeable issue. However, to the layman, flood risk management is complicated at the best of times let alone delving into the unknown realms of planning. Here we are providing a brief snapshot of the changes that have taken place and some links to key documents that we hope will help you understand SuDS a bit more.



The flood group thought it was strange that suds were being referred to in their multi-agency meeting

### What are SuDS?

- An approach to managing drainage in and around properties as well as sometimes serving to filter pollutants before reaching watercourses
- Designed to hold back water to prevent 'flash floods' and release water in a controlled manner to drainage systems or the ground
- Examples include: installing permeable driveways; swales; purpose built ponds; wetlands; green roofs
- Multiple SuDS can be used on one site to take advantage of a staged approach to managing flood risk

### Timeline of recent changes and key documents

Information courtesy of Defra; underlined text will take you to key documents:

- **18<sup>th</sup> December 2014:** the then Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Eric Pickles, laid a Written Ministerial Statement in the Commons, setting out the changes to planning that will apply for major development from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The changes will strengthen existing planning policy to ensure SuDS will be provided in new major developments, where appropriate. The Planning policy guidance has now been updated to reflect these changes and non-statutory technical standards for the design, maintenance and operation of sustainable drainage systems have been published on-line.
- **24<sup>th</sup> March 2015:** the Government laid a statutory instrument making the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) a statutory consultee in the planning process by adding the consultation requirement to Schedule 4 of the Development Management Procedure Order. LLFAs are considered well placed to provide technical expertise on surface water drainage proposals. This came into effect from 15 April 2015: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/595/pdfs/ukxi\\_20150595\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/595/pdfs/ukxi_20150595_en.pdf).
- **6<sup>th</sup> April 2015:** LLFAs are now statutory consultees on planning applications on proposed development sites with 10 or more properties. To help LLFAs cope with the extra workload Defra has provided funding to all LLFAs on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

### Changes to SuDS – pros:

- SuDS have to be considered for all major developments
- Planning applications now sitting with flood risk experts who are able to better guide non-flood expert planners
- Making flood risk management more holistic with planning & the environment

### Changes to SuDS – cons:

- No independent body monitoring the LLFAs' SuDS recommendations, all done 'in-house'
- Lack of planning enforcement to ensure developers' SuDS are put in as agreed on original design plans
- Does not apply to developments of 9 houses or less or developments given permission before 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- Unclear how SuDS will be maintained in the long-term

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