

Editors' Note: BOO! Did I scare you? As I write this the clocks have sadly gone back for another year and winter is definitely creeping up on us. Having said that, apparently it is going to be the warmest Hallowe'en on record: that in itself I find a scary concept! This time last year we had the first of the winter storms, known as St Jude; many parts of the East of England were wind-battered without utilities for days on end. As we approach the traditionally very wet season I am sure many more people will begin to reflect on last winter's storms. Some will understandably be concerned about their flood risk in the coming months: if you have any worries, are looking for a sympathetic ear, want some insurance advice or have anything flood-related that you wish to discuss please call the National Flood Forum's helpline on 01299 403055.

This month's bulletin includes a welcome to a new member of National Flood Forum staff, a community article by Manor Park Flood Action Group in Slough, some information on a new

crowd-funding website that's just been launched to help flood groups raise money and some bite-size updates from the flood policy world, with a plea for more of your opinions on the matters that concern you most before we go into the next year's general election.



As ever, if you have an article that'd you'd like to be included I'd be delighted to receive it (hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk). We look for about 250 words on any flood related topic; in particular, we are always on the look-out for community articles.

Until next time,

*With best wishes,
Hannah*

The Community Fund helps Flood Action Groups Finance Flood Defences through Crowd-funding

The Community Fund is trialling a 'crowd-funding' approach to funding flood defence and catchment management projects.

Nicole Shamier, the founder of The Community Fund, said "the potential for crowd-funding is huge. According to a Defra study, households would be willing to pay £20 per year to improve their local environment. We want to tap into that, and so do the Flood Action Groups and Rivers Trusts we have been talking to". The initiative is looking for additional projects to pilot and will provide marketing support to help make each campaign a success.

To read more information about the new initiative visit: www.thecommunityfund.co.uk.



Have you got any fundraising tips you'd be willing to share in this bulletin? If yes, please email hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk

Voice* of the Flood Risk Community

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

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

Manor Park Residents Fight Flooding!

By Ms N Brown and Steve Harris (Manor Park Flood Action Group)

In response to the continual alarm over flooding in the area, an action group of concerned residents has been formed in Manor Park. The group holds regular meetings at The Manor Park Community Centre and has made great progress in bringing together both residents from locations throughout Manor Park and also representatives from local companies who have shared and varied responsibilities for flood risk in the area. The group is supported at meetings by representatives from The National Flood Forum.

Ms N Brown, member of the group explains "I called myself *a nosey neighbour*, showing an interest in an environmental problem in my local neighbourhood that I didn't feel I had been affected by: flooding. It's happened in the past, it's happening now, and it most definitely will happen again, we live in a high risk flood area. It's a fact, and bringing the problem to your attention is our intention"

At a recent multi-agency meeting, representatives from Thames Water, Stoke Park Golf Club, Slough Borough Council and the Environment Agency were welcomed to St John's Church on Stoke Poges Lane to offer their views on the ongoing problem of flooding in the area. There was a very *open and productive debate* with parties explaining what has already been done to deal with the problem of flooding and also suggesting ways forward in how to deal with the ongoing problems in specific areas such as Northern Road and Granville Avenue. Follow up meetings will be taking place to ensure that ideas and suggestions from the meeting are actually acted upon.

Recently, members of the group were also invited to Stoke Park Golf Club to have a tour of the course and to see all the work that has been done in

recent years at Stoke Park to ensure that a repeat of the serious flooding of 1999 does not occur again. A lot of work has been done, but *it was clear that it was still possible in a severe event for excess water from the reservoir to cause flooding. It was explained that the golf course management have no means to operate the sluice on the course, operation being entirely the responsibility of the borough council since the 1975 reservoirs act.*

Steve Harris, resident and facilitator for the group states: "Flooding IS still an ongoing problem in Manor Park for a variety of reasons which need to be addressed. It is thus very important that residents of Manor Park are proactive in facing up to the serious issue of living in a flood risk area. It has implications for all residents *WHETHER YOU HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN FLOODED OR NOT.* Members of the group have mentioned the difficulties in getting decent house insurance and the effect on house prices and their saleability. Therefore, if you receive a leaflet through your door in the near future please do not ignore it as being just another local action group which will come together for a while but will then disappear with little achieved. We are here for the long term and this is recognized by the local companies who have welcomed the formation of the Flood Action group as *LOCAL PEOPLE TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROBLEM OF FLOODING IN THEIR AREA*".

"This is the way forward. We need to show that we care enough to come together and speak about our concerns. Therefore, we welcome interested residents to join us at our next meeting. Please come along if you are interested in contributing a little time to your community" If you want further details about the group and the meetings, you are welcome to contact Steve Harris on 01753 521492

Supporting and representing flood risk communities

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Welcome to Emma Palmer!

The National Flood Forum continues to grow and with this we get to welcome another new lovely member of staff to the team. Below, Emma Palmer introduces herself and what she will be doing with us at the National Flood Forum.

Hello everyone! I've recently joined the NFF in the role of Community Flood Resilience Officer for the West Sussex region after completing an MSc in Risk and Environmental Hazards at Durham University.

Within this role, I will be supporting the work of the West Sussex Pathfinder Project and the community groups involved in this. I will also be supporting the establishment of additional flood action groups in West Sussex, as well as a number of groups within Surrey. I will work with these communities and provide the groups with assistance in creating sustainable partnerships with those authorities that manage flood risk in their area.

This work will be in addition to a national focus on events where the NFF provides information on floods and on the property flood products that are available, demonstrating how these can be used and the benefits they can provide.



Hello Emma!

While I am still new to the NFF, I have really enjoyed the work I have carried out so far and am looking forward to the making the most of the future opportunities that this role will provide!

Fact: Since the 2012 floods, in West Sussex 14 flood action groups have been established. These community groups are reducing their flood risk in partnership with flood risk managers, all of which are supported by & affiliated to the NFF.

We're still looking for your opinions...

Don't forget that the National Flood Forum is calling for your input into our manifesto for the 2015 election. We are looking for what you think should be the **focus for flood risk communities**. We have already had an enthusiastic response and are still keen to hear more of your views as soon as possible. Opinions received to date really are helping us to help influence flood risk policy to benefit the communities at risk of flooding.

To take part in this survey, please use the link below:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/NFFManifesto or email paul.cobbing@floodforum.org.uk.

Fancy Shaping the Future of Flood Risk Management?

The Environment Agency is currently running two consultations that are important for long term flood risk management and is keen for people to respond:

- The draft updates to the river basin management plans consultation will run until 10 April 2015: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/update-to-the-draft-river-basin-management-plans
- The draft flood risk management plans (FRMP) consultation will run until 31 January 2015: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-flood-risk-management-plans

The updated plans are due to be published in December 2015 and will help direct future investment.

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Joint Statement on Flooding

By Several Organisations, published in the Financial Times, 19th October 2014

The National Flood Forum has joined a wide range of organisations calling on the Chancellor to plough an additional £500m in to strengthening protection for homes. Alongside leading insurance executives from the insurance industry and Friends of the Earth, the National Flood Forum is calling on the Government to make good on David Cameron's commitment that *"money is no object"* in protecting people.

Paul Cobbing from the National Flood Forum said, "Flooding causes *huge trauma* to people's lives, as well as the financial burdens it creates. We know that without significant investment, the impact of flooding will get worse in years to come, due to growth, suburbanisation, ageing infrastructure and changing weather."

The independent Committee on Climate Change indicates that about 250,000 more households will become exposed to a *"significant risk"* of flooding by 2035 unless a funding gap is filled. By contrast, the coalition cut spending on flood defences soon after it took power in 2010, from about £680m to as little as £533m in 2013-14, although it then increased that to up to £570m for the following year. A significant improvement is required to protect people.

The National Flood Forum has also submitted a response to the consultation on the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The Forum is calling on the Government to make flooding a national priority for all departments, not just Defra. Paul Cobbing said, "There should be a government wide target to reduce the number of homes at risk year by year, with annual reporting to Parliament. To achieve this Government will have to work across all departments consistently."

A Trustee Update: Goodbye and Welcome

By Paul Cobbing (National Flood Forum Chief Executive)

Paul Roberts, our Treasurer since 2008 has stood down. He has managed the Forum's finances through some very turbulent times but leaves the organisation in a healthier position financially and with much improved systems and processes, including the successful completion of a recent independent audit. Without his work there would be no National Flood Forum, so we owe him a great deal. His work will be replaced by a Finance and Audit Committee, on which he will be a member.

We have recently recruited three new Trustees to help drive forward the work of the National Flood Forum: Jo Higgs has been a major supporter of ours for many years. She has a strong background of working with disadvantaged groups to reduce inequalities and deliver meaningful change for local communities. She is currently employed by the Environment Agency as a Technical Advisor across the Solent and South Downs area and has been

working closely with us for several years in West Sussex.

Jennifer Jarrett is a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute, a Chartered Insurance Practitioner and a member of the Worshipful Company of Insurers. She runs her own management consultancy providing valuation, benchmarking and business advice to the insurance intermediary market. As well as being heavily involved with many insurance industry committees, she also chairs her local Wellington Parish community led plan steering group, a parish that sits on a low risk flood plain but has many problems of insurance cover and flood resilience.

Rachel Blackburn works as a lawyer in the climate change and emissions markets at Burges Salmon. She has had personal experiences of flooding in the United States and a wealth of knowledge of how communities are addressing flooding around the world.

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