

Editors' Note: February has a knack of flying by, with March sneakily rolling upon us. With that, it has been lovely noticing the longer days and all the snowdrops and daffs around the place. Even though there's still a nip in the air, it really does seem like spring is around the corner.



We wonder how you are doing. This time last year we saw the back end of the winter storms of 2013/2014; for some, that was just the beginning of the mayhem. If you need to speak to someone, still have insurance queries, or want to

talk about how flood risk could be better addressed in your area, please call us: 01299 403055.

This issue has a lovely article from the Shifnal Flood Partnership Group, an update on a flood exhibition in Surrey, some funding information for those in the south and more besides.

As always, if you would like to contribute something, please feel free to drop me a message at: hannah.tankard@floodforum.org.uk.

Don't forget, Mother's Day is Sunday 15th March and that the clocks go forward on Sunday 29th March...now that's something to look forward to!

With best wishes, Hannah

Shifnal Flood Partnership Group: Our First Year

By Bob Haddon (SFPG Chairman)

It all started in January 2014, when we discussed about the possibility of setting up a flood group, with the help of the National Flood Forum. We were all invited to meet at a local watering hole with the hint of suggestion there might be a free drink (we are still waiting!). We talked about the setting up a flood group to deal with all our concerns on flooding in our town, to encompass thoughts from across Shifnal, listen to everybody and all ideas and proactively deal with flood risk.

Since the major floods of June 2007, there had been numerous attempts by local residents to form community flood action groups but unfortunately they did not possess the secret element of success (the National Flood Forum).

The simple premise of creating a partnership involving our group, local council, county council,

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Shifnal Flood Partnership Group walk the Wesley Brook with the Environment Agency (Photo: Colin Daziel, SFPG)

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

Shifnal Flood Partnership Group: Our First Year, continued...

the water company, the Environment Agency, other non-government organisations and housing developers was undertaken with apprehension (cavorting with the enemy...!).

We soon realised we knew nothing, so began the process of gleaming and learning the technical elements of attenuation and resilience in our catchment area. With the kind facilitation of the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water, we walked the brook (main river) through our market town, visited the sewage works, pumping station, balancing lake, reservoirs and any other feature which we considered either an asset or potential problem (pinch points, neglected hazards and special locations; I could bore you to death with the list...) .

We created a webpage (www.sfpg.bt.co.uk), made presentations to our local forum meeting, and our local council endeavouring to get out there and be known and recognised in our community.



Looking for hazards along the Wesley Brook (Photo: Colin Dalziel, SFPG)

Since November 2014, we have held two types of meetings:

1. One traditional multi-agency meeting held with flood risk management organizations, including: Severn Trent Water, Environment Agency, Shropshire Council, Shifnal Town Council and Shropshire Council. This meeting was to discuss all our on-going issues identified on our rolling flood action plan, such as tackling pinch points,



Finding the pinch points on the Wesley Brook (Photo: Colin Dalziel, SFPG)

quashing flooding conspiracy theories, ideas for flood defences and our own future resilience.

2. Two specific meetings to discuss developments across Shifnal, held with eight developers (how many did you expect when they are building thousands of homes in your back garden!), supported by attendance of all the multi-agencies listed above. The meetings were really useful for building trust and relationships between the group and developers; we will now be meeting individual developers on an ad hoc basis based on urgency and need.

Oh, I almost forgot to say that none of the above would have happened without the National Flood Forum who gave us confidence, ideas and mentored us at every step of the way. They are brilliant and we would never have obtained the meagre sum of ½ million pounds to assist in our future flooding plans in our little (overdeveloped) wonderful market town without them.

Our sincere thanks go to the National Flood Forum and in particular the boss Heather Shepherd (The Mentor) and Hannah Tankard (The Facilitator): they sound like characters from Greek Mythology or a spy movie! Sincerely outstanding; two ladies that I, and Shifnal, will be eternally grateful to for all their help.

It's not over yet, we still have so much to do in managing flood risk but we have the building blocks in place and we're ready for action.

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Roadshow Success in Surrey

By Liz Cutter, Smallfield/Burstow Flood Action Group

The National Flood Forum's Roadshow turned out to be a resounding success! The procession of visitors was constant throughout the four-and-half-hours it was open. Alongside the advice and display of all the items that can prevent flood damage to property and with all the leaflets, the Charity also provided four helpers to come and talk, explain and answer questions from all who came.

The Environment Agency also came along and, with the help of maps, the representatives were able to talk through problems concerning their area of responsibility. Surrey County Council – the lead flood authority in Surrey – brought along details of the repair and renew grant, which has again been extended; and the Asset Planning Group worked all the time noting problems with areas which are the County's responsibility.

We were able to discuss who would be the enforcing authority for riparian ownership disputes – only EA and SCC are able to make an owner clear an area/ditch etc.

The number of people and the accounts of the damage, problems and frustrations helped to make these agencies realise that we have got a problem here and maintenance will still need to be done. It is only by all of us following this up that SCC can really see where the problems are and from that data help us to repair the area.

We have just formed the Smallfield/Burstow Flood Action Group. We had our first tentative meeting a week before the Roadshow and will be meeting in March to see how we go forward – the first thing we will do is to mark our maps with identified faults. When we have that collated we will be inviting the Agencies to a meeting and will then be able to work out how they can help us. Thames Water will definitely be at that meeting! I would personally like to thank all those who gave up their Saturday to come and help us, SCC who funded the Roadshow for us, and for Malcolm and Jeannie who cooked their hearts out making bacon rolls for all – and we are delighted to say we managed to raise £100 for the Forget-me-not Club! Another example of how we, as a village/parish, can all work together!

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

Flooding: The Real Economic Impacts

A new report has been produced by Localise West Midlands for Calderdale MBC on the impacts of flooding on the community economic resilience of an area. This innovative report goes beyond our traditional perceptions and shows how flooding of businesses can have much wider impacts to a community.

To see the report, visit:

<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/report-on-the-economic-impact-of-flooding-in-calderdale/>

Climate Just

Joseph Rowntree Foundation have produced a really groundbreaking new website, climatejust.org.uk, that highlights which people and places are likely to be most vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather, including flooding and extreme heat, and the areas which might be most affected.

Take a look at the maps to identify the issues in your local area and find guidance, case studies and resources on actions you could take to help build local resilience.

Supporting and representing flood risk communities

SEPD launches £1 million storm fund for communities

By Southern Electric Power Distribution

Local communities across central southern England are to benefit from a new million pound fund designed to help them prepare for severe winter weather.

The new Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD) Resilient Communities Fund is open to non-profit making organisations, community groups and charities across the SEPD network area, and will support projects which help communities prepare for extreme weather situations. Applications for up to £20,000 will be accepted, with an initial deadline of 17 April 2015.

SEPD has established the fund in recognition of the inconvenience caused by the disruption to its customers' electricity supplies when severe storms swept across the UK during the winter 2013. The collective impact of hurricane force winds, torrential rainfall and extensive flooding meant that many customers were without power for an extended period. The £1m for the SEPD Resilient Communities Fund is in addition to £2.5m paid out in compensation to customers, and to the £1million donated to four national charities; British Red Cross, Age UK, Macmillan Cancer Support and National Energy Action, to provide additional assistance for 'at risk' households.

The Resilient Communities Fund will support projects that:

- **Protect the welfare of vulnerable customers** during a significant power outage or emergency weather event
- **Enhance community facilities and services** that may be used or instigated in the event of a significant power outage or emergency weather event
- **Improve communication during an emergency situation** to keep communities informed or aid contact between local groups and emergency services

The fund will run over a two-year period between April 2015 and April 2017, with two funding rounds in each year. A panel comprising industry experts and external stakeholders will review the



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applications and make the final funding decisions. Preference will be given to submissions from areas which were most affected by the storms.

SEPD, which serves 2.9m customers in central southern England, recently invested £1.1million in state of the art flood protection technology and a further £95 million to make the network more resilient. Stuart Hogarth, Director of Distribution at SEPD said: "Despite being more than 99% reliable, we invest millions of pounds each year to strengthen the network against the severe battering it gets during severe weather. And we coordinate with emergency services and other agencies to ensure the welfare of our vulnerable customers, if there is a power cut caused by such weather conditions. Community groups play a tremendously vital role at a time like this. Volunteers give up their valuable time to help elderly neighbours, clear snow or work at a relief centre. Their efforts cannot be underestimated and we would like to support these groups in the work they do."

To find out more about the Resilient Communities Fund, or to download an application form, visit: www.ssepd.co.uk/resiliencefund Projects must benefit communities that lie within the Southern Electric Power Distribution area. To check your network operator, please visit: www.ssepd.co.uk/Whoismynetworkoperator

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National Flood Forum Advocacy Update



Supporting and representing flood risk communities

Over the last few months the National Flood Forum has been working hard to make sure that the issues that people constantly tell us about are at the forefront of policy makers' minds. Using the results from the survey last summer of people's views, we have had meetings in Treasury, No. 10 Downing Street and Defra to highlight the key things that respondents identified:

1. Flooding is a national priority: for Government and everyone. Without action many more people will flood
2. Putting communities first: A step change to put the needs of people at the centre of flood risk management
3. Do what we are already doing better: Review and improve.

Visit the National Flood Forum website (<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/manifesto>) if you would like more details. We have also sent the results to all the political parties and reported them through several conferences and workshops.

Flood Re, the new household flood risk insurance scheme, due to launch in July, is developing quietly behind the scenes. Over the last few weeks we have had meetings with both the new Chair and Chief Executive of Flood Re and met with the policy leads in Defra. This really is an innovative scheme that, if it gets past the general election, will deliver affordable household insurance to many more people. However, it is also an opportunity to address the core issues, i.e. we need better management of our flood risk, now and in the future. This requires all parts of Government and the insurance industry to participate positively and proactively.

Check my Flood Risk

From the Bath Chronicle, 14th January 2015

A new search site will allow households and businesses across the country to check for flood risks to property. Using data from the Environment Agency, CheckMyFloodRisk.co.uk allows people to search for an address and see its proximity to flood risks.

Rod Plummer, managing director of Shoothill, said: "This hugely valuable dataset became freely available only very recently as part of the Environment Agency's continued commitment to the UK's open data initiative.....We can easily imagine this becoming a standard check that people do before buying property, just like running a search on broadband availability or school catchment areas..."
CheckMyFloodRisk.co.uk



Everyone loves to read a map!

Defra Small Schemes Pathfinder

Defra is inviting Risk Management Authorities (local authorities, Environment Agencies, Water Companies, etc.) to submit bids for the Small Schemes Pathfinder. This is looking at the efficiencies that are possible by appraising a 'package' of small schemes. If you think that it might be for you, please contact your Lead Local Flood Authority (your county council, metropolitan borough or unitary authority). The deadline for submitting bids is **5pm on Friday 3rd April**.

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