

BRENDON AND COUNTISBURY PARISH COUNCIL – FLOOD PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Council is reviewing preparations for a severe flooding incident. As an initial step, based on information provided by the Environment Agency (EA), the following basic advice should assist residents to assess the risk to their own properties and take sensible flood precautions in advance of any incident. For more detailed information see the full EA's advice booklet at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/>.

Further work is being undertaken with the public bodies to improve local emergency readiness. If you have any queries, wish to learn more, or could assist locally in case of an incident please contact Mr Mike Sinden, Clerk to the Parish Council, 01598 741323.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING AND TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY, GUESTS, AND YOUR OWN PROPERTY.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY 24-HOUR INCIDENT HOTLINE 0800 807060.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Brendon and Countisbury parishes cover a large area with a number of properties lying in the flood plain of the East Lyn and its tributaries. However the housing stock is widely dispersed and a number of streams and drains have the potential to cause localised difficulties in some circumstances – sometimes in unlikely places. Unusually disruptive and localised weather events seem to be becoming more common and sensible precautions should be taken by householders.

Flooding events can range from minor water damage to a few properties to a large scale incident involving a serious threat to life.

The Parish Council's first responsibility is to help residents prepare for this range of possibilities.

You are advised to assess the risk to your own property. In addition to the information and flood risk maps provided by the Environment Agency at www.environment-agency.gov.uk a good guide to risk will be local knowledge, which should be used to inform your preparations. See also <https://www.gov.uk/flood>.

Serious events will involve action by County and District Authorities and the emergency services – the role of the Parish Council is summarized at the end of this document.

FLOOD WARNINGS

Flash flooding can occur unexpectedly but experience shows there is usually time for warnings to be issued.

For those registered with the EA warnings will be issued by landline as follows.

FLOOD ALERT i.e. Flooding is possible – be prepared.

FLOOD WARNING i.e. Flooding is expected – immediate action required.

SEVERE FLOOD WARNING i.e. Severe flooding – danger to life.

WARNING NO LONGER IN FORCE i.e. Further flooding no longer expected but caution remains necessary in relation to flood effects on properties and standing/contaminated water.

Register to receive warnings on the EA's Floodline 0345 988 1188 if you consider your property is at risk - you may be contacted by email provided a telephone number is also supplied. In the event of flooding monitor updates via BBC Radio Devon 103.4 FM or visit <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk>.

THINGS TO DO NOW

Where you judge your property is at risk it is essential to make preparations in advance of any such warnings. A particular responsibility falls on those operating guest houses etc. to ensure visitors are aware of the action to take in event of emergency.

Assemble or fit the means to keep water out of your property so far as possible and check how to turn off gas, electricity and water supplies in the event of the risk of a dangerous influx of water or if you are obliged to evacuate. For the external doors and fabric this may include flood barriers or sandbags and air brick covers. Internally be ready to block ingress of water from the sink waste and toilet.

Check the adequacy of your house and property insurance.

Make your personal list of items to take with you in the event of evacuation including any vital documentation (including house insurance), medicines, torch and dry clothes.

Establish with neighbours what mutual help is available and where you and any livestock and pets will go for refuge in the event of flooding or evacuation.

Consider what precautions are necessary for you to take if you are temporarily absent.

Conduct or arrange routine maintenance of relevant drainage on or affecting your property or that of neighbours, seeking advice or assistance as necessary.

Maintain your own 'flood file' including this advice and a checklist of actions.

IN THE EVENT OF AN ALERT OR FLOOD WARNING

Remember your safety and that of others is paramount and heed official warnings.

Monitor the situation, stay in a safe place but be prepared to evacuate yourself and livestock if this proves necessary and it is safe to do so. Farmers should consider moving livestock and equipment away from areas likely to flood if an 'Alert' is issued.

Protect your property from water ingress, turning off service supplies as necessary and secure external moveable items e.g. LPG containers.

Remove valued items to a higher or upstairs location.

Assemble items to take with you if necessary.

Establish contact with neighbours, especially the vulnerable, if possible.

Monitor local water levels at the EA's flood warning website above. Brendon river level may be viewed at <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/station/3099>.

Call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for up-to-date-information.

Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.

IN THE EVENT OF THE NEED TO EVACUATE

Make contact with your previously agreed refuge (the churches at Brendon and Countisbury could provide temporary shelter if nowhere else is available).

Check escape routes remain accessible.

Advise a relative or neighbour of your intentions.

Take vital documents and medicines with you and other items on your personal list.

RECOVERY PHASE

These are unusual and traumatic events but there are numerous sources of support and advice open to you.

Initial advice may be obtained from Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Also visit <https://www.devon.gov.uk/emergencies/recovery>.

PLANNED ACTION BY THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council will seek to draw the above information, together with leaflets produced by the Environment Agency upon which it is based, to the attention of residents and new residents and update the advice as necessary via the Council's website.

Liaise with Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council to review local flood plan arrangements.

Discuss the emergency role and plans of the County and District Authorities and of the emergency services with their representatives and establish good liaison in the event of an incident in order to provide local information where possible.

Maintain an information and resource file (available from the clerk) providing information to assist local householders to:-

- investigate the flood risk to their property (including flood risk maps)
- improve, if necessary, the flood resilience of their homes (including information about how to obtain sandbags and commercially available flood protection devices) and
- obtain further advice relevant to their individual situation.

Where potential flood risks are identified (e.g. likely river blockages by fallen trees) seek to resolve the situation with responsible owners or the Environment Agency in case of flood risk.

During the recovery phase from any serious flooding seek to facilitate and publicise the necessary support for those affected.

SERIOUS FLOODING IS A RARE BUT POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING EVENT- BUT BY BEING AWARE OF RISK AND TAKING PRACTICAL PRECAUTIONS YOUR ACTIONS CAN MINIMISE HARM AND DAMAGE IF THE WORST HAPPENS.