

Spring 2019

Flood Risk Management

Newsletter

We are Warwickshire County Council's (WCC's) Flood Risk Management (FRM) team, and we take the lead in understanding and reducing flood risk across the County, working in partnership with other agencies, services and communities which are at risk, also helping them to help themselves. This protects the lives and properties of the most vulnerable, and enhances economic growth, making Warwickshire a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

News in brief



- In December WCC FRM installed a weather station into Bournebrook Primary school, Fillongley, to provide the school with current weather data that the children can use in lessons. The weather station collects wind direction, wind speed, temperature, rain and humidity data which is then converted into graphs or kept as raw data. The installation of this weather station will provide the children with accurate and relevant data for their studies. There are also benefits to other stakeholders; for example the local Natural Flood Management (NFM) project, being led by Warwickshire

Wildlife Trust, for Fillongley and Bourne will also utilise the data to provide evidence and information for the development of their scheme. We have received really positive feedback from the school and are very happy that the weather station is being incorporated into lessons; for example, , *"We are making a weather board and putting pictures and data on it"* and *"having the weather station means we can tell if something is going to happen, like the flooding"*.

- Polesworth Parish Council and WCC FRM team have been working together to try and mitigate the flood risk in Polesworth High Street. After much discussion and survey works, it became apparent that the way forward was to install an inline non-return valve to prevent flood waters from the River Anker backing up. Before the valve, this water would then pass along the storm water sewer line, eventually discharging from access chambers and gullies resulting in internal and external flooding on the High Street. The cost of installing the valve was £8000, of which £5000 was contributed by WCC FRM through our Small Scale Flood Alleviation Grant Scheme and the remaining £3000 contributed by Polesworth Parish Council. WCC FRM team would like to thank Polesworth Parish

News in brief



Council for their continued support during the delivery of this scheme, another great example of partnership working at its best.

- On the 25th January, the Warwickshire Stour Catchment Partnership held their first meeting. This group is pioneering an approach to flood alleviation by co-ordinating NFM interventions on a catchment scale undertaken by local community groups. The scheme brings together local community representatives from Brailes, Long Compton, Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) and Cherington/Stourton to work in collaboration on a Steering Group. The group are in the early stages of establishment, currently sharing their local knowledge and ideas to work out the best plan moving forward. The group are hoping to make good progress this year with the overall aim of reducing flood risk on a catchment scale. The group are hoping to make a lot of progress this year with the overall aim of reducing flood risk on a catchment scale. [A catchment area is defined as the area drained by a river or body of water¹.]
- **What is Natural Flood Management?**
"Natural flood management involves techniques that aim to work with natural hydrological and morphological processes, features and characteristics to manage the sources and pathways of flood waters. These techniques include the restoration, enhancement and alteration of natural features and characteristics, but exclude traditional flood defence engineering that works against or disrupts these natural processes."²

- Following a leaflet drop and walkover of the local flood risk areas, community members from Grendon, North Warwickshire, held their first Flood Action Group (FLAG) meeting on Thursday 21st February. Grendon is a community at risk from fluvial flooding from the River Anker and the Penmire Brook, as well as surface water flooding. Following an initial wider community meeting, where residents were able to express their concerns and questions, individuals interested in forming a FLAG helped organise a second meeting. This entailed developing and writing down questions to form their first Flood Action Plan which will be circulated to relevant agencies prior to their first Multi-Agency Meeting (MAM). The group are currently in the process of organising their MAM, along with help from the National Flood Forum (NFF) and WCC FRM. This form of meeting will encourage a grassroots approach to community flood resilience, where local knowledge is vital for success, and help develop a greater partnership between the community and agencies.
- The WCC FRM team have recently been working hard on securing funding and delivering Flood Alleviation Schemes across the county. We have recently secured funding for a Property Level Resilience Scheme in Grendon, with the potential to better protect up to twenty properties once complete. We are looking forward to collaborating with the newly formed FLAG in the delivery and engagement aspect of this scheme. We have also secured funding for a Property Flood Resilience scheme in Nether Whitacre, which is currently 75% delivered. Once this scheme is complete, there will be five properties better protected. We would like to thank the Parish Council and FLAG for their help so far with the scheme, and we are looking forward to continuing this partnership.
- In 2018-19 the WCC FRM team responded to over 800 major planning consultations, as part of our role as a statutory consultee. The team have also been consulted formally on a further 52 strategic and policy consultations. This includes an increasing number of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and possible changes in national policy.

¹ <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/catchment+area>

² SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) Natural Flood Management Handbook (2015)

Events

School engagement

An element of WCC's Community Flood Resilience project is delivering school sessions on flooding to raise awareness of the causes and effects of flooding. The sessions encompass what the WCC FRM and NFF aim to achieve, the possible causes of flooding and the impacts it can have on people. Since January, the NFF and WCC FRM have delivered 6 school sessions across Warwickshire, which have had positive feedback from both the pupils and the teachers.

Rugby rural event

On Friday 1st March representatives from WCC FRM attended the 'Rural Rugby – Sowing the Seeds for a Stronger Rural Community' event in Wolston. The aim of the event was to provide an opportunity for community members to pick up information from agencies and organisations on their activities and services. Several agencies attended with display stands full of information, along with organisations providing presentations and short talks.



Flood Action Group Focus

Shipston Area Flood Action Group

"2018 has been the most productive year for South Warwickshire based Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG), since its formation in 2014. By the end of September ordinary watercourse consent had been secured and more than 350 NFM measures had been installed across 23 estates and farms, through which the Knee Brook and Pig Brook flow. These watercourses account for 50% of the volume of water that feeds into the River Stour at Shipston, so it was an obvious priority. Along with 1200 trees generously donated by the Woodland Trust, a further £50,000 has been committed by the Environment Agency (EA) and so planning for the next phases in the eastern and southern parts of the catchment are under way. Completing these elements will allow further installations to commence in spring 2019.



Flood Action Group Focus

So is SAFAGs work effective? Well the group believe so, backed up by a condition of the government funding that regular monitoring of the installations takes place. This is done remotely by solar powered cameras which feed directly to the Environment Agency at times of heavy rainfall so that they can monitor the impact the intervention measures are having. Members of the group also undertake site visits to validate this information, filming and recording their own findings.

Importantly the use of natural materials to create flood defences is also designed to improve water quality, biodiversity and create natural wildlife habitats. We are delighted to report the return of Snipe and Lapwings to areas of the catchment where our work has been undertaken."

To find out more about SAFAG, visit www.shipstonfloodaction.org.uk

Len Grey – Head of Publicity for SAFAG

Wellesbourne and Walton Flood Action Group

"The group has been busy since we reported in September last year, with a mix of meetings and activities organised.

The group created its own website (www.wwfag.org) to publicise its objectives and progress, ahead of the first Local Awareness event held in November 2018. Our agency partners felt it had been well-organised and well-attended by the public, who were able to meet the agencies face-to-face, add to the mapping of flooded areas and also volunteer to help with future activities.

On the legal side, our group is now fully affiliated to the National Flood Forum, has its own constitution, bank account and has started to formally allocate roles and responsibilities within the group.



After a long wait, two new hydrological surveys (one on behalf of Wellesbourne School covering the Brook and one by Wellesbourne Parish Council covering land adjoining the School) are now available which will help the group finalise its own hydrological survey of the missing catchment area. From these surveys, we should be able to identify possible Natural Flood Management intervention locations.

A year on from our foundation, we are starting to see the direction and processes we need to follow and look forward to taking positive actions to "slow the flow".

Stephen Kirk – Chair of Wellesbourne and Walton Flood Action Group



If you have any questions or require further information, please contact us:
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