

## Guidance Notes: COMMUNITY LEVEL INITIATIVES

*If you are unsure about anything within these notes then please contact the Flood Risk Management (FRM) team using the details at the end of this document.*

### What do we mean by Community Level Initiatives?

Derbyshire County Council is committed to empowering localism within communities in order to increase their resilience to the current and future impacts of flooding. Community level initiatives can help towards mitigating flooding at the local level. It is important that communities inform and support the relevant organisations, as to identify the key concerns and objectives for managing flood risk for the community.

The FRM team strongly support and encourage any type of community working and are involved in community level work on a daily basis including:

- Flood Action Groups.
- Flood Warden Schemes.
- Public and Parish/Town Council meetings.
- Public site visits.

### Flood Action Groups

#### *What are Flood Action Groups?*

Flood Action Groups involve members of the public joining together to take an active role in local flood risk management. They are community led and are a representative voice for the wider community and often set up after a localised flooding event. With local expertise and knowledge about flood risk in their local area they work in partnership with the Risk Management Authorities for flood risk management. Flood Action Groups are able to engage directly with relevant organisations in a structured way, therefore establishing a strong voice that can inform how local flood risk can be managed both now and in the future.



#### **A public site visit**

To find out whether your community already has a Flood Action Group or to obtain further information please contact the FRM team.

### *What is the role of a Flood Action Group?*

Flood Action Groups are proactive and involved in flood risk communication, promoting flood resilience, building self-resilience amongst other activities at the community level. By being part of a Flood Action Group it allows the community to:

- Be involved and updated on what is intended for their community.
- Access procedures that are already in place in terms of routine maintenance.
- Instigate 'flood watchers or wardens' and create a network of communication around the local area.
- Raise awareness of flood risk around the wider community.



**A local Flood Action Group**

### *How can you set up a Flood Action Group for your Community?*

Some initial actions of forming a Flood Action Group within your community are listed below as a guide:

1. **Create community interest** - you will need a group of proactive, enthusiastic community members working together.
2. **Set up a group structure** - there are many ways the group can be structured; you may like to adopt a constitution or be more informal.
3. **Prioritise key concerns** - collate all the concerns of the community into manageable groups.
4. **Spread the word** - get yourselves known within the local area and promote the group and your key actions.
5. **Engage with organisations and local authorities** - hold a meeting to share ideas, fill in an action plan suggesting ways forward and listing critical assets i.e. road gullies, culverts and watercourses.
6. **Keep the wider community updated** - ensure that the community is kept informed of all information/plans on progress.

### **Flood Warden Schemes**

During or immediately after a flood event it is not possible for the Authority to provide resources across the County all at one time. Therefore it is important to provide members of the community with appropriate resilience equipment and skills to be able to help mitigate the impacts of flooding before the emergency responders or relevant Risk Management Authority can attend.

### *What are Flood Warden Schemes?*

Flood Warden Schemes are being piloted across the county by the FRM team and Emergency Planning team to priority communities that have been affected by flooding. A Flood Warden is a voluntary member of the local community who will liaise with the Local Authorities and organisations associated with flooding. The Flood Wardens will become an integral part of the Community Flood Plan for their area, which may cover things like agreed actions in the event of a storm warning, a road closure plan, names and addresses of vulnerable people, details and location of a flood resilience store etc. As part of the overall scheme the community may receive partnership funding which can be used purchase a store facility and equipment (where required) such as personal protective equipment, waders, sand, sandbags etc. amongst other things.

### **A Community Flood Plan**

### *What is the role of a Flood Warden?*

During a flood event the Flood Warden may undertake a series of pre-agreed tasks set out within the Community Flood Plan to help to minimise the impacts of flooding on residents, businesses and those using the local infrastructure network. They will also receive direct information (severe weather/flood warnings) from the local authorities and organisations passing this information on to the community. Tasks that Flood Wardens may undertake or be involved with include:

- Developing a Community Flood Plan with the help of the Local Authorities or other organisations;
- Working as a community to prepare for a flood event and identify vulnerable people from within the community who may need extra help;
- Reporting blocked drains, ditches, etc. to the relevant authority or landowner;
- Ensuring members of the community have received severe weather/flood warnings, understand what they mean and where they can obtain further information;
- Putting out flood warning signs in agreed places in accordance with an agreed road closure plan; and
- Reporting the findings of a flood event to the relevant authority.

### *What is a Community Flood Plan?*

The Community Flood Plan is a document that may include any of the following:

- A road closure plan (where required, particularly in areas that suffer from the effect of bow waves);
- A description/list of local triggers for action of the plan;
- Maps of any flood risk data (to be provided by Derbyshire County Council or relevant organisation);
- Locations of local identified flood risks;
- Actions for helping to mitigate any flooding;
- Names and contact details for any Flood Wardens;
- Names and contact details of relevant Local Authority or organisation contacts;
- Agreed actions for the Flood Wardens (and any other community members);
- Agreed actions for any of the Local Authorities or other organisations;
- Emergency contact details; and
- Names and contact details of any vulnerable residents, properties or locations.

### *What a Flood Warden should not do...*

Flood Wardens should always remember Health and Safety is of primary importance and **never** place themselves in a position where their own personal safety is at risk. In particular, they should not:

- Enter any flood water whatsoever;
- Put themselves at risk to attempt any form of rescue operation;
- Attempt to clear blocked drains, gullies, ditches or watercourses, particularly during a flood event.

The Flood Warden should always call the emergency services or the relevant agency to deal with any emergency situations.

If you would like to become a Flood Warden, or are interested in implementing a Flood Warden Scheme for your community please contact the FRM team.

### **Lengthsmen / Community Maintenance**

Historically some communities across Derbyshire had community members recognised as Lengthsmen who kept watercourses and gullies free of debris. Although these initiatives do not still exist, some communities in Derbyshire have adopted informal arrangements for



members of the community to be proactive and check assets in the event of a severe weather warning. These arrangements can be very productive at a local level and reap great benefits for areas that suffer regularly or in times when the demand for support/response outweighs the available resource. For more guidance about community level maintenance please contact the FRM team.

## Derbyshire County Council led community level work

### *Flood awareness events*

A flood awareness event may have representation from a number of Risk Management Authorities or charitable organisations such as the **National Flood Forum**<sup>1</sup>. The County Council have arranged and held a number of flood awareness events, often after a flood event to offer help, support and guidance. Flood awareness events can be arranged following a flood event or can also be set up to raise awareness of potential risks of flooding to a community.

Has your community recently been affected by flooding or if you like to hold a flood awareness event in your community, please contact the FRM team for further information.

### *Public site visits*

The FRM team receive reports relating to flooding and land drainage on a daily basis. Following a desk based review of each enquiry an officer within the team can decide whether a site visit is required. Public site visits are a good opportunity for the FRM team to obtain local knowledge and in turn provide guidance for personal resilience, effective land management, stakeholder responsibilities etc., whilst also passing on information about the wider drainage catchment. For information regarding level of service please refer to **Part 2 of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**<sup>2</sup>.



**An evening public meeting**

<sup>1</sup> A national charity dedicated to supporting and representing communities and individuals at risk of flooding ([www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk))

<sup>2</sup> Derbyshire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy available online at [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)

### *Evening/daytime Parish/Town Council or public meetings*

Members of the FRM team regularly attend evening or daytime meetings supporting Parish/Town Councils or the local community presenting a variety of information relating to flood risk management and community initiatives.

Evening public meetings are also a useful way of staying engaged with the community regarding flood risk management projects for which the FRM team are leading on, on behalf of the community. The FRM team have worked with a number of Parish/Town Councils presenting at regular evening meetings ensuring that local opinions are incorporated into the design of schemes for helping to mitigate flooding.

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### *Do the County Council provide any funding to support community level initiatives?*

In recent years the County Council have made available a small amount of partnership funding to help establish action groups and flood warden projects across the County. This funding remains under constant review due to the ever growing demands on corporate finances. This limited funding must be strategically prioritised in an attempt to ensure that we are helping to protect to most at risk communities within the County. For further information about prioritisation please refer to the **Communications Strategy and Prioritisation Guidance Notes**.

For further information relating to funding please refer to the **Funding Guidance Notes**. Please also contact the FRM team to obtain greater information about available partnership funding.

#### *Who else can provide funding to support a community level initiative/project?*

Other Risk Management Authorities and/or relevant bodies, companies or people may also be able to contribute towards a community project such as your local water provider, the Environment Agency, District/Borough/Town/Parish Council, County and Local Councillors. You may also wish to speak to local companies or even throw a local fundraising charity/organisation.

For further information relating to funding please refer to the **Funding Guidance Notes**. Please also contact the FRM team to obtain greater information about available partnership funding.

*How long will the support/help from the County Council last for?*

Any partnership funding made available to communities in recent years has been given as a one off grant payment to allow a local community to build local resilience such as purchasing a flow gauge, a storage facility for sandbags and other equipment. Often during a flood event resource at the local, district and County Council level is stretched; building local resilience means that a local community can be better prepared for the potential impacts of flooding. Following the release of partnership funding the County Council will still continue to guide and support a local community where possible.

*Other than funding what other support can the County Council and other organisations/bodies provide?*

The County Council (with support from the Environment Agency, water companies, the District/Borough Authority, the Parish/Town Council etc.) will assist with the implementation of a community level scheme across the County. Other support that can be provided includes:

- Relevant training for any specific tasks such as ‘advisory’ road closures;
- Technical support including sharing data;
- Support in producing a Community Flood Plan;
- Liaise with the emergency services where required;
- Work with riparian landowners and the Highways team to maintain local watercourses and the local Highway drainage network; and
- Provide/pass on any severe weather/flood warnings to the designated Flood Warden.

For more information relating to the role of relevant organisations for flood risk management please refer to the [Roles and Responsibilities Guidance Note](#). For more information about riparian responsibilities please refer to the [Riparian Landownership Guidance Notes](#). For information regarding the Highways team please refer to the [Highways Statutory Duties and Vested Powers Guidance Notes](#).

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