



## Locals manage flood risk in Chew Magna with personalised river level gauge



*The Winford Brook responds rapidly to rainfall. Having up to the minute information on river levels is vital to preparing for flooding.*

cc-by-sa/2.0 - The Winford Brook overflows... by Dr Duncan Pepper - [geograph.org.uk/p/3845588](http://geograph.org.uk/p/3845588)

Around 70 homes in Chew Magna are at a high risk of flooding from the Winford Brook and the River Chew. The community has developed a nationally recognised community flood plan, which includes a network of Flood Wardens managing different 'zones' within the village.

In order to aid the community's preparedness, in 2018 the Council's Drainage and Flooding team installed a be-spoke river level gauge on the Winford Brook.

The gauge assists the Chew Magna Flood Wardens with their response to major flooding events and is used alongside their community flood plan. The gauge is managed by the flood wardens, providing them with real time

information on the water level of the Brook.

This information enables the community to respond directly to immediate river levels and trigger different actions within the flood plan.

One advantage of the new gauge is that rather than relying on visual observations of the river level, which are only practical during daylight hours, text messages and emails are sent to Flood Wardens whenever a particular river level is reached. This means that if river levels are predicted to rise during the night, they can be monitored from the comfort and safety of homes rather than outside in the dark.

Jim Collings, Flood Authority Manager, says "We can't stop the river from flooding, but this technology gives people the information to help protect their homes. We need more local communities to put someone forward as their Flood Representative who will be able to identify local flooding issue to us."



*Installing the gauge, February 2018.*

The Council is keen to support communities that can help to manage their flood risk. If you are part of a community group that has identified a significant flood risk, is developing a way to manage this risk and would like some support please get in touch with the team: email [drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk)

## Major drainage improvements to Globe Roundabout improve safety for drivers on the A4 near Bath

The Globe inn roundabout on the A4 is one of the busiest junctions on the B&NES road network. It is subject to high traffic volumes at all times of the day and any disruption on the roundabout can have a knock on effect that causes long queues through Bath and along the A4 from Keynsham.

A spur of the roundabout, Pennyquick, was subject to regular issues with surface water. The highway drainage system was damaged in several places and had not been adequately maintained. It being such a busy roundabout meant that maintenance was always difficult to undertake due to the impact on the local highway network. The highway gullies on Pennyquick regularly surcharged and

caused water to run across the carriageway, this was near to the exit of the roundabout and was hazardous to users of the junction.

Extensive survey work was undertaken to establish the drainage network and find any issues. To undertake the survey work, lane closures were required, this meant that the work had to be undertaken at night to reduce the potential build-up of traffic. Following survey work, a plan was drawn up to rectify all the issues of the surrounding highway drainage network. A work programme was devised that phased the work to be undertaken in three phases, all to be done at night to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum.

Over the course of two months, the various phases were undertaken. The work has proven successful and the issue of surface water is no more. Several issues were encountered during the construction phase, abandoned gas mains and unmapped mains were found and required re-designs. This extended the duration of the work and caused delays to removal of traffic management – this caused issues with traffic building up.

As part of the design, various elements were moved within the carriageway to allow for ease of future maintenance. This should mean that the drainage system can be maintained without needing to close lanes.

## Be aware: Culverting or filling-in a ditch without consent is illegal. If you intend to alter a ditch, stream or other watercourse get in touch with the Council first!

Drainage ditches, including those running along the perimeter of private fields or alongside hedgerow, are defined as 'watercourses' within the Land Drainage Act. As such, any proposal to modify, culvert or fill in a ditch or small stream, even if privately owned, requires the Consent of the Lead Local Flood Authority (Bath & North East Somerset Council) before any work can be carried out. In the majority of cases, culverting or filling-in would not be given Consent. If ditches are culverted or filled in without Consent, the landowner will be in breach of the Land Drainage Act and will be

required to reinstate the watercourse.

Last year we had a few instances where landowners had not applied for Consent, leading to some difficult conversations!

Please make sure that anyone that has drainage ditches or small streams on their land is aware of the restrictions around modifying watercourses. There is some excellent information available online, and we have a poster that helps to explain watercourse ownership and responsibilities—see page 4.

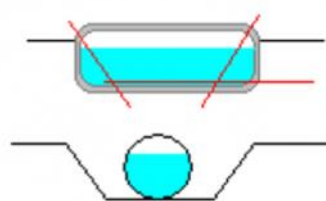


Culverting a watercourse requires consent from the Lead Local Flood Authority or the Environment Agency. In most cases, culverting is NOT permitted.

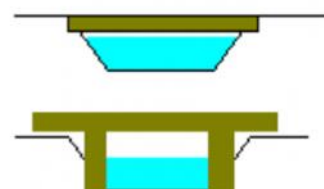
### Works that require Land Drainage Consent:

If the structure is likely to impede the flow of a watercourse then Consent is normally required.

#### Culverting, including trash screens



#### Bridge structures within channel



#### Weirs and Dam like obstructions, this could include temporary works





## How to set-up a WhatsApp Group to help manage local flooding

The roads in and out of the village of Priston are subject to surface water flooding. During wet weather one or more of these roads may become impassable for a short time.

Aylet Anderson is the Local Flood Rep for Priston. A couple of years ago she set up a WhatsApp group so that local people could quickly and easily alert others about any impassable roads.

Aylet explains the benefits, *"People say it has saved them time and petrol and on one or two occasions prevented water-damaged cars. The scheme really only needs one person to co-ordinate it and it takes up very little time".*

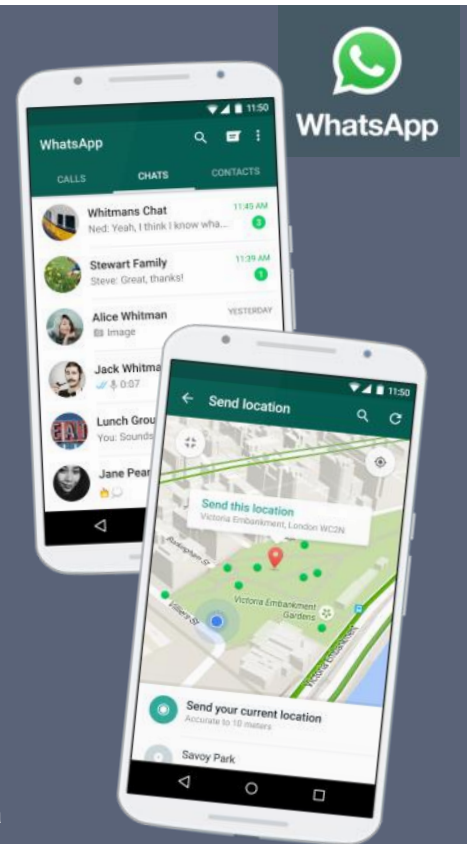
Do you think a WhatsApp Group could help your community manage flood risk? This could be used to warn people about flooded roads, prompt drainage inspections or alert people to any vulnerable residents that might need some help in bad weather. It's extremely easy to set up a WhatsApp Group.

1. **Set up a WhatsApp Group of interested parties.** If people don't use WhatsApp, you could still set something up on email or simply use a list of mobile phone numbers. Remember to get their permission if you are likely to reveal their email addresses or phone numbers to the general public).

2. In the event of wet weather **ask the members to share information if they encounter flood water.** People will need to know: **time**, **place** (with clear location that others will recognise, for example, "100 yards west of Greenhill Farm on X lane") and **any other relevant details.**

3. **Send this info to your 'loop'. Or simply allow the Group to share it directly.**

4. Don't forget those who may not have a computer or mobile phone but would still like to receive information.



Remember – **it is extremely important not to get anywhere near flood water, whether on foot or in a vehicle.** Driving through floodwater puts the lives of drivers and passengers at risk, risks the safety of emergency responders, and often causes serious damage to the vehicle.

If you come across flooding on the roads, this can be reported via **Council Connect** on 01225 39 40 41 or via **Fix My Street** <https://fix.bathnes.gov.uk/>

## How to report blocked highway gullies

Back to all reports

**O/s no. 23 gully completely blocked**

Reported in the Blocked drain category anonymously at 13:30 today

I'm writing to inform you about the drainage problem on the Charnouth Road in Bath (BA1 3LJ). This is an access road to the Newbridge Primary School hence it's important that everything is in order. The Virgin Media has been recently doing some work on our road. When they finished working in front of our house (no. 23), I noticed that the drainage has been completely blocked. I don't know what caused the blockage but I asked one of the workmen to hold the metal cover of the drainage so I could take some pictures to show the scale of the problem. The first photo (below) shows that the drainage is completely blocked with a black soil, and the second photo (below) shows that the drainage has been simply covered with the metal cover through which you can still see the scale of the problem. It is obvious that the drainage doesn't let for any flow of rain water which is not helpful because in mind that

Generally speaking highway gullies in urban areas are cleaned once every two years and gullies in rural locations once a year.

If you believe a road gully is blocked and that this is creating a risk to road safety or property flooding this can now be reported via the Council's Fix My Street portal so that it can be reviewed by the Highway Maintenance team. Fix My Street makes it easy to report the precise location of a gully and include a photo to demonstrate the issue. It's probably the simplest way to report any highway issues.

<https://fix.bathnes.gov.uk>

Alternatively you can still report highway and drainage issues via Council Connect:

Email: [councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk)

Twitter: @ccbathnes

Telephone: 01225 39 40 41

## Getting in touch with the Council's Drainage and Flooding team



Local Flood Reps are an important part of helping us identify what's important to local people. We are grateful for the time that Local Flood Reps have taken to flag up surface water flooding locations in your communities.

Like all Council departments, the Drainage and Flooding team has a limited budget so it's extremely useful for the team be informed of issues so that they can be prioritised as, unfortunately, we are unable to fix everything!

We would be delighted to get your feedback on this newsletter and our communications with you. Equally, if you would like to talk through a local drainage or flooding issue please get in touch initially by email: [drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk)

This newsletter has been put together by the Drainage and Flooding Team at Bath & North East Somerset Council.

## Resources for Local Flood Reps and communities

The Drainage and Flooding team can email or send to you any of the following items.

A map of your area highlighting flood risk

A map showing the highway drainage network in your area (in order to aid reporting of blocked gullies)

A poster explaining how to report flooding

A poster explaining watercourse responsibilities

If there is something you would like please email [drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:drainage&flooding@bathnes.gov.uk)



## How to report flooding

### Report watercourse flooding

Watercourses are split into two categories: Ordinary Watercourses and Main Rivers.

Main Rivers tend to be the larger rivers or systems and in Bath and North East Somerset these include the Avon, the Chew, the Cam Brook and Wellow Brook.

**To report Main River flooding contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.**

Any watercourse that is not a Main River is known as an Ordinary Watercourse and includes drainage ditches, small streams and pipes.

**To report Ordinary Watercourse flooding contact the Council via Council Connect.**

### Report surface water flooding

To report surface water flooding including highway flooding and blocked road gullies contact the Council via Council Connect. Please note the Council does not provide sandbags.

### Report sewer flooding and burst water mains

**To report sewer flooding contact Wessex Water on 0345 600 4 600.**

**To report a burst water main in the Bath area contact Wessex Water on 0345 600 4 600.**

**To report a burst water main outside of the Bath area contact Bristol Water on 0800 801 011.**



# How to report flooding

## Did you know

Anyone that has a river, stream or drainage ditch running through, or adjacent to their land is known as a 'riparian owner', and is responsible for maintaining the bed and banks to ensure that water can flow normally.

## Reduce the impact of flooding

The National Flood Forum can advise on things like finding flood insurance, or ways you can make your home more flood resilient. [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk)

## Did you know

The maintenance of roadside ditches generally rests with the adjoining landowner.

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Is your home at risk of flooding?

Find out your flood risk by looking at the Environment Agency's flood maps for rivers and surface water.

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Did you know

A third of flood-related deaths in the UK involve drivers taking unnecessary risks. **Do not drive through flood water!**

## If your home or business has flooded it's important to let the Council know so that we can investigate.

You can report flooding in a variety of ways:

- Complete an online form at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit)
- Email [councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk)
- Tweet [@ccbathnes](https://twitter.com/ccbathnes)
- Call **01225 39 40 41**
- Text **07797 806545**

If you know the precise cause of flooding please also contact the relevant organisation.

## Watercourse flooding

Watercourse flooding, also referred to as fluvial flooding, occurs when water overtops the banks of a river, stream or drainage ditch.

This can occur because there is more water draining into the channel than it can hold, or because it is blocked.

### Report watercourse flooding

Watercourses are split into two categories: Ordinary Watercourses and Main Rivers. Main Rivers tend to be the larger rivers or systems and in Bath and North East Somerset these include the Avon, the Chew, the Cam Brook and Wellow Brook.

To report Main River flooding contact the Environment Agency on **0800 80 70 60**.

Any watercourse that is not a Main River is known as an Ordinary Watercourse and include drainage ditches, small streams and pipes.

To report Ordinary Watercourse flooding contact the Council via Council Connect.

## Surface water flooding

Surface water flooding is caused by rainwater, which runs across the surface of the ground and pools in low lying areas.

Surface water flooding commonly affects roads and can occur quickly during intense rain storms.

### Report surface water flooding

To report surface water flooding including highway flooding and blocked road gullies contact the Council via Council Connect.

Please note the Council does not provide sandbags.

## Sewer flooding and burst water mains

Sewer flooding happens either when the pipes in the network are blocked or when there is heavy rainfall and the sewers cannot cope with the amount of water. You can help prevent blockages by only flushing the three Ps – paper, poo and pee, and avoid pouring fats, oils and grease down the sink.

The danger of this type of flooding is that water can become contaminated with raw sewage and enter land, property, or the river system.

### Report sewer flooding and burst water mains

To report sewer flooding contact Wessex Water on **0345 600 4 600**.

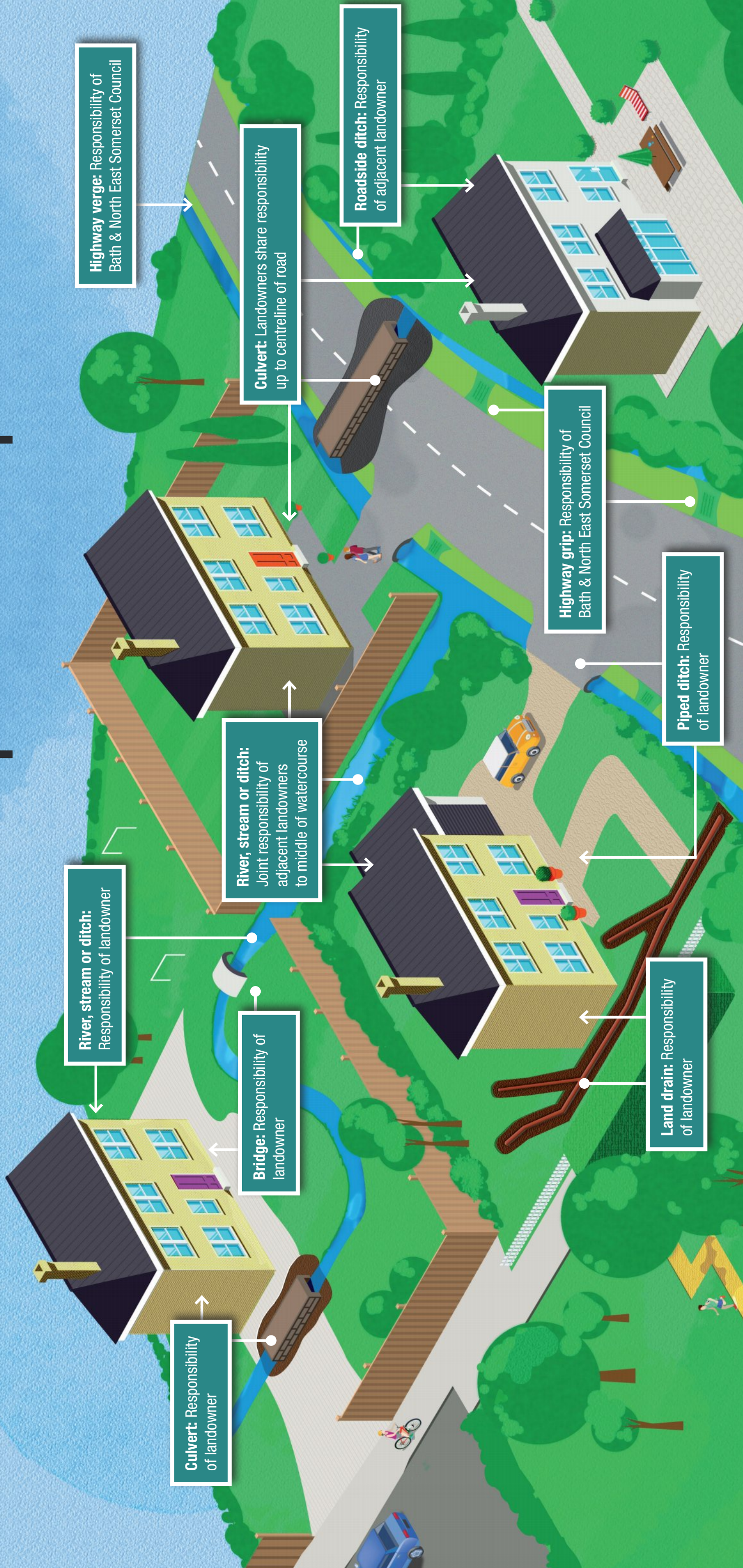
To report a burst water main in the Bath area contact Wessex Water on **0345 600 4 600**.

To report a burst water main outside of the Bath area contact Bristol Water on **0800 801 011**.

Flood Risk Management is shared between a number of different organisations with individuals and communities having an important part to play. To find out if your home or business is at risk of flooding and what you can do to manage your risks visit: [www.bathnes.gov.uk/flood](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/flood)



# Watercourse ownership and responsibilities



If you have a watercourse running through or alongside your land you are responsible for ensuring that water can flow freely and is not polluted. You may have to remove blockages, fallen trees or overhanging branches from your watercourse, or cut back trees and shrubs on the bank.

**What you can do if you see a blocked watercourse.**  
If you see a blocked watercourse, your first point of contact should be the person or organisation responsible for its maintenance. A 'watercourse' can be any river, brook, ditch, stream or culvert.

If you're not sure who owns an area of land, it's often worthwhile talking to local neighbours or your Parish Council. Alternatively, a land registry search can be carried out. Be aware that title deeds for a property may not show watercourses within the property boundary.

Any proposed alterations to a watercourse, or the construction of structures such as weirs, culverts, bridges or outfalls, may require formal consent from the Environment Agency or Bath & North East Somerset Council before they can be made. To find out more about watercourse rights and responsibilities visit [www.gov.uk/guidanceowning-a-watercourse](http://www.gov.uk/guidanceowning-a-watercourse)

**Your Local Flood Rep is:**

**Flood Risk Management** is shared between a number of different organisations with individuals and communities having an important part to play. To find out if your home or business is at risk of flooding and what you can do to manage your risks visit: [www.bathnes.gov.uk/flood](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/flood)

**Bath & North East Somerset Council**





Information and resources available from  
the Environment Agency...

## Where to find further information

- For local weather information including weather warnings visit the Met Office at [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)
- For river levels and to sign up for flood warnings, visit <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>
- Wessex Area Monthly Water Situation Reports are produced on Gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-local-area-reports>
- Flood Re has been set up to help those households who live in a flood risk area find affordable home insurance. For more information contact your insurer or visit [www.floodre.co.uk](http://www.floodre.co.uk)
- The National Flood Forum provide further advice and support at [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk)

## Helpful resources and guidance that you can access on-line and download (click on the picture)



### What to do before, during and after a flood

Practical advice on what to do to protect you and your property from flooding



### Prepare your property for flooding

A guide for householders and small businesses to prepare for floods.



### Sandbags - How to use them properly for flood protection



### Flooding from Groundwater

Practical advice to help you reduce the impact of flooding from groundwater.

## Flood Plan Templates (click on the picture)



### Personal flood plan



### Would your business stay afloat?

A guide to preparing your business for flooding



### Community Flood Plan

### [Riverside Ownership](#)

Your responsibilities and rules to follow for watercourses on or near your property, and permissions you need to do work around them.

## Useful contacts

Contact **Floodline** on **0345 988 11 88** for up to date flood warning information or advice.  
Contact the Environment Agency **incident hotline** on **0800 80 70 60** to report flooding, blockages in rivers or any other environmental incident.



# Flood warnings - know what to do?



**FLOOD  
ALERT**

**PREPARE**

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Visit [flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk)



**FLOOD  
WARNING**

**ACT**

- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- Move things upstairs or to safety
- Move family, pets and car to safety



**SEVERE  
FLOOD  
WARNING**

**SURVIVE**

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

[floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk](https://floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk)

**FLOODS  
DESTROY  
BE PREPARED**

Floodline on 0345 988 1188

#PrepareActSurvive

## Help us to Help Your Community

If your community is affected by flooding please remember to share this information with us. Photos, times and description of flooding are vital in helping us understand how your community has been affected and what we can do going forwards, whether it be changes to flood warning thresholds or assessing your community for a scheme or property flood resilience measures.

If you have received training on SWIM (Severe Weather Information Management) system you can record information directly at <https://swim.geowessex.com>  
Alternatively you can email us at [floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Reporting Flood Risk and Riparian Responsibilities

If you are concerned about blockages, obstructions to flow in the river or know of cut vegetation being deposited in the watercourse, which can cause pollution, please remember to ring our Incident Hotline **0800 80 70 60** which is open and manned 24hrs a day. You will be given advice and guidance and the information you share will be recorded and passed to the relevant duty team who will be able to take any necessary actions.

## Keeping in Touch

If you are a new flood warden or have received this newsletter from your Town or Parish Clerk, please contact the Wessex Flood Resilience Team at [floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) and we will update our records and sign you up to receive the newsletter and invitations to future training opportunities.