

Welcome to the Spring 2026 Flood Warden Newsletter

Across the area, watercourse and groundwater levels have reduced considerably, and there are abundant signs of spring along our rivers.

However, for those who flooded across Wessex this winter, the journey to “normal” will be ongoing, and life will still be upended. Many also experienced a near-miss during this exceptionally wet winter, and there has been widespread disruption to businesses, roads and infrastructure. January to February was the second wettest on record in Wessex, with only 2014 recorded as receiving more rainfall since these records began in 1871.

For everyone impacted, drier weather will be welcome, but we know that anxiety often remains long after the water recedes. Flood wardens have done such an important job this winter responding to flooding, supporting people in their communities, and making sure accurate information is shared among communities and agencies. We will continue to provide support to help enable and empower you as community volunteers in the crucial work that you do.



Flood Warnings issued
over a 6-week period

Over 250 properties* have been reported as flooded this winter in our area, with Dorset most heavily impacted, as well as Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. Alongside our partners, we have been out and about in many affected communities, with more events happening in the coming weeks. In this edition of the newsletter, we will be sharing the details of upcoming recovery events as well as information about planning and preparing for flooding, along with our usual news and events.

*best available data, subject to change

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Flood Warden Support

Flood Recovery

During this winter’s flooding, we launched two websites with useful background information, context and links to support and advice. These sites are being updated regularly with recovery news.

- Groundwater Flooding in Dorset & Wiltshire:
<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/dorset-and-wiltshire-groundwater-incident-response-2026>
- Somerset Levels Flooding:
<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/somerset-levels-flood-response-2026>

Dorset

Areas of Dorset recorded their wettest January since records began. Following Storm Chandra, there was widespread flooding from rivers across the county, and we issued dozens of Flood Warnings, including two rare Severe Flood Warnings, meaning danger to life. Groundwater levels rose sharply across Dorset and Wiltshire, and with double the average rainfall for February, groundwater reached record breaking levels, causing widespread impacts, including property flooding and disruption to roads and infrastructure.

With so many communities affected in Dorset, we are hosting hub flood drop-in events in locations nears areas where we had most reports of flooding, but these events are open to any and all communities that have been affected.

We will be joined by Dorset Council and Wessex Water, and we would like to hear from you so we can better understand the impacts from flooding in your community and provide you with the guidance and support you need. Details of all the events can be found on the poster. If you would like to find out more, or can't make one of the drop-ins please email floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk.



The poster features logos for the Environment Agency, Dorset Council, and Wessex Water (YTL Group) at the top left. A central photograph shows snowdrops in a field. Below the logos, the title 'Community Drop In' is displayed in a dark green box. The main text explains the purpose of the events: to understand the impacts of flooding, share experiences, and build resilience. It lists five event dates and locations: 21 April in Weymouth, 23 April in Blandford, 14 May in Winterborne Stickland, 21 May in Sydling St Nicholas, and 4 June in Dorchester. A contact email is provided for more information. At the bottom, there is an illustration of a village with houses on a hillside.

Environment Agency **Dorset Council** **Wessex Water**
YTL GROUP

Community Drop In

We understand that homes and businesses in your community may have been recently affected by flooding.

Join us to share your experience of the recent flood events so we can better understand the impacts of flooding in your community.

Speak to the Environment Agency, Dorset Council, Wessex Water and partners to understand what support might be available.

Find out how you and your community can be better prepared and build resilience through the Flood Warning Service, preparing flood plans and Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures.

For additional information and advice:
<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk/engagementhq.com/dorset-and-wiltshire-groundwater-incident-response-2026>

Join us from 3-7pm at any one of our hub locations:

- 21 April** - Weymouth: The Palm House, DT4 7TZ
- 23 April** - Blandford: Pimperne Village Hall, DT11 8UZ
- 14 May** - Winterborne Stickland: Pamela Hambro Hall, DT11 0NT
- 21 May** - Sydling St Nicholas Village Hall, DT2 9NX
- 4 June** - Dorchester: Stratton Village Hall, DT2 9WG

For more information or to register your interest please email:
floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk

Somerset

January had double the normal rainfall in Somerset, with a third of this rain falling in only two days during Storm Chandra. At the peak of the storm, around 1.2 million tonnes of water per hour was moving down the Parrett and Tone catchments, with most of this water filling the floodplains of the moors. We received reports of between 80-90 properties flooded across the whole county, with areas around Taunton worst affected. Around 20 properties were flooded on the low-lying Levels and Moors, although at the peak, 30 square miles of mainly agricultural land was flooded. We undertook a significant pumping operation, bringing people and equipment from around the country to help with the flood response. During the event, 2860 properties were protected by flood defences maintained or operated by risk management authorities, 180 of which were protected by pump deployment.

We held community drop-ins throughout the event, and since the floods, we have been out across the county talking to residents and gathering information. We will continue to provide updates on recovery events via the [Somerset Flooding webpage](#).

We are continuing to attend [Local Community Network meetings](#) in impacted areas, with Chard and the Blackdown Hills coming up next week on 21 April.

There will be a flood recovery drop-in for residents in the Bathpool area on Thursday 30 April, 3pm-6.30pm, Brittons Ash Community Hall, TA2 8FT. We will be joining Somerset Rivers Authority and Somerset Council at this event.

Any questions, please contact infoccu@somerset.gov.uk or floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk.



The poster features a green header with logos for Somerset Council, Environment Agency, and Somerset Rivers Authority. Below the logos, the title 'Community Flood Recovery Drop-in for the Bathpool area' is displayed in white text on a blue background. The main image shows a flooded landscape with a winding path through water. Below the image, the text reads: 'If you were affected by flooding this January in the Bathpool area, come and access support and share information'. At the bottom, a blue box contains the event details: 'Thursday 30th April 3-6:30pm at the Brittons Ash Community Hall (BACH), TA2 8FT'. A green footer box provides contact information: 'For more information contact: infoccu@somerset.gov.uk floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk'.

Join us to share your experience of recent flooding so we can better understand the impacts of flooding in your community.

Speak to Somerset Council, the Environment Agency, Somerset Rivers Authority and other organisations about recent flood events and the issues affecting you.

Find out what support and information is available to help you to be better prepared for the future and build resilience.

Wiltshire & Hampshire

In Wiltshire and Hampshire, groundwater levels rose sharply following Storm Chandra at the end of January. Into February, the groundwater influenced Hampshire Avon River reacted to the continued heavy rainfall and the rising groundwater. There were impacts across the area including in Salisbury City Centre. Over 30 properties were reported as flooded in Wiltshire and Hampshire, and there was also significant disruption to roads and infrastructure.

Following the flooding, our staff were out on the ground talking to communities that had been affected. We have been working closely with our partners including local Councils, Wessex Water and other partners in the Local Resilience Forums as part of the recovery phase. We will continue to provide updates on recovery and any future recovery drop ins via [Dorset & Wiltshire Groundwater webpage](#).



Flood Warden Lunch & Learn Sessions

Thanks to everyone who joined us at our latest Flood Warden Lunch & Learn sessions. In February, flood recovery and property flood resilience expert, Mary Long-Dhonau MBE (also known as Flood Mary) joined us to talk about her first-hand experience of having a home flood, and in March we were joined by FloodRe to learn about flood insurance and the Build Back Better scheme. If you missed either of these sessions, the recordings are available to watch here:

- **FloodMary** talks about the road to recovering from a flood <https://youtu.be/J6TjOIPhK1l>
- **FloodRe**: Flood Insurance & the Build Back Better scheme <https://youtu.be/T0lmuJI4fdk>

We aren't running a Lunch and Learn in April, however we will be back in May with a session on flood plans. Then in June, to coincide with National Volunteers Week will be inviting flood wardens and community emergency volunteers to visit our Bridgwater or Blandford Office (see details below).

Flood Plans (Online) - Thursday 28 May 12:30pm

In this session we will cover a refresher of flood plans and flood action cards, including how to activate them, review them and update them following flooding.

Microsoft Teams meeting link:


<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/33637107959074?p=vGDxnoI7urFNsnoRNm>

Or dial in by phone [+44 20 3321 5273](tel:+442033215273), [773832712#](tel:+442033215273)

We have more Lunch & Learns in the pipeline and will share more details shortly. Our library of previous sessions can be viewed below. Videos are 30mins in length and a good resource to share with flood volunteers and interested people within your community.

Previous Recordings

- Introduction to the Flood Warden Role - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_niBfDjQQU
- Flood Risk Management - <https://youtu.be/h2lqZyAVuZl>
- Property Flood Resilience (PFR) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KDAaupa4h0>
- New Warning Service - <https://youtu.be/bhRDiiXZQDk>
- Natural Flood Management – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pAXjjh56oY>
- Flash Flooding – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hck2ufdPTwg>
- Groundwater - <https://youtu.be/CR6xkrHFa0U>



The image shows the 'community flood plan' logo, which includes the Environment Agency logo and the text 'Parishes and communities working together'. Below the logo is a registration form with the following fields:

Community or group	Address
Floodline Quickdial Number	Which Environment Agency flood warnings are you registered to receive?
Local flood warning trigger (i.e. when water reaches bottom of the bridge)	
Date	

Environment Agency - Community Flood Plan

Riparian reminders

Flood Wardens often ask us about owning a watercourse and the associated rules and responsibilities. A reminder that there's a detailed booklet available at:

<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/your-watercourse-rights-and-roles>

For more guidance on owning and managing a watercourse, see: [Owning a watercourse - GOV.UK](#)

For more detailed information on permissions you might need for certain work around rivers, please see the above booklet or: [Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK](#)

Other Upcoming Events

Somerset Rivers Authority Flood Cafés

Flood Cafés offer people affected by flooding the chance to gather and discuss issues arising from flooding in a friendly relaxed environment. These informal gatherings provide a space for open dialogue, discussion, and connection, with the events facilitated by professional staff. Flood Cafés have proven to be popular and helpful in other communities affected by flooding in Somerset in recent years.



Somerset Rivers Authority

FLOOD CAFÉ

BRITTONS ASH COMMUNITY HALL
BRIDGWATER RD, TA2 8FT

**WEDS 13 MAY,
10 JUNE & 8 JULY
1-2.30PM**

The flood cafe offers flood-affected people and those worried about future flooding the chance to gather, drink tea, and discuss flooding topics in a friendly, relaxed setting. This is a space for open dialogue, discussion and mutual support. There is no agenda and no cost.

If you have any questions please contact:
Bel.deering@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Rivers Authority

FLOOD CAFÉ

MOORLAND VILLAGE HALL, GREEN END, NORTHMOOR
GREEN ROAD, BRIDGWATER, TA7 0AX

**MON 11 MAY
MON 15 JUNE
MON 13 JULY
6 - 7.30 PM**

Flood cafés offer flood-affected people and those worried about future flooding the chance to gather, drink tea, and discuss their experiences in a friendly, relaxed setting. Hosted by Somerset Rivers Authority and facilitated by Glastonbury Mental Health Network, this is a space for open dialogue, discussion, and mutual support. There is no agenda and no cost for attendees.

Tea, coffee, and cake provided
Free parking & level access

Contact Bel.Deering@somerset.gov.uk to book your place or find out more

Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day – Save the Date

The date is set for this year's Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day.

Millfield School (BA16 0ST) on Wednesday 21st October 2026!

Please get in touch if you have any requests for workshops or talks. Contact bel.deering@somerset.gov.uk

Partner Updates

SSEN Funding

[Powering Communities to Net Zero fund - SSEN](#)

SSEN is accepting bids for funding from communities, non-profit organisations and charities to support boosting community resilience to severe weather and other emergencies and also bids for funding for net zero efforts. Previous examples include power banks, general kits at home to support powercuts and snow events, and solar panels for community hubs.

Who can apply?

Your organisation must be in an SSEN Distribution area (which includes parts of Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire & Gloucestershire). You don't need to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution (governing document or set of rules) and be set up on a not-for-profit basis.

The fund is now open for applications with a deadline of 21st May.

Any questions, please contact colin.mcmillan@sse.com

Somerset Rivers Authority Update

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is investing £2.84million in 17 schemes and activities across Somerset to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding.

Among new elements in the SRA's 2026-27 programme of works are a project to reduce flooding along the A358 at Donyatt Hill; a study into the idea of siting permanent pumps at Dunball, at the interface of the River Sowey - King's Sedgemoor Drain system with the River Parrett north of Bridgwater; and a contribution to Environment Agency plans to improve pumping arrangements at Bathpool, on the edge of Taunton. These initiatives are partly a response to floods earlier this year.

There is continued funding for localised early flood warning systems (see the Community Flood Hub: <https://cfh.aquaticinformatics.net>), for natural flood management, for drain jetting, and for community projects involving the SRA's community team.

Some additional main river maintenance will be done by the Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards, drawing upon Environment Agency support and knowledge.

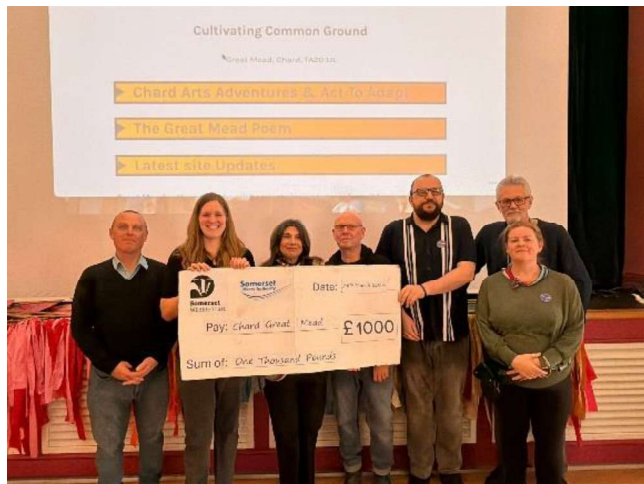
The SRA's Community Flood Action Fund has another £240,000, so not-for-profit organisations with good localised knowledge of Somerset flooding problems can take practical actions with obvious benefits. Next deadline for grant applications for £3,000 to £20,000: 24 May.

More details:

<https://www.somerset-rivers-authority.org.uk/flood-risk-work/sra-enhanced-programme-2026-27/>



Somerset Wildlife Trust Climate Adaptation Update



Thanks to the new round of funding from the [Somerset Rivers Authority \(SRA\)](https://www.somerset-rivers-authority.org.uk/), we have continued to support communities around Somerset on building tailored Climate Adaptation Plans.

Over March, we have engaged the communities of Frome, Chard and the Mudford, Ashington & Chilton Cantelo area in the Act to Adapt process.

While Frome have been busy preparing for the Launch of their Climate Adaptation Plan in Summer, we are happy to announce that Chard's plan has been successfully launched! With SRA seed funding of £1,000.00, Great Mead and the

Chard Town Council will work in collaboration to kickstart action from the Climate Adaptation Plan.

The Climate Adaptation Plans are created from community workshops, before being shaped at community events. These consultations are a brilliant opportunity for people to input their ideas on the four priority actions identified for the plan.

Two consultations have recently taken place at Mudford Village Hall, which involved encouraging feedback for the Mudford, Ashington, and Chilton Cantelo plan!

For more information about the Act to Adapt journey, please go to:

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/act-to-adapt>

Work with the Somerset Council

In other news, our Climate Adaptation Officer is working with Somerset Council, University of Bristol, and the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) hub over 2026 to deliver practical tools and procedures for Somerset Council, including:

- A structured analysis of the barriers and opportunities for Somerset Council to act on community adaptation plans and include them in processes and policies.
- New council procedures for incorporating community adaptation proposals into planning decisions.
- Staff training protocols to support more effective community engagement on climate issues.
- Decision-making guidance setting out how community plans connect to planning applications and policy development.
- A co-designed monitoring framework tracking policy adoption, institutional change, and community capacity over time.

These outputs will be developed with and for Somerset Council and designed to be replicable so that Somerset's approach can inform other local authorities across the UK.

Thank you again for your continued support.

The Climate Adaptation Team at Somerset Wildlife Trust

Met Office App

The Met Office has recently refreshed their app making it easier to get instant alerts of warnings in your area and access all UK weather warnings via a single click. Read more here:

<https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/weather-app>

Emergency Volunteer Action Group (EVAG)

EVAG continues to issue flood resilience kit to householders, having gained experience by issuing to over 120 households in Somerset so far. All we need is the name and address, with contact details of threatened households and we will visit, survey and issue kit.

Flood wardens are our primary contact to guide us to the right addresses.

Contact us on evag@evag.uk

Bath & North East Somerset Council Emergency Planning Support

Bath & North East Somerset Council is continuing to encourage community groups and businesses to start the process of creating a resilience plan to ensure that in the event of an incident, such as a fire, flood or utility cuts, they can support the emergency services response and help their community recover quickly. To find out more visit: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/plan-emergency>

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives

Emergency Preparedness

For Communities in Bath and North East Somerset

Prepare for the known risks in your area

- Flooding
- Severe Weather
- Fire

Emergency Community Contacts

They will help coordinate response in the community and they will liaise with the emergency services and local authority.

- Know who your Emergency Community Contacts are
- Have a home emergency plan for you and your family
- Know where your closest place of safety is

Prepare an Emergency Preparedness Kit

- Torch/battery powered lantern
- A list of key contacts, phone numbers/addresses
- First aid kit
- Bottle of water/snacks
- Phone charger/portable battery charger

Don't forget to plan for your pets!

- Food & water for a few days
- Travel carrier
- Pet & vet documentation

For further information go to www.bathnes.gov.uk/plan-emergency

Young people & Community Resilience – Duke of Cornwall award

The Duke of Cornwall Community Safety Award was launched in 2012 in response to significant flooding in Cornwall. The award aims to educate and train young people to assist before, during and after a crisis. It was developed to give young people in the UK an opportunity to learn what to do in an emergency.

There is no requirement to register to take part in the award scheme. All of the materials and resources including an award handbook are available from this site: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/fire-and-rescue-service/keeping-safe/community-safety/community-safety-award/>

Other Environment Agency News

How you can help report waste crime



Waste crime is dealt with in accordance with size, scale, environmental impact and who's involved.

The Environment Agency is responsible for dealing with large scale waste crime. This looks like more than a lorry load of waste. Signs that you could be witnessing waste crime include:

- increased numbers of lorries entering a site
- drastic increases in waste stored on sites in a short period of time
- activity out of hours
- waste going in but not coming out
- smoke
- water pollution
- machinery operating like excavators, dust, noise and increased site work

You can report these types of waste crimes and those you believe are involved to our partner, Crimestoppers. 100% anonymous. Always. 0800 555 111 or online: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>

Local councils are responsible for dealing with small scale waste crimes, such as fly-tipping. They also have powers to fine unregistered waste carriers, to investigate and deal with statutory nuisance and waste issues, such as someone burning waste in their garden impacting their neighbour and noise and dust nuisance from waste activities.

You can report these types of waste crimes to your local council:
www.gov.uk/find-local-council

In addition, local councils share responsibility with the Environment Agency for some medium scale waste crimes such as illegal dumping, disposal, treatment and burning.

Information about Prolonged Dry Weather

Prior to this winter's flooding, from spring to December 2025 the Wessex area was in a period of prolonged dry weather. An exceptionally wet winter reversed this, however with a changing and unpredictable climate the prospects of another period of prolonged dry weather remains something we must prepare for. You can learn more about our drought work here and how you can help: <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engageenthq.com/dry-weather-information-2025>

We encourage everyone to use water responsibly. You can find water-saving advice and guidance at: [Lessons from drought | CCW, Waterwise and the Environment Agency - CCW](#)

Water Situation Report

Water Situation Report – December to March 2026

Rainfall – For Wessex, December to January was exceptionally wet. It was the second wettest 3-month period on record with 475mm of rainfall. In February, almost all areas recorded close to or more than double the long term average (LTA) rainfall. In general, the south of Wessex has recorded more rainfall than the North. March was the first relatively dry month of 2026 with an average of 34mm of rain in Wessex, only 54% of the long-term average.

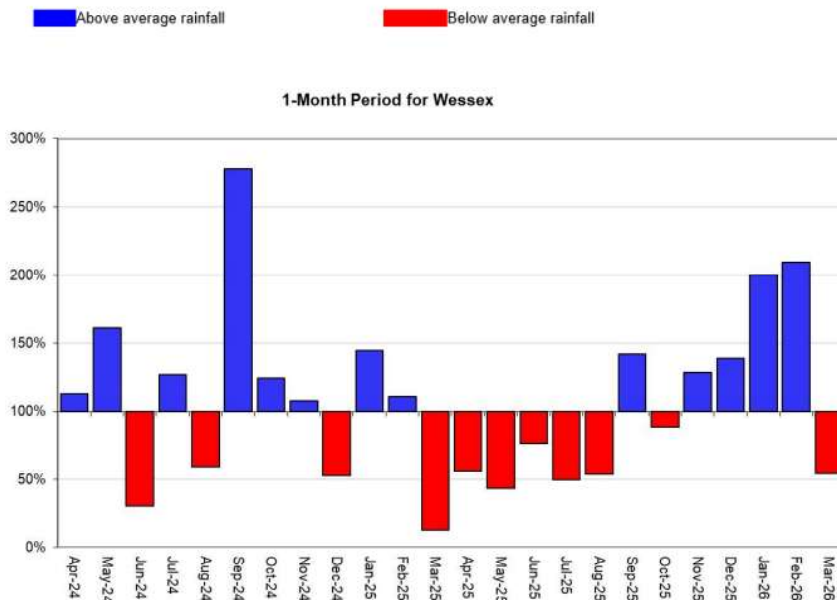


Figure 1: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 24 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each region and for England.

River flows - In March, river flows fell in the north of Wessex in response to the drier weather. Most flows remained higher in the south of Wessex due to supporting baseflow from the Chalk aquifer.

Groundwater – During February, groundwater levels increased rapidly in response to rainfall resulting in widespread groundwater flooding. However, groundwater levels fell across most of Wessex in March in response to the low rainfall. At the end of the month, most monitoring sites reported normal or above normal levels

Reservoirs - Both Wessex Water and Bristol Water reservoir levels remained close to capacity throughout March. The combined levels at the end of the month for Wessex Water were approximately 99% capacity while for Bristol Water, combined levels were approximately 97% capacity. These levels are typical for this time of year.

	2026	December	January	February	March
Flood Alert					
Fluvial		64	62	23	3
Tidal		23	21	12	2
Groundwater S Wessex		2	3	0	0
Flood Warning					
Fluvial		50	63	20	0
Tidal		2	13	3	0

Groundwater S Wessex	4	32	2	1
Severe Flood Warning				
Fluvial	0	2	0	0
Tidal	0	0	0	0
Totals	145	196	60	6

Table 1: Flood alerts and warnings issued from December to March 2026

Read the full water situation reports here: [Water situation: area monthly reports for England - GOV.UK](#)

Useful Information

Useful Contacts

Contact Floodline on **0345 988 1188** 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 environment incident.

Where to find further information

For local weather information including weather warnings visit the Met Office at:
www.metoffice.gov.uk

The Met Office's Community Resilience website: [Met Office Community Resilience](#)

Get flood warnings: www.gov.uk/get-flood-warnings

For river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels: [River, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels](#)

To find out more about preparing for flooding: www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding

[Wessex Area Water Situation Reports](#). Monthly reports are produced on Gov.uk

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

The National Flood Forum provide further advice and support at:
www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Flooding and Health advice from gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/publications/flooding-and-health-public-advice

For Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Flood Plan templates:
[BeFloodReady – Property Flood Resilience \(PFR\) | Helping Reduce Flood Risk](#)

Communities Prepared: Flood warden booklets and online training:
<https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/>

Your Watercourse: rights and roles:
[Your watercourse: rights and roles | Engage Environment Agency](#)

Keeping In Touch

We need your help to keep our list of contact details up to date:

In the two short videos we describe why we need your contact details and how we will use them to help support you in your role as Flood Warden or Community Emergency Volunteer. We also explain why, how, and when our Flood Warning Duty Officer might want to contact you.

[Flood Warden Video 1](#)

[Flood Warden Video 2](#)

Please email us at floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk with your name, your community and contact number.

You have rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the supervisory authority for data protection legislation. The ICO website has a full list of your rights under data protection legislation, you can access this here:

[Your data matters| ICO](#)

For general information on how the Environment Agency treats your personal data and how to contact us, see our Personal Information Charter:

[Personal information charter - Environment Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

No longer a Flood Warden? - [Unsubscribe](#)



Unsubscribe to our Newsletter:

[Unsubscribe](#)