

Winter 2023 Newsletter



An update from Devon County Council's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team.

Find out about what we have been doing over the last 6 months as part of Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

A copy of the full Strategy can be found on our [website](#).

Our Vision

To be a leading authority in the management and reduction of flood risk in the County of Devon. We will work efficiently and collaboratively with our partners and engage with communities to make Devon more resilient to flooding and ready to adapt to climate change by promoting sustainable flood risk management and using natural solutions where possible. In response to the climate and ecological emergency, flood risk infrastructure will play its part in achieving a net-zero carbon Devon and protecting and enhancing the natural environment – indeed natural flood risk management solutions will be considered before hard engineering. Additionally, flood risk infrastructure will take opportunities to improve communities' access to and enjoyment of green spaces, and to conserve and enhance local landscape and heritage assets.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team News

Over the last 6 months, the team have been involved in numerous flood recovery activities following the flood events that affected East Devon and surrounding areas on 9th May, Crediton on 18th June and the most recent flood incident effecting over 250 properties across Devon on 17th September. In partnership with the Environment Agency, District and Parish Councils, we have carried out flood reconnaissance in affected areas, held drop-in sessions for affected residents and have been compiling and publishing a series of flood investigation reports on each significant event.

The team have also been working hard on developing flood studies and improvement works, Natural Flood Management (NFM) and the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP), in addition to fulfilling other statutory duties to provide land drainage consents and supporting the Local Planning Authorities with sustainable drainage expertise.

Flood Risk Management www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement

Flood Incidents

9th May 2023 Storms

Following the flooding of over 100 properties in the Otter Valley and wider Devon, we have now published an initial flood investigation report, as required under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This report outlines the locations affected, the extent of flooding and known causes. Risk Management Authorities are identified where possible as having responsibilities to take action and we have shared this report with them all. The May report can found on our [website](#).

18th June 2023, flooding in Crediton

Nine properties were flooded in Crediton in June from surface water following a short duration heavy rainfall event. Local drainage systems became overwhelmed which led to multiple properties flooding. This report is soon to be published on our website.

Right: The Crediton Inn on Mill St, Crediton (photo credit: Crediton Courier).



17th September 2023 Storms



Above: Kenton Primary School (photo credit, BBC News)

On Sunday 17th September, significant flooding was experienced across Devon as a result of an intense rainfall event. Over 250 properties were flooded. Watercourses overtopped and drainage systems became overwhelmed from large amounts of surface water runoff, which led to multiple properties flooding in Devon. The areas worst affected areas were Kenton, Exeter and Topsham, Cullompton, Harberton and Harbertonford, in addition to many other locations across the County.

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Community flood drop in sessions

Following the flooding in September, 'drop in' events were held in Kenton, Topsham and Harberton throughout October, providing an opportunity for affected residents to share information about the events and to get help and advice. This information has been used to piece together what is known about the flood extent and mechanisms and to help inform any recommended actions to take forward.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Councils that helped to host the events and all of those that attended these sessions, as well as our colleagues in Highways, the Environment Agency, South West Water and Exeter, Teignbridge and South Hams District Councils.

Report flooding to your property on the Flood Online Reporting Tool, FORT

If you are aware of any flooding in your area and not had the opportunity to discuss this with us, then please do contact us through the floodrisk@devon.gov.uk mailbox or alternatively report the incident on the Flood Online Reporting Tool ([FORT](#)).



We use this to gather and record information about flooding that has taken place, in particular when internal flooding of a property has occurred.

Flooding, including muddy flood water or soil erosion from local land entering the water system should also be reported to the Environment Agency Incident Hotline number: 0800 807060. It is a freephone number and is available 24/7. For more information on [who to contact during or after a flood event](#) please refer to our website

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

DCC's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team is committed to the delivery of flood improvement works throughout the county and will continue to endorse NFM measures either as standalone projects or within larger flood improvement schemes to future proof against the effects of climate change. To progress this, DCC is currently working in partnership with the Environment Agency to deliver NFM pilot studies in a few selected locations across Devon.

In September 2023 the government announced £25 million funding for improving flood resilience through a new NFM programme. DCC and the Environment Agency together, have submitted expressions of interest for two priority catchment areas. One for the Otter catchment, following the significant flooding in East Devon in May 2023 and a second for the Harbourne catchment as a result of the more recent flooding in September 2023. The outcome of the submissions will be announced early 2024.

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Defra Six Year Programme 2021-2027

We are now in year 3 of Defra's £5.2bn 6-year programme for flood and coastal erosion risk management, with a target of better protecting 336,000 properties across the country. We cannot tackle this on our own, so there is a reliance on collaboration with all Risk Management Authorities including the Environment Agency, water companies, Unitary, County and District Councils and Highways. Each authority has their part to play in tackling the many sources of flood risk to achieve the target set.

Flood Improvement Projects

DCC continue working on the delivery of flood improvement schemes to make Devon more resistant and resilient to flooding. We are working with our consultants to investigate and develop schemes that subject to funding, will be delivered over the coming funding window up to 2027 and beyond.

Many of the schemes currently being progressed are property flood resilience (PFR) focused. The sector continues to experience significant challenges due to the availability and rising costs of materials and increased demand. DCC have worked tirelessly to continue to progress these and to help overcome the challenges posed.

Beeson

Works commenced on the flood alleviation works in Beeson in May this year. However, unfortunately in June our contractor informed us they would be going out of business and subsequently vacated the site. As a result of leaving the site part way through completion with highly disruptive road closures in place, we made the very difficult decision to temporarily backfill excavations to allow the road to be opened to traffic for the busy summer season.



Above: Open excavations left by contractor who went out of business during the works

Once resolving the contractual and legal issues that had arisen from this unfortunate situation, we were able to undertake a new procurement exercise to get a new contractor in place to finish the works. To minimise further disruption to the residents in this small village, the remaining works are planned to occur in two phases: the first includes the works on private land and off the highway and is to take place in before Christmas; The second phase which requires a road closure will be undertaken in the new year following the Christmas holidays.

Longbrook Street and South Pool, PFR

Unfortunately, the contractor due to deliver the PFR schemes in both Longbrook Street in Exeter and South Pool in the South Hams also went out of business earlier in the year. Again, following on from the due contractual and legal process we were able to commence with re-tendering the work. This process is now completed, and we have identified a preferred supplier. This challenging project, due to much of the work taking place on listed buildings will now move into the delivery phase once again. We hope the works will be completed in late spring 2024.

Barnstaple West

The PFR works to better protect 40 residential properties who suffered from surface water flooding in August of 2020 has now moved into the delivery phase following the award of contract through the Environment Agencies PFR framework. It is hoped that the works will be complete by summer 2024.

Devon Resilience Innovation Project



Devon Resilience Innovation Project DRIP

The Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP) is one of 25 projects in the country funded by Defra as part of the flagship £150 million Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme to develop and test new approaches to flood resilience.

Devon County Council and 18 partners have been awarded over £7 million of funding over a 6-year period (April 2021 – March 2027) to deliver thirty flood resilience pilot projects in rapid response catchments in Devon, including installing NFM measures, PFR measures in targeted community facilities and providing localised surface water flood warning systems. The project will also develop and test new spatial planning tools to ensure flood resilience is part of the decision-making process.

DRIP is an opportunity to work towards creating climate resilient places which are greener, cleaner, and more flood resilient. Overall DRIP will test and trial a range of replicable low-cost resilience actions that can be delivered by local authorities and communities in the future where traditional flood defences are shown not to be appropriate or cost beneficial.

Flood Risk Management www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement

Communities have been identified and selected to become part of the project by the project partners. Partners will start engaging with targeted communities to develop further the flood resilience interventions over the next 6 months.

Communications and Media

A new dedicated website, and social media accounts (@devonfloodresilience on Facebook and Instagram) have been developed as part of DRIP's wider communications strategy:

DRIP website: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/drip/>



[Devon Resilience Innovation Project \(@devonfloodresilience\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)



[Devon Resilience Innovation Project | Facebook](#)

Future media initiatives will include short films, press releases and a quarterly newsletter to project partners. This will raise the public profile and awareness of this important project and allow partners to share successes and lessons learned. The social media will be used to provide regular project updates and news.

NFM Pilots

Devon County Council/DRIP Natural Flood Management Pilots are operating Exton, Stokeinteighhead and South Pool.



Progress with the Exton NFM pilot has been significant and greatly helped by Clinton Devon Estate's (CDE) openness to the idea of slowing the flow of surface water in the upper catchment. CDE have embarked upon a comprehensive suite of NFM measures including many leaky dams, leat alterations, and a hedge bank bund on low lying flood plain land at the bottom of the catchment. Other landowners have followed suit and there are more measures planned for CDE tenanted land. The South Pool pilot is likely to focus on soil management, with some leaky dams being installed, and work to extend water storage capacity on the flood plain.

As part of the DRIP NFM funding agreements, a new multi-year revenue agreement has been developed to support better soil management in catchments, and there are substantial water storage gains to be made in South Pool catchment by extending our scope in this way. We are working in tandem with the Environment Agency's Soils Management Team and the Catchment Sensitive Officer in order to support farmers in the area with soil testing and choice of interventions.

The Stokeinteighhead NFM pilot has benefitted from an engaged community with a strong flood emergency group, and a history of discussion around the installation of nature based solutions to help increase infiltration and stop large amounts of sediment from being deposited after flood waters recede. A previous scheme designed on behalf of DCC will be resurrected as part of the measures planned for the catchment. This is large scale and has consents already in place. Another previously discussed scheme is being reviewed for adaptation to DRIP's budgetary constraints and wider measures have been proposed and agreed by landowners and DCC's own DRIP NFM committee.

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Property Flood Resilience

Stokeinteignhead Village residents have previously made good use of DCC's own residential PFR scheme and is set to access funds for DRIPs PFR fund for community assets. This will see the village hall and shop become more resilient and available to help residents in the event of a flood. Other target areas include Lympstone, Combe Martin, Chillington, Stokenham, Cullompton, Ashburton, Sampford Peverall, East Budleigh. Suitable community asset properties are being offered free grant funded PFR surveys by DRIP's chosen contractors: Jeremy Benn Associates (JBA) Consulting who have extensive experience in this area. For those properties who choose to install recommended measures on completion of survey, there is limited funding available under the project on a first come, first served basis.



Partner News



Our partner organisations are continuing to engage with communities across Devon to improve their resilience to flooding and discuss DRIP pilot projects. NFM interventions are being designed, and some installations have begun in catchments across the county including the Little Dart, Walkhampton, Ottery St Mary, Combe Martin and Stokeinteignhead. We continue to work closely with our partners to share learning from the innovative projects being carried out.

Surface Water Flood Forecasting

DCC are continuing to work with JBA to develop the technology for our new surface water flood forecasting system. We are beginning to engage with the communities selected to trial the system. Small groups of volunteers will begin to receive alarms early in 2024 and use this guidance to enact community flood plans when necessary. Feedback from these volunteers will inform future improvements and development of the technology, to ensure the system is useful to communities and can improve their resilience to flooding.

Smart gullies

DCC are working on trialling 'Smart Gullies' in Devon's highway gullies in three locations across the county. Installation of the sensors is due to take place this winter and they will be in place collecting data until Spring 2025. The sensors are small devices which can be attached to the underside of the gully cover or gully wall and will monitor silt and water level. The sensors work using radar to collect data and mobile phone signal to transmit the data and can operate for up to five years before requiring a new battery. This data will help DCC Highways plan maintenance and react to flooding and blocked gullies more effectively.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

We have finalised Devon's Sustainable Drainage Guidance and it is now made available on our website [here](#), for use by the public, developers and Local Planning Authorities.

The proposal to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is still ongoing. The result of this will make DCC the SuDS Approval Body, which will involve the approval, adoption, inspection and maintenance of all new SuDS features serving two or more properties. A full consultation of the draft proposals was due in November of this year but has been delayed until January 2024, however there is still the indication that implementation is being pursued prior to the next General Election, due by January 2025.

The SuDS team are involved with providing consultation advice to the Sherford Consortium for Sherford New Town, and the Woolwell development led by the Urban Fringe Team at South Hams District Council.

The SuDS Team also provide comments on minerals planning applications. The team have previously provided comments for the Linhay Quarry extension. The SuDS Team have visited the site to see how the works for the road are progressing. The new road will drain into basins before discharging to watercourses at restricted rates.

Right: As well as surface water management, the Linhay Quarry owners have also included basins to manage springs further up the catchment.



Funding and Community Support

Property Flood Resilience Funding Scheme

Following the significant flooding this year there has been an increased interest in Devon's Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Scheme. For more information on the PFR scheme and funding policy, and to download an application form please [visit our website](#).

The PFR scheme is available for residential property owners to apply for up to £5,000 worth of funding. With this, a property survey will be carried out and a list of recommended resilience measures produced, which will need to be purchased and then installed by a selected contractor. Any additional budget requirements over £5,000 are at the expense of the property owner.

There is limited funding, with an allocation to be made available each year by Defra, Local Levy and DCC. Applications will therefore be prioritised based on the criteria set out in DCC's PFR Policy to maximize the number of properties benefitting from this opportunity and to ensure those properties with the greatest need will receive the funding.

Get advice on making your home more resilient to flooding: [Be Flood Smart | Flood Protection | Flood Re](#)

The Devon Community Resilience Forum

Recent flood events across Devon have been due to intense rainfall events, overwhelming local drainage and watercourses, causing flooding to homes and roads with very little or no warning. This highlights the need for more resilient communities, through either making changes to your home, writing or updating your community emergency plan or getting hold of the right equipment to help you do this.

The Devon Community Resilience Forum continues to support and engage with local communities to improve local resilience, with community grants available:

[Apply for up to £250 to develop your community emergency plan.](#)

[Apply for up to £1,500 for small scale works and resilience equipment.](#)



Twitter: [@DevComsTogether](#)
[#devonresilience](#)

Flood Risk Management www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement

Useful Information

The following documents provide useful information and guidance:

[National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#)

[Devon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027](#)

[NFM Guidance for Devon](#) (PDF) / Accessible version: [NFM Guidance for Devon Webpage](#)

[Living with Water Leaflet](#) Your guide to riparian rights and responsibilities

Meet the Team

Flood & Coastal Risk Manager	Martin Hutchings
Flood & Coastal Risk Project Engineer	John Galt
Flood & Coastal Risk Officer - Projects	Vacant
Flood & Coastal Risk SuDS Engineer	Hock Lee
Flood & Coastal Risk Officer - SuDS	Joshua Lewis
Land Drainage Consents and Area Issues:	
Principal Flood & Coastal Risk Officer	Jessica Bishop
Flood & Coastal Risk Officer	Thomas Aldridge
Flood & Coastal Risk Officer	Jago Burris
FCRIP Project Manager	Doe Fitzsimmons
FCRIP Project Officer	Gale Alexander
Graduate Environment Project Officer (FCRIP)	Annabel Beasley
Environment Technician	Kieran Miller
Graduate Flood & Coastal Risk Projects Intern	Ruilin Jiao
Civil Engineering Apprentice	Kaja Potoniec

What to do in the event of a flood

Your guide on who to call

In the event of a flood, there are many authorities available to help. Below outlines who should be contacted for the various types of flooding incidents and emergencies that occur. The local authorities rely on information reported to them to inform any investigations and prioritisation of investment.

If it is an **emergency** and there is danger to life as a result of flooding, you should not hesitate to call **999**.

To report flooding of the highway and blocked drains contact Devon County Council's Highway Customer Service Centre on **0345 155 1004** or visit the [Roads and Transport webpage](#). Office hours are Monday to Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturdays 9am – 1pm. For emergencies outside of these hours call **01392 383329**

For any flooding on major trunk roads (the M5, A30, A38, A35 and A303) contact the Highways Agency on **0300 123 5000** (24-hour service)

To report flooding from sewers and water pipes contact South West Water on **0344 346 2020** (24-hour service)

For enquiries about flood warnings contact the Environment Agency's Floodline on **0345 988 1188** (24-hour service)

For general enquiries about Main River or flooding from the sea contact the Environment Agency on **03708 506 506**

For all other flooding enquiries contact the Devon County Council Flood Risk Management Team on **0345 155 1015** or email floodrisk@devon.gov.uk.

Preparing for a flood

Please refer to Devon County Council and Environment Agency web pages for advice on what to do before, during and after a flood. In the first instance of flooding and sandbag requests contact your local District or Parish Council to be directed to any local sandbag supplies that may be available.



Flood Alert: Flooding is possible. Be prepared.



Flood Warning: Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.



Severe Flood Warning: Severe flooding. Danger to life

Warnings no longer in force: No further flooding is currently expected in your area.

Sign up to flood warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

Flood Risk Management www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement