

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023



The year got off to a busy start for the NFF, with close to 100 flood warnings issued nationwide, this was a difficult time for many communities and particularly so for those in York and Shrewsbury, where the Ouse and Severn burst their banks, as well as those in the East Sussex and the West Country impacted by flooding.

This spring has also seen us pushing ahead with our campaigning work, launching our new Parliamentary campaign to improve access to central government funding for flood risk communities. At present, the Defra Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid scheme is hard to navigate and demands time and financial resources which are simply not available, thus leaving many communities unable to access resources.

The NFF is calling for a more responsive, timely allocation of funding that understands the human impact of flooding. In particular, we are highlighting the shortcomings of the current system for those communities that experience repeated flooding [and demanding more action on their behalf].

Our Kent-based project looking at building resilience in communities (BRIC) has now come to an end. This important and successful project led by the NFF's David and Katia included developing several Flood Action Groups. A key element was community-led mapping of flood risk assets and the NFF supported the community to work with the Risk Management Authorities to list missing assets and create and up-to-date and easily accessible list of flood risk assets and to digitise paper maps. In addition, training was given to use mapping software. We are immensely grateful to David for his hard work leading this important project.

Looking ahead, the NFF is joining forces with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management to create an arts exhibition highlighting peoples' experience of flooding. We are asking people to share artwork, poetry and photographs that capture their experiences and hope many of you will submit piece of work. The exhibition will be held at this year's Flood & Coast Conference in Telford and you can find out about more, including how to enter work, later in this newsletter.



RECOVERY

Our recovery team was out and about earlier in the year in the recently flooded areas. We were able to support on many issues.

FLOOD ACTION GROUPS

We have more than 350 Flood Action Groups, each enabling better outcomes for communities.

HELPLINE

Our helpline assists more than 1000 people a year. We are available 365 days a year for all your flood queries.
Tel: 01299 403055 or
Email: info@floodforum.org.uk

SHFAG COMMUNITY DAY

South Hampstead Flood Action Group (SHFAG) was set up after the terrible flooding there in August 2021. This small group has made great progress in the past 18 months.

Start-up was accompanied by a huge amount of work encompassing set up tasks, surveys and meetings. The Group secured meetings with Thames Water and Camden Council and more recently worked with the NFF to explore support options. Keen to benefit from specialist expertise and support, the group has now affiliated with the NFF.

The NFF arranged further multi agency meetings with Thames Water and Camden Council to push matters forward and support the Group's aim of preventing similarly devastating floods happening again by mitigating their effects wherever possible. Key to this was identifying specific objectives to direct interventions and holding the relevant authorities to account.

With the NFF's help and encouragement, SHFAG held a well attended community day on Sunday 5th February. The NFF was pivotal in helping prepare a newsletter about the day. This was distributed across the area but with a particular focus on those properties that had flooded.

On the day, SHFAG members were accompanied by NFF representatives who gave advice and showcased a range flood resilience devices. The day was a real success, attracting around 50 people as well as representatives from CRASH, the local residents' association.

The day covered many topics of interest including advice and guidance on property flood resilience measures, discussion around de-paving and possible collaboration with CRASH.



It also explored interest in a community initiative to monitor gullies as well as coordinated cleaning, support for SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) schemes and common problems residents experience with insurance, relating to building types.

A questionnaire for attendees sought views on a number of possible projects with the aim of establishing which scheme residents felt would bring most benefit to the area. SHFAG hopes these will be funded by monies made available by Thames Water.

Following on from this, SHFAG has now decided that the best use of any funds made available would be one or more SuDS schemes. These would be strategically placed to try and prevent excess surface water reaching the worst affected areas during flood events.

Flood focus for new photography and art exhibition A call for entries

An exhibition of artwork, photography and other creative work will focus on people's experience of flooding. To be shown at this year's Flood and Coast conference, the NFF-backed exhibition aims to highlight both the immediate and lasting impact flooding has on people and communities.

Please send your entries to info@floodforum.org.uk

Flood and Coast runs from 6 – 8 June and is held at the Telford International Centre.

NEW COMMUNITY GUIDANCE ON FLOOD RISK AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM



The NFF has partnered with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to produce new guidance for on how flood risk is dealt with in the English planning system.

Communities should be an important voice in planning decisions and the new guidance will help them to understand how best to be heard and feed in their unique local knowledge.

The guidance aims to help communities make sure their views are heard and are targeted at people who have little or no experience of the planning system but who are worried about the risk of flooding. It takes readers through the processes and language used in the planning system and helps them identify where they can make a difference.

Three newly published guides cover planning practice guidance for flood risk and coastal change, strategic flood risk assessments and using neighbourhood plans to address flood risk. They form part of a collection of nine of easy-to-digest documents encompassing all aspects of flood risk and the planning system.

All nine guides can be downloaded from [HERE](https://tcpa.org.uk/resources/building-a-safer-future/)
<https://tcpa.org.uk/resources/building-a-safer-future/>

NFF WELCOMES NEW APPROACH TO DRAINAGE

A new consistent approach to sustainable drainage systems announced by Government aims to mitigate flood risk by catching and storing surplus water and reducing storm overflow discharges.

Delivered through Schedule 3, the proposed new approach aims to ensure new developments have sustainable drainage systems that reduce the impact of rainfall and consequently the overall volume of water hitting sewers.

Schedule 3 is a framework for the approval and adoption of sustainable drainage systems. It includes an approving body within unitary and county councils along with national standards on the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of sustainable drainage systems for the lifetime of a development. It also makes the right to connect surface water runoff to public sewers subject to approval.

The NFF broadly welcomes the new proposals, highlighting potential benefits for both new housing developments and the wider environment through a reduced risk of flood and associated pollution. But it also believes there is still much more that can and must be done to protect communities from the devastating impact of flooding.

A public consultation on the Government proposals will take place later this year and the new measures are expected to come into effect in 2024.



NFF PROJECTS SELECTED FOR ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FLOOD AND COASTAL RESILIENCE INNOVATION PROGRAMME



Roch Valley neighbourhood flood and climate resilience programme

The Roch Valley's Littleborough and Wardleworth neighbourhoods have both experienced significant flooding from river and surface water, including the impact of Storm Eva in 2015.

Each neighbourhood also faces challenges associated with low incomes and affordability. These include ageing and poor housing conditions along with low insurance uptake and the financial resilience of local businesses and landlords.

This new project aims to create sustainable Neighbourhood Flood and Climate Resilience Plans to help prepare for and manage future flood events. Local communities and businesses will play a pivotal role as the project tests new approaches to flood resilience, benefiting people, infrastructure and the local economy.

Key measures include embedding flood resilience into the Council's housing improvement programme, new environmental works to improve drainage and the increased use of nature-based solutions. This sits alongside working with local businesses to improve their physical and financial resilience and community education and participation programmes. The project will also work with the insurance sector to find ways to increase insurance take up.

A nature-based approach in Slough

The Slough SMART catchment will use plants as a natural flood prevention method. Carefully chosen species will help combat flooding alongside the borough's waterways by soaking up significant amounts of water.

The project has a strong community element and will work closely with community flood forums and residents to understand and harness vital first-hand experience of localised flooding.

The past 13 years have seen seven flood events involving groundwater and floodwater from Slough's Salt Hill Stream and Chalvey Ditches. This project will use natural havens of plants will act like sponges and absorb excess water as well as creating valuable new havens for wildlife and encouraging biodiversity. Underground tanks will be used in key strategic areas to capture and reuse excess water.

It will also see the expansion of the pioneering Mayflower Smart City Platform where biotechnology – using electricity created by the chemical reaction between plant roots and water – alerts the council of plant and ground saturation.

As well as helping to manage flood risk and resilience, the Slough project will help reduce carbon and deliver social and health benefits.



Staffordshire FAIR

Effective community engagement and enabling partnerships between communities and risk management authorities lie at the heart of Staffordshire's FAIR project.

Standing for FLOOD: AWARE, INFORMED, RESILIENT, FAIR will give communities in Stoke on the Trent the skills, knowledge and resources to actively participate in risk management and resilience activities alongside partner agencies.

This community first approach advocated by the NFF will see local residents inform decision making and co-design flood mitigation measures and resilience measures. To best achieve this, communities will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and resources to actively participate in flood risk management and resilience activities alongside other partner agencies.

Lincolnshire Groundwater Project

This important project heralds a new approach to tackling groundwater flooding in Lincolnshire. The NFF is delighted to be playing a key part, ensuring that the views of communities impacted by flooding will be pivotal in shaping new flood mitigation schemes.

A powerful voice for communities lies at the heart of NFF approach and our support is already helping to create a more positive future for residents in Grimsby and Scopwick.

Grimsby

Communities in Grimsby have welcomed support from the NFF and are looking forward to working together as part of the Groundwater Project.

The Chelmsford Avenue community are keen to work in partnership with agencies and authorities to plant a range of trees, bushes and flowers. These will not only help alleviate flood risk but will also attract a variety of wildlife into the area.

Scopwick

Community members shared their vast local knowledge with the project team on its visit to Scopwick. This included detailing current and historical events as well showing project team members exactly where flooding occurs and when.

The project team – made up of representatives from the NFF, Lincolnshire County Council project management and Atkins Consultancy – received a warm welcome from residents and the visit served to highlight the importance of local knowledge. Most importantly, it also underlined just how vital communities are to effective flood alleviation and mitigation.



Remembering Phil Awford

It is with great sadness we have learnt of our colleague Phil Awford's death, and our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

Phil was an exceptional supporter of flooded communities in Gloucestershire. He had great empathy and went above and beyond to fight for better outcomes for those flooded. He had a close interest in property development and always ensured he had a voice in what he believed had the potential to be a flood risk for people, or if any build was planned on a flood plain.

He joined many community events arranged to support those in the immediate aftermath of a flood including being onboard the National Flood Forum recovery trailer.

Phil was a National Flood Forum Trustee in May 2002 to July 2012 and proactively supported the Forum in its development. After stepping down, he remained available and was always there to listen, advise and support. Phil also spent many years on the Severn & Wye RFCC (Regional Flood & Coastal Committee).

We will all have our own memories of Phil, and these are the ones we will cherish – Our overall memory of Phil at the National Flood Forum will be as an unrelenting campaigner for flooded people and a dear friend.

Phil was an amazing example of people power and hard work. I've sat in meetings with him and witnessed his perseverance in seeking better flood management and better people protection

Phiala Mehring - NFF Trustee

Phil was an amazing person, someone who stuck with the difficult issues around flooding and tried to make people's lives better through what he did, day to day. He recognised the real impact of flooding on people, but also got involved with the practicalities of bringing about change.

Paul Cobbing, former CEO of the NFF



SEARCH FOR SKILLS: CAN YOU HELP THE NFF?



The NFF is on the hunt for skills to help us with our vital work with flood risk communities. Might you be the right fit to make a difference?

Trustees wanted

Trustees bring skills and experience to charities like the NFF, helping them to achieve their goals. Being a trustee means you are happy to take on a vital leadership role, helping to lead the NFF and set its future direction.

The NFF is looking for new trustees to join its team with skills covering marketing, legal, finance and human resources as well as corporate and charity fundraising. If you think you are the right fit or would like to find out more, contact amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk for an application form.

Volunteer photographers, video makers and mentors

If you have skills in videomaking, photography and mentoring and have the time and commitment to offer these on volunteer basis, we would love to hear from you.

A small charity run on tight budgets, we make a huge difference to the people and communities we support. Flooding is a devastating experience and has a lasting impact. These rewarding roles will help us to raise the profile of flood hit and flood risk communities and develop our hardworking team.

To apply contact Amanda Davies on amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk

WELCOMING NEW STAFF MEMBER...HAYLEY BEVAN

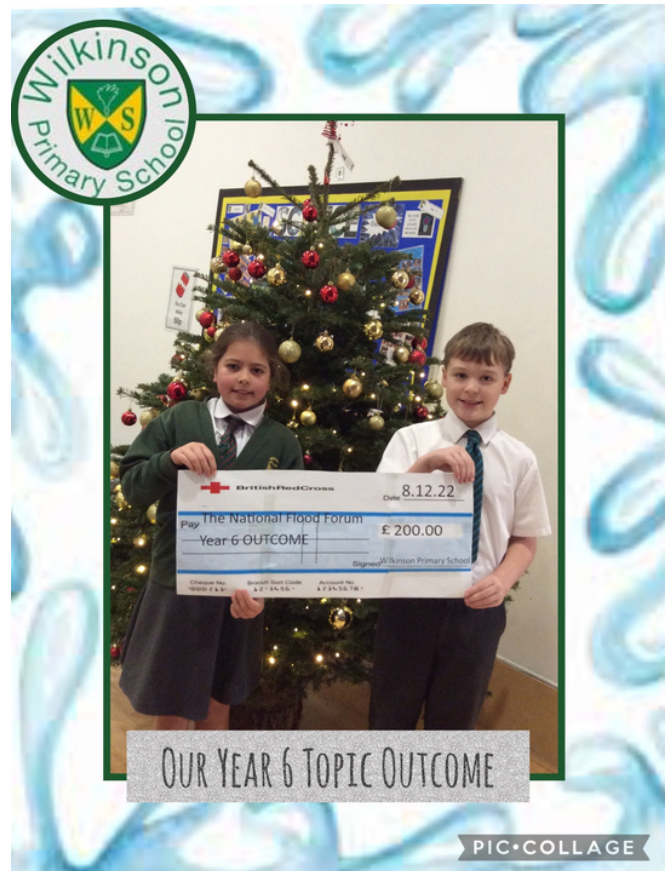
My name is Hayley Bevan. I joined the National Flood Forum in February 2023 as a Trainee Flood Engagement Officer. My degree in Geography & Natural Hazard Management as well as my background in teaching Secondary School Geography has equipped me with the knowledge and skills needed to empower communities to take control of their own flood risk.



PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT FOCUSES ON FLOODING

Pupils at Wilkinson Primary School have been studying natural disasters as part of their geography research. Study areas include the different types of natural disasters from volcanic explosions and hurricanes to flooding and children have produced a variety of work including poems, written accounts, artwork and drama.

Year Six students visited Bewdley – the Worcestershire town that has felt the full force flooding over the years - to learn about the local community and how it has had to adapt to live alongside the River Severn. The visit included examining Bewdley's flood defence systems and using the experience to inform and inspire their own flood defence system designs. This formed part of their Design and Technology work.



Pupils also created an exhibition to showcase their work and sold a variety of items that had been created within their lessons. Funds raised were donated to the NFF to help those whose lives have been affected by flooding.

The NFF team is incredibly grateful for the donation and inspired by the pupil's work.

When communities are hit by a flood it is key that the emergency services work with each other, local authorities and the Environment Agency.

As the water recedes our first role at the National Flood Forum is to go into those communities with our recovery services trailer, open our doors and to support flooded people with the stress and trauma that they have just experienced. Our role is to listen, support and enable people and communities to secure the help they need.

We can move into an area where our experienced staff can support Agency and Local Authority work and communicate with all departments once the blue lights have gone.

We provide immediate emotional and practical advice to flood victims from day one by actively listening to the flooded residents, providing advice and support and providing feedback to agencies/authorities about local concerns.

We can also offer this support on a virtual platform.





WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP US CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FLOODED PEOPLE

When people flood Family ties are ripped apart, you are forced to leave your home, possessions and mementos are destroyed, normality is impacted and the damage is all-consuming.

It can take a year or more to get back into your home after a flood. Floods are much more complex than a simple mop and bucket. Getting your home back to normal after a flood can be filled with challenges that cause unimaginable misery.

That's why we need to ensure the National Flood Forum is here for people. To offer guidance and support, to help navigate stumbling blocks and most importantly as a charity that understands exactly what it is like to flood.

There are many ways to support us to donate visit our website or send by post to National Flood Forum, PO Box 7643, Bewdley, DY12 9BL.

You can also support us as you carry out your everyday shopping. Every donation makes a difference and helps us support more people. Thank you.

