

# Parish Briefing – Flooding

Issued: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Flooding update

Widespread thunderstorms and rain across Somerset on Sunday brought flooding and significant disruption, mainly in West Somerset and Wellington area.

There has been flooding to homes and businesses and teams are working to assess the scope of this confirm the exact number affected. Some roads have also been damaged.

It is estimated about a month's rain fell in a day – a source in Cotford St Luke reported 103.1mm of rain falling. Highways teams dealt with 38 incidents during Sunday.

Our teams are working with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and Avon and Somerset Police to establish an accurate picture of who has been affected and where as quickly as possible.

## Key points

- Our Civil Contingencies Unit, Flood Management and Highways teams are mobilised and will be in the affected areas throughout today and tomorrow co-ordinating the clear-up and providing a range of support. Officers in high vis will be going out to communities and meeting people across the area to assess the level of homes and businesses affected.
- River levels are now falling but a flood warning remains in place for the Tone at Creech St Michael, plus a number of flood alerts remain in place for Blue Anchor, Watchet, Minehead and Porlock.
- Key affected areas include Minehead, Carhampton, Dunster, Withycombe, Watchet and other parts of West Somerset, as well as the Wellington area.
- Housing and adult social care teams worked together to support individuals impacted by flooding in the Wellington area last night and will be supporting individuals across West Somerset today.
- Somerset Council's Customer Contact Centre will have a dedicated team working on the response – callers will be asked to press 1 for flood issues and will be triaged and referred to CCU or partnership agencies where necessary.
- Both the A39 and A396 had to be closed for part of the day due to flooding. Both were reopened by early evening of Sunday but the A39 is likely to have to close again today to allow Highways teams to carry out a clear-up.
- There is further rain forecast throughout today and this week - teams will remain in response mode and residents and businesses are urged to remain vigilant and take necessary action to protect properties.
- Residents and businesses who are concerned about flooding are advised to go to builder's merchants to get sandbags – Somerset Council does not have a supply of these at depots.
- Our communication team is issuing a press release alongside this briefing note summarising the situation and publicising the phone number and other important information. There will be a sustained social media campaign throughout today to help signpost people to help and support, as well as to gather key information on the situation.

- Although we cannot say this event was caused by climate change, the science tells us that events like these are likely happen more frequently. The Council has an important role to play in helping communities become more resilient as well as helping tackle the causes of climate change.

### **Key impacts on roads yesterday attended by Highways teams to make area safe with signage/sandbags:**

- A39 between Holford and Kilve on sharp bend – significant flooding: Cones/sandbags and warning signs.
- Mart Road Minehead - manhole covers blown out of frames
- Olcombe roundabout flooded
- Ponsford Road – flooded
- King George Road Minehead – flooded
- Ponsford Road Minehead – collapsed wall
- A396 Dunster to Weddon Cross – flooded/closed
- Turner Road junction manhole cover
- A39 flooding at Carhampton
- George St Wellington – flooding
- A39 Kilve - flooding

### **What to do**

We are encouraging people to get in touch if they've been affected - anyone who has experienced property flooding can report it online at

<https://swim.geowessex.com/somerset/>, or email [flooding@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@somerset.gov.uk)

If you are aware of anyone who needs support, please advise them to call 0300 123 2224 and choose option 1 during office hours.

Visits to impacted communities will continue tomorrow and we will provide further updates.

### **Flooding and roads – key information**

Heavy rain and flooding present a clear and present danger to drivers – road users are urged **NOT** to attempt to drive across flooded roads as it is not possible to estimate the depth of the water reliably.

Our Highways and Street Scene teams are out today in all affected areas assisting with the clear-up operation and assessing damage to roads.

All roads are now open but please be aware our teams will need to sweep and carry out minor repairs asap.

It's vital to prepare for wet conditions if you have to travel and to proceed with extreme caution if you get caught in flood conditions – you can find information and advice here: [Adverse weather conditions \(somersetroadsafety.org\)](https://www.somersetroadsafety.org)

If you spot a problem with a drain or gully, or any issue on the highway you can report it easily and quickly here - [Report a problem on the road \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk).

## Looking after yourself and mental health

Floodwater can contain hidden dangers such as uncovered manholes or obstacles – so never enter floodwater. We know that heavy rainfall may trigger feelings of anxiety, fear or worry, particularly for those who have been previously affected by flooding. Here are some things you can do to help reduce any feelings of anxiety caused by heavy rainfall and the activation of local flood defences:

- Talk to somebody about how you are feeling, if you don't feel able to talk to friends or family you can call Mindline - Somerset's emotional support and mental health helpline which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 01823 276 892 (local) 0800 138 1692 (freephone).
- Try and do activities that help you to feel less stressed like exercising, reading, listening to music, or meditating.
- Help neighbours and others in your community, look out for each other!
- Follow your normal routine as much as possible.
- Visit the [Every Mind Matters](#) website where you can find lots of tips and exercises to help manage anxiety.
- Stay up to date on weather information and warnings. If you're aware of the latest information, you may gain a sense of control over the situation. [Check for flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## What to do during a flood

There is information to help you on what to do during a flood on the [Somerset Prepared website](#). The key point is to always stay safe, in an immediate flood emergency or where there is a risk to life, follow the advice of the emergency services.

## What to do after a flood

Following a flood there will be hazards revealed as the water clears, consider the following as you recover from the impacts of an incident.

- Assume floodwater has been contaminated with sewage and avoid contact wherever possible. For further health advice when dealing with flood affected areas visit [Public Health England](#)
- It's important to stop harmful germs that might be present in floodwater from spreading to food. For advice on cleaning preparation areas after a flood visit the [Food Standards Agency](#)
- Flooding presents a number of hazards to utilities in the home. Follow [electric](#) safety advice before switching back on.
- Contact your insurer if you haven't already and let them know the situation. They will advise you of the next steps to take in restoring your home and belongings.
- Reporting when your property has flooded helps the Council investigate why the flood has occurred and look for possible methods to mitigate the risk of it happening again in the future.
- Use the [SWIM](#) website to update your flood record/record recent flooding.

## What can I do to prepare for flooding?

Thinking ahead and preparing for what the weather may bring can make a real difference in your home, business and community.

One of the first things to check is whether your property is at [risk of flooding](#).

We also recommend taking precautionary measures and purchasing your own sandbags in case of flooding emergencies. If sandbags are not available, you can use:

- rolled-up mats or carpets
- bags of garden compost
- pillowcases filled with soil (don't overfill them)
- timber boards (possibly screwed to door frames, sealed with mastic)

## Protect yourself from future flooding

It is advisable to plan how you'll respond to a flood. Information and plans are available to help you [plan ahead](#).

We also encourage you to download the ['Prepare. Act. Survive.' flood plan](#) to help reduce the impact of flooding.

You can find up to date information on flood warnings by visiting the [flood warnings](#) page on the Government's website.

**ENDS**