

Editor's Note: Recent flash flooding across many parts of the UK have seen our recovery trailer on the road at a time of year when many people might least expect it. In Surrey the issue of new developments putting pressure on the ageing infrastructure has been a recurring theme. Let us know if you've experienced the same as it's an important issue that we're keen to push.

Residents in Bury who are reinstating their homes six months after the Boxing Day floods attended our recent Flood Exhibition to find out more about flood products and services that are available. Our exhibitions provide a good opportunity to discuss Property Level Protection. If you think this would be useful to you, please contact your local authority and ask them to request our Flood Exhibition service.

With products in mind, we're also highlighting a warning by the Property Care Association about a British Standards Institution (BSI) Kite Mark scheme that could mislead consumers about protecting properties from flood. This is well worth reading before you start spending money.

On a more positive note, we were delighted to receive donations from fundraising events last month and we shine (a slightly shameless) spotlight on how you can fundraise and support us too.

Finally, we will soon be sending out a survey asking for your perceptions and views of the National Flood Forum. We want to make sure we're working in your interests, so your feedback on the survey will be gratefully received.

As ever, your views, comments and feedback are always welcome at bulletin@floodforum.org.uk

Spotlight On: Flood Products

Trade body concerns over flood assurance standard

The Property Care Association (PCA), the trade association for property level protection measures, along with a wide range of organisations, including the National Flood Forum, has raised concerns that householders could be misled over the capability of flood protection products being fitted to their properties.

A new British Standards Institution (BSI) Kite Mark Installation Scheme 'fails to provide the necessary assurance to homeowners' says Steve Hodgson, chief executive of the PCA.

He went on: "The scheme has been written in such a way that it can be

interpreted to mean that the installation of a flood protection product can then make the whole property protected with the Kite Mark standard.

"But in truth the scheme can only assure homeowners that a product tested and approved under the Kite Mark scheme has been *fitted properly*. The scheme cannot reassure homeowners that their homes are protected from flooding.

"As a result, we believe the scheme and the promotional material supplied by BSI is misdirecting consumers who are using government money to buy flood protection that may not work."

Many manufacturers and installers of



flood protection products have their own accreditation systems for the work that they do. This is to ensure that the people installing their products do so properly.

The BSI Kite Mark Installation scheme implies that it is an industry wide scheme, but in fact it has been designed with just one

manufacturer, rather than the whole industry. It also implies that a property that has been fitted with these products everywhere is fully protected.

However, it is simply not possible to make these assertions. In the last few months we have seen perfectly good schemes and products overtopped. Where flooding has lasted several hours water has found its way in to a building. One supplier's products will never be suitable for all eventualities and it is important that people choose measures that best deal with the flood risk, the building construction and the lifestyle of the occupants.

It is also likely that other measures will be required, such as ensuring

that water can't get in to the building through cable entry points or poor pointing.

Like flood defence schemes, flood protection products can never guarantee that a property will not flood, however good the scheme.

So what next?

The PCA says its approach to BSI to address the situation has so far drawn a blank. Mr Hodgson said: "We have made BSI aware of these issues, including the safety risks associated with families thinking they are safe from flooding when they are not, yet nothing has been done to remove the potential for confusion. For the sake of consumer confidence, we call on BSI to clarify

the situation."

Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum said: "BSI standards are meant to provide people with the assurance that they are getting what they think they are paying for. Unfortunately, in this instance the wording is inappropriate; it's all too easy for people to think that they will be fully protected from flooding, when in reality they are not.

"People who are trying to better protect their homes and businesses have often recently been flooded, are suffering enough stress and trauma already and are vulnerable. BSI knows the problems that this scheme is causing and needs to change its approach."

So what can you do?

1. A BSI document, **PAS 1188** covers the performance of property products. In contrast to the scheme referenced in the previous article, it was developed by the industry as a whole, together with Government, the Environment Agency, trade bodies and organisations with relevant and particular expertise, including the National Flood Forum, and covers all products. It is a useful measure that a particular product meets a particular standard.
2. Due to flooding in recent years, we now have evidence collected through Defra funded projects about how Property Protections Schemes should be developed. To ensure that the right measures are installed in a property it is really important that an independent flood risk assessment is undertaken by an organisation completely unconnected with the manufacturers and installers. Once the work is completed it should then be inspected independently.
3. See the [Protect my Property](#) page on the National Flood Forum website for all the latest guidance on how this should be done. In particular, the [Six Steps to Flood Resilience](#) and the Defra [PLP Advice for Local Authorities](#).



Six Steps to Flood Resilience

4. The National Flood Forum is pressing for a proper accreditation system to be introduced for Independent Flood Risk surveyors urgently, so that people (and local authorities) can easily understand who has the necessary skills to do this work.

Still Recovering: A view from Radcliffe Flood Action Group (Greater Manchester)

When the River Irwell broke its banks on Boxing Day 2015 it sent a surge of water, foul sewerage and debris into properties across Radcliffe. Homes were damaged, cars destroyed, families displaced. In the immediate aftermath the community came out in support of each other and subsequently a small group of residents formed the Radcliffe Flood Action Group. The National Flood Forum was asked to support the group and one of our first actions was to work in partnership with them and Bury Council to hold a Flood Exhibition for the 400 householders who were flooded in the area.

Colette Jones, chair of the Radcliffe Flood Action group said: “Six months on, many people are still not able to return home. Struggles with insurance, independent survey advice, availability of builders and a long list of questions about the reinstatement process all need tackling. Lots of homeowners haven’t yet applied for the £5000 grant and we’re fast beginning to realise that it won’t go far enough to really protect our homes from future flooding. The true cost is likely to be in excess of £35,000 which is a considerable sum – particularly when there’s a constant fear that we could flood again this winter... It doesn’t bear thinking about.

“A lot of people think getting a new kitchen or having the house re-done is a happy by-product of being flooded. It’s not. It’s anything but. I didn’t want a new kitchen, I was happy with what I’d already got.

“People are often surprised to hear that we’re still not back in our homes but due to widespread flooding across other parts of the North in December, it took weeks before we could even get access to any driers for our homes. More houses flooded in Bury than York but I don’t think many people realise how bad it was.

“Nevertheless we have to keep pushing on. In a bid to help ourselves, we’ve formed the Radcliffe Flood Action Group. We hope the National Flood Forum will be able to support us as we seek answers from different agencies and press for action to be taken to protect us from further flooding.

“The Flood Exhibition was a positive start and we’ll be looking towards a multi-agency meeting in the not too distant future. One of the good things to come out of the flood is that neighbours who didn’t know each other before have come together in support. It’s safe to say I didn’t ever imagine I’d be chairing a Flood Action Group but we need to pull together to make sure we’re doing all we can to prevent flooding in future.

“I recently heard the chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, Mary Creagh MP, say that the issue of waterways not being maintained properly is a ‘major obstacle because no action is action is being taken to sort them’. I have to agree with her. There are too many agencies involved and each one is blaming the other so there’s no accountability. We want to work together to ensure that we all take responsibility for flooding to prevent or at least reduce the impact of something like this happening all over again.”

FLOOD EXHIBITIONS

We know that flooding is affecting more and more people, many of whom have never flooded before. The process of reinstating a home can be daunting which is why a National Flood Forum Exhibition is a good way to seek free, independent advice about different water resistant products that are on the market. They also give people the chance to discuss how to achieve a water resilient home during the rebuild process, as well as considering the best use of grants and surveys.

If you think your community would benefit from a Flood Exhibition, please contact the local council to enquire about them funding a National Flood Forum event in the local area.

Our recent Exhibition in Bury was funded by the council who joined us to give out information and answer questions, alongside the Environment Agency.

Volunteers Week: The beginning of June marked the start of Volunteers Week (VW), a national celebration of all those people across the country who give their time and dedication to help others.

We took the chance publicly thank the thousands of people in Flood Action Groups who volunteer to improve life in their communities. It was a chance to raise awareness about what Flood Action Groups can achieve. Here's the blog we shared:

Flood Action Groups up and down the country are packed with people volunteering their time and ideas to help local communities reduce their risk of flooding.

The impact of a flood is devastating. These groups are borne out of a need to tackle a problem that threatens people's lives and livelihoods.

At the National Flood Forum we know that people feel a sense of loss and despair when they're hit by flood water in their homes or businesses. It can damage buildings and possessions

at a staggering pace and people often feel helpless as the water encroaches. That's why the volunteers who meet to share ideas about reducing flood risk and take action to protect their neighbours from future flooding should be thanked and celebrated during Volunteers Week.

We know it's a challenging and emotional issue. We also know that when people work together to tackle their flooding problems they usually come up with practical, imaginative and realistic solutions.

That's the beauty of local knowledge. Flood Action Group volunteers are often experts in their local area. They have great ideas about how best to manage water around their communities. When they bring their knowledge together they can truly make a difference to people's lives.

We wouldn't be without this amazing volunteer network of committed, dedicated and determined people who help to act against flooding each and every day. THANK YOU!



Volunteer Drivers Needed

When flooding happens we can be on the scene with our recovery trailer to help local people but we need volunteer drivers to help us get there.

We have two trailers (5ft and 6ft) that provide space for people to seek sustenance and support in the aftermath of a flood. The trailers can be driven right to the heart of a flooded town or village meaning that those affected don't have to worry about getting themselves to a support centre – we go to them. But we can only do this if we have the drivers to help us get the trailers to the right location when flooding happens.

If you have a driving license that will permit you to drive a 2 – 2.5 tonne trailer and you also have the time to volunteer your help, then we would love to hear from you.



Volunteer Drivers Needed cont...

Flooding isn't predictable so this volunteering opportunity doesn't require you to give a set amount of hours during a set period of time. The beauty of it is that we would only call you at the time of a flood or soon after. If you're available to help when we call, then we can get to work arranging the logistics of where in the country the trailers need to get to. But if it's not convenient then we would simply ask someone else. There's no set commitment, we just need to have more driver support to ensure we can be there when people need us the most.

Your safety would be paramount and we would only ask you to drive to a flooded location after we have consulted with the local authorities about accessibility and agreed a safe drop off point.

So if you enjoy driving, have the appropriate license and have the time to spare then please contact us to discuss being a volunteer driver. We would cover any expenses and provide you with a vehicle to tow the trailer. You can call us on 01299 403101 or email info@floodforum.org.uk

GPC Industries raise £2,200 for the National Flood Forum

Thanks to GPC Industries Ltd who kindly raised £2,200 at their annual conference and charity gala dinner to support the National Flood Forum.

Based in Lincolnshire, GPC is one of the UK's leading specialists in access, materials handling and storage equipment and operate with a nationwide network of Distributors. Sue Watson, Distributor Catalogue Manager at GPC Ltd said: "Each year we always choose a different charity to raise funds for. Some of our Distributors are from areas which have been affected by the terrible flooding so the National Flood Forum seemed an apt one to choose.

"We were delighted to have raised such a good figure thanks to the generosity of everyone who joined us on the night. We really hope that this donation will help the charity in its endeavours to help the victims of flooding."



Pictured: The GPC team who organised the charity event. Including Sue Watson pictured centre.

Thank you!

Supporting the National Flood Forum

How you can help to fundraise

Our core work with flooded communities is unfunded and relies on donations. With the growing number of flooding events happening throughout the year, we're increasingly in demand but we need the funding to ensure we can get our people and resources to those who ask for our help. That's why we want to let you know about some of the different ways you can help to raise money.

Did you know you can support the National Flood Forum when you shop online? It doesn't cost you a penny to donate but it really benefits us.

Give as you Live is a website that enables you to shop with thousands of well-known brands and retailers, who in turn make a donation to your chosen charity for every purchase made. It's an idea that's already benefitting thousands of small charities so if you shop online and want to help boost our funds then please visit the site to find out more and start shopping! giveasyoulive.com

If you don't fancy shopping to raise money but want to do something a bit more active, then why not take advantage of the summer months to set yourself a charity challenge? It could be anything from a sports event to a garden party, quiz night or summer social in your neighbourhood. There are countless ways you can have fun with friends and help us in our work to support more flooded communities.

If you want to collect sponsorship then we've set ourselves up on totalgiving.co.uk which ensures 100% of donations come directly to us.

If you are interested in fundraising for us and would like some advice or support, please contact

lucy.scarborough@floodforum.org.uk

...And what can we give you?

Affiliation with the National Flood Forum

Have you ever considered affiliating your Flood Action Group with us? As the number of Flood Action Groups grows we want to increase our affiliated membership to ensure we're getting a clear picture of common issues and concerns across the country. By affiliating to us, you can tell us exactly what's happening on the ground which we can feed into a national picture of flooding priorities.

In turn we can make sure you are up to date with key policy changes, debates and issues. We can push your questions into the political arena and put forward your ideas for discussion.

With a stronger membership we can also offer you access to other groups and a nationwide network of experience. You can have the opportunity to share knowledge and problem solve across groups, as well as tap into our support and expertise. We would also give you access to the National Flood Forum's logo to give your work increased credibility and visibility too (terms of logo usage apply).

It doesn't cost anything to affiliate. Just simply contact jean.timmins@floodforum.org.uk.

Community Resources

We have recently shared a wealth of information in the form of toolkits, films, online training, leaflets and 'how to' guides about working with communities to reduce their flood risk. Created during the Defra Flood Resilience Community Pathfinders scheme, the [resources are free](#) and provide excellent ideas for anyone who wants to know more about reducing flood risk in communities.

Environmental Audit Committee Report - *Flooding: Cooperation Across Government*

The National Flood Forum welcomed the publication of the [Environmental Audit Committee's report - Flooding: Cooperation Across Government](#). It highlights what communities have been saying for years and we hope that it will significantly influence the National Floods Resilience Review.

Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum said: "This report goes some way towards showing the way forward, but we need much, much more if communities are to feel safe in the future.

"The National Flood Forum believes that we need a much more ambitious approach to flood risk management if we are to tackle our flooding problems, let alone adapt to increased flood risk over the coming decades. As it stands, long term flood risk management is inadequate to deal with the scale of the problem, both in approach and in the level of funding.

"Communities want honesty about what the real levels of risk are and the implications for people, businesses and society. We need all Government departments and their agencies to play a much more proactive and strategic role in keeping people safe, alongside business, households and civic society."

The charity's analysis of some of the key findings is as follows:

1. That we need a strategic approach to flood risk management, whereas currently our approach tends to be reactive, resulting in a less than strategic approach to spending that results in inefficiencies
2. We focus on capital funding, but maintenance is just as important. Our flood defences are not in the state that they should be and we should be putting much more effort in to keeping them in good order.

Amongst other things, the report focusses on the need for a much more vigorous approach to planning to ensure that Local Plans are in place and that they do address flood risk management properly. It highlights that there is currently no way of knowing whether the planning system is delivering developments that will be safe for people now, or in the future. This has been a particular issue for communities for many years, where people live in fear of development proposals putting them at risk and the planning system failing to respond effectively to their concerns.

Lead Local Flood Authorities were set up by the Water Management Act 2010 but many still have not produced the most basic Local Flood Risk Management Strategies, and the quality of those that have been published is extremely variable. Resourcing of Lead Local Flood Authorities is also extremely variable, with many unable to fulfil the aspirations of the Flood and Water Management Act or local communities effectively.

On resilience, the report highlights the lack of consistency in infrastructure standard reporting and the need for Government to press for higher standards. It also calls for all previous reviews, of which there have been many, to be published consistently.

Paul's comments were reported on the BBC, Daily Mail and across a number of local newspapers along with interviews he gave across national and local radio.

Surrey Recovery: Heather Shepherd has given a number of interviews on BBC Radio Surrey and in local print publications to promote the recovery support we have been offering in the area following flash flooding.

Our Bury Flood Exhibition generated considerable local press attention from BBC TV, BBC radio and commercial radio, online and print media. We are pleased to be supporting the Radcliffe Flood Action group and appreciate the contribution of their members in helping to raise awareness of the traumatic reality of flooding. Particularly Colette and Shirley (pictured), as well as Dominic Melia for their interviews and Andrew Eland for coordinating.



ICE Flooding 2016: Risk Management and Delivering Projects

Paul Cobbing has recently [blogged](#) about his presentation at the Institution of Civil Engineers' (ICE) Flooding conference (ice-flooding.com), in which he considers how far flood risk management has progressed in the UK and looks at what more needs to be done to make communities more resilient.

Richard Jones is Senior Lecturer in Landscape History, University of Leicester. Email: rlcj1@le.ac.uk

We live our lives surrounded by place-names. In Britain, most of these names are over a thousand years old and the names of many of our rivers much older still. But how many of us know what these place-names mean? And how might these names be helpful when thinking about flooding and water management?

Our ancestors, the people who founded the places in which we still live and who coined their names, knew their environment intimately—much better than us in actual fact. Their local knowledge of the presence, characteristics and behaviour of water was especially profound. It needed to be, because Anglo-Saxon England and its contemporary neighbours were wet. From around 400AD, average temperatures dropped and Britain entered a cold, damp phase. But, beginning around 700AD and continuing through to the turn of the first millennium, temperatures rose rapidly leading to climatic instability and greater frequencies of extreme weather events (Fig. 1). It may have been warmer, but these climatic changes added ever greater quantities of water to Britain's river systems. Rivers overbanked and surface run-off from valley sides deposited silts on expanding floodplains. If this sounds familiar, then it should. The period 700-1000AD was the last major episode on record of rapid global warming before the present day. If we look for historical parallels for our own times, then it is to the early medieval period that we should look.

Some place-names are easily interpreted because their meaning remains transparent in their modern

No-one would be surprised that *Oxford* and *Cambridge* are located on rivers, or that watercourses will be found in the near vicinity of place-names that end in *-beck*, *-brook*, or *-bourne*. For other watery names, however, their meaning is less obvious. Eton, for example, contains the Old English element *ēa* 'river', the whole name meaning 'river estate'. Then there are island-names, commonly built around the Old Norse word *holmr* and Old English term *ēg* producing names such as Haverholme (Lincs.) and, of course, Muchelney on the Somerset Levels, the scene of such devastation in 2013 when extensive flooding returned it once again to its literal sense of 'big island'.

Some place-names specifically warn against flooding particularly those in *-wæsse*, an Old English element that is now interpreted as 'land that floods and drains quickly' and which can be found in names such as Buildwas (Salop.) on the River Severn, Alrewas (Staffs.) on the River Trent, and Broadwas (Worcs.) on the River Teme. And there is the unique Nottinghamshire example of Averham, '[settlement] at the floods' from Old English *ēagor*.

To these names can be added others where water can be inferred. Stroud (Gloucs.), for example, stems from Old English *strōd* 'marshy land overgrown with brushwood'; Aldershot (Hants.) signals the presence of water-loving alder trees; and Tadcaster (Yorks.) may include the word *tāde* 'toad'. Sometimes, name changes have inconveniently removed the environment messages of their original names. St Ives (Cambs.) was first recorded as *Slepe*, from Old English *slæp* 'slippery place, portage'.

In total, there are over two hundred different water-related terms that can be found in several hundred English place-names (and many more if Wales and Scotland are included), covering a wide range of water-loving flora and fauna; 'wet' geologies from mud to gravel; associated structures such as landing-places, bridges, and fords; and references to flowing water, bodies of water, standing water, wetlands, marsh, moor and fen. When combined and mapped, these names describe the hydrology of individual river catchments, identifying how the state, value, nuisance, and threat of water altered from headwaters to mouth or confluence.

Exploring place-names provides a useful way of learning about water in your neighbourhood. For England, at least, this information is easily accessed (a searchable database of major place-names can be found at <http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/>). Of course, if you discover that you live in a place whose name does not indicate anything watery this is no guarantee that your property is safe; or that if you do, your property is necessarily at risk. But place-names will allow you to get to know your area better and might just help you to get better flood prepared.



Above: Cuckney (Nottinghamshire) 'Cuca's island' surrounded by water once more in 2006. Photograph: Paul Cullen



Right: Buildwas (Shropshire). Two photographs taken on consecutive days showing how rapidly the Severn floods and drains (OE **wæsse* 'alluvial land that floods and drains quickly') Photographs: Margaret Gelling. Reproduced courtesy of the English Place-Name Society

And Finally...What's it like to work at the National Flood Forum?

In our last edition we said goodbye to two of our more senior project officers. This time we're delighted to be welcoming our two newest team members who have captured what their first few weeks with us have been like.

Sanjay Johal, Trainee Flood Resilience Officer

I've recently started at the National Flood Forum as a Trainee Flood Resilience Officer and It has been amazing. I've learned so much already in my first few weeks. I've been observing the excellent flood resilience officers while they have conducted multi agency meetings (MAMs, there are a lot of acronyms to learn), in which the positive effect of forming Flood Action Groups is apparent already. Local communities are able to really make a difference and to become more flood resilient.

One of my biggest surprises since working at the National Flood Forum has been the amount of local residents who know so much about the flooding history of their areas. If local authorities could 'tap' into this knowledge, it would be so beneficial to everyone involved. I've really enjoyed the constant change in areas I'm seeing, objectives I'm working towards and the varied amount of people I'm getting to interact with. No day is the same. Some of the places I've travelled to are just jaw-dropping and gorgeous.

The National Flood Forum supports and represents communities at flood risk. We specialise in offering support and advice to local residents and businesses, we bring about partnership working within flooded areas. These priorities really mean we can help communities in a positive and proactive way. But the great thing about this role is that I am helping to give local residents a voice and I would think there is no better feeling than knowing that they themselves have made a difference to the community they live in.

This empowerment has been a key way in which the National Flood Forum is able to help local communities become more resilient in the face of flooding events.

One of my favourite days so far has been going on a 'recce' with my trainer. I was walking down into a valley, through the river course, along the banks all while wearing a suit and shoes! Whoever said you can't be an explorer without the right gear doesn't know what they're talking about.

I hope this has given you a little glimpse into the awesome work I do and how I cannot wait to get out there and help more communities at risk of flooding.



And Finally...What's it like to work at the National Flood Forum?

Tori Simkin, Trainee Community Flood Resilience Officer



Here I am, just a few weeks into my new role as Community Flood Resilience Officer for the National Flood Forum. And what an incredible time it has been already.

Working for The National Flood Forum is such a unique experience and it really is a job where no two days are the same. I have seen Flood Action Group Meetings, Multi-Agency Meetings, Community Awareness days, site visits and been on-the-ground chatting to local residents. I have spent my time whizzing around the country with the project officers experiencing first-hand the work the charity does. This is the great thing about the National Flood Forum, we go right into the heart of the community and address flooding at a community level. I have learned so much not only from the other officers, but also from local people and I love that this job is giving me the chance to explore some of the beautiful English countryside.

Working for the National Flood Forum is like being part of a family. Before I started my new role I was really nervous with so many questions. All of the team are wonderfully welcoming and approachable, I really had nothing to worry about. The project officers and all of the staff really care about the work that they do. It is really inspiring to see how dedicated everyone is to making a positive change to communities affected by flooding. For me personally, I am passionate about making a difference and it is important to me to work for an organisation whose values mirror this. The National Flood Forum's first and foremost priority is to support and represent communities at the grassroots. What I love is that this remains at the heart of the organisation and even though the National Flood Forum has grown over time this key focus remains.

It's so hard to choose a highlight of my time here so far because each day has been so different. But one of the things I am enjoying most about my role is being able to meet so many different people. It is really interesting being able to meet representatives from the agencies and learn all about the work that they do. I have been so impressed with the level of local knowledge from residents in the Flood Action Groups and members of the communities we work with. Seeing this knowledge transferred into action really is inspiring and just shows how powerful the voice of the community can be and how this CAN make a difference!

I hope this has provided an insight into what it is like to work for the National Flood Forum. I am so happy to have this opportunity and am really excited for the road ahead. I would also like to thank all the National Flood Forum staff and the Flood Action Groups for being so welcoming.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the bulletin are those of the writers and not necessarily of the National Flood Forum

Supporting and representing flood risk communities

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