Flood and water newsletter

January 2025

- Welcome to the fourth Cambridgeshire flood and water newsletter
- Updated online flood risk maps
- Environmental Audit Committee – call for flood risk evidence
- Community Flood Action Conference update
- What are SuDS?
- In the news: Storm Éowyn
- Keeping in touch

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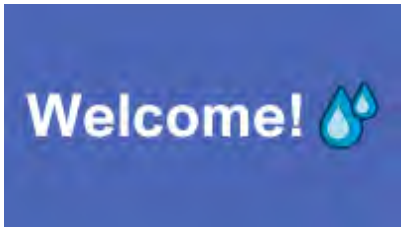

Welcome to our fourth flood and water newsletter. The council oversees local flood risk including the management of groundwater and surface water flood risks and the regulation of ordinary watercourses. We work in partnership with the Environment Agency, district and parish councils, water companies and Internal Drainage Boards.

Managing flood risk and increasing community resilience in Cambridgeshire is our priority and we work closely with local residents to achieve this.

This seasonal newsletter provides you with information, advice and guidance relating to flooding, and explores how to manage watercourses depending on time of the year. We will also promote upcoming events and provide information on local flood groups. Where relevant, we will share local case studies so that you can see some of our achievements.

Back to top.

Updated online flood risk maps

On 17 December 2024 the Environment Agency published its new National Flood Risk Assessment. This assessment is the Environment Agency's explanation and picture of current and future flood and coastal erosion risk in England. It provides the latest information on the source and characteristics of flood and coastal erosion risk, how it is distributed and the potential for these to change in the future because of climate change.

Earlier this month, the Environment Agency published its updated flood risk maps for rivers, sea and surface water that form part of the national flood risk assessment.

These maps use new data, improved methodologies, as well as flood risk data for national climate change scenarios.

The update combines outputs from 200 detailed local flood risk models with the new state-of the-art national flood risk model. Local modelling of flood risk often captures important local features more accurately, and the integration of local and national data ensures greater consistency between flood risk information. For the first time, the maps account for future climate change impacts.

The updated mapping represents a significant step forward in understanding and managing flood risk. By incorporating future climate projections, it provides decision-makers, developers, and communities with the information required to plan effectively and adapt to a changing climate. By way of an example, the previous mapping did not include detail of depth of flooding from rivers and sea, but the new maps let people know their chance of flooding to a depth up to 20cm, 30cm, 60cm and 90cm. This allows people to consider the possible impacts to their property and whether they can use property flood resilience measures.

It should be noted that if your risk of flooding has changed on the maps, this is not a measure of how much flood risk has changed since the last update in 2017. Instead, the updated maps provide a more accurate representation of flood risk on a local scale due to better data and methodologies.

Back to top.

Environmental Audit Committee – call for flood risk evidence

The Government's Environmental Audit Committee is undertaking an inquiry on flood resilience in England, focusing on how flood resilience can be strengthened in response to increasing risks from extreme weather, rising sea levels and evolving flood hazards.

There was a 'call for evidence' between December 2024 and January 2025 to which Cambridgeshire County Council submitted evidence which we hope will be considered.

We are aware that some flood groups also submitted their own evidence which is great to hear and allows the committee to hear directly from affected communities.

Back to top.

Community Flood Action Conference update

Thank you to all those who responded to our survey back in July 2024.

Everyone who responded suggested the conference should be held annually, with the majority suggesting winter as the best time.

When asked about what you would like to hear about at a future event you included:

- hearing from other flood groups, including how they have overcome any challenges
- information about upcoming flood alleviation schemes and the work plans of the various agencies
- maintenance of drainage infrastructure, including responsibilities and maintenance schedules
- local sources of funding including for agricultural land.

Based on the above and to give sufficient time to plan, we will look to hold our next conference in the upcoming winter (December 2025 or January 2026). We recognise this is quite a long time away, so by the end of March 2025 we plan to hold a joint meeting of flood group chairs across Cambridgeshire. Whilst we know many of you already speak with each other, the purpose of this meeting will be to provide a formal introduction to those who haven't already met and provide a forum to share ideas and plans for the coming year. We'll look to hold this meeting somewhere relatively central within the county, considering accessibility and proximity to public transport. If you know of any venues that could cater for such an event, ideally with capacity for around 30 people we would love to hear from you.

As soon as a venue is confirmed we'll contact every group that we have details for by email but to ensure we don't miss any groups, if you would like to be added to the invitation list, please email **floodandwater@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**, providing details of which flood group you represent.

[Back to top.](#)

What are SuDS?

SuDS stands for sustainable drainage systems. It involves mimicking natural drainage processes to reduce flood risks caused by development. This means that the drainage system should act in the same way after the development as it would have before the development occurred.

The main processes in SuDS include:

- interception and conveyance: transporting surface water
- attenuation: slowing runoff before it enters watercourses
- infiltration: providing areas to store water and allow it to infiltrate into the ground.

This is important to recharge groundwater, contribute to soil moisture and reduce the risk of surface water flooding.

SuDS design encompasses four pillars:

- Water quantity: managing runoff to support flood risk management
- Water quality: preventing pollution
- Amenity: creating better places for people
- Biodiversity: creating better places for nature

Some examples of landscaped SuDS include:

- swales (broad shallow channels covered by vegetation to transport, store and infiltrate water)
- infiltration basins (depressions to store and infiltrate runoff)
- wet ponds
- constructed wetlands.

Engineered SuDS include:

- permeable paving (paving that allows infiltration through gaps in the surface)
- green roofs
- filter drains (trenches filled with permeable material that also remove certain pollutants).

Even trees are considered a SuDS feature as they can intercept water and create conditions in the soil that promote infiltration.

Alconbury Weald SuDS basin

Swale in Eddington

Back to top.

In the news: Storm Éowyn

The UK's weather is significantly influenced by the Jet Stream. This powerful current steer's weather systems across the north Atlantic, playing a vital role in determining local conditions.

Recently, the Jet Stream strengthened and shifted southward, directing cold Arctic air south to North America before steering it toward the UK.

This has introduced a series of low-pressure weather systems, bringing heavy rainfall and strong winds. Notably the formation of Storm Éowyn leading to weather warnings in several regions.

Variations in the Jet Stream are normal at this time of year. Staying informed is the best way to remain prepared. The Met Office provides regular weather updates which can help you stay ahead of any potential impacts.

For a more in-depth understanding of Storm Éowyn, **watch this video on the Met Office's YouTube channel**.

To find out more, check out the articles below:

- **Storm Éowyn: Amber weather warning issued for UK amid threat of 90mph winds | BBC Weather**
- **Storm Éowyn expert comments | University of Reading**
- **UK weather warnings | Met Office**
- **Flood alerts and warnings | GOV.UK**

Back to top.

Keeping in touch

Visit our website: Cambridgeshire flood and water

Report a flood Using the form on our website

Email us:

- **Planning, pre-application or development related enquiries**
- **Watercourse consenting, enforcement, and general enquiries**
- **Community Flood Action Plan**

Write to us:
Flood and Water, New Shire Hall, Emery Crescent, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

Phone us:
0345 045 5200 (General Enquiries)

Back to top.

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