



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Flood Management and Prevention in Maidstone & the Weald

Summary progress report of the Second Flood Forum Meeting

10th October 2014

Maidstone House, Kent, ME15 6JQ

By Helen Grant MP

PATNERSHIP WORKING

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Progress report and next action schedule from the second Flood Forum Meeting

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Maidstone House, Kings Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ

This summary report sets out progress that has been made upon on action points identified in the first Flood Forum Meeting held on February 28th 2014, and the next list of action points for each stakeholder.

A list of attendees at the meeting are listed at the end of the document.

For further information contact the office of Helen Grant MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Tel 020 7219 7107.

NINE POINT ACTION PLAN
SCHEDULE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Item	Description	Responsibility for Action
1.	Capital projects:	Environment Agency and Helen Grant MP, KCC
2.	Personal Flood Plans:	Environment Agency, MBC, Parish Councils Residents
3.	Provision of information:	Environment Agency and Parish Councils
4.	Flood Warden Scheme:	Environment Agency and Parish Councils
5.	Flood warning systems:	Environment Agency
6.	Communications contact lists:	Environment Agency
7.	Road Closures:	Police, Highways Agency, Parish Councils Environment agency
8.	Security:	Police, Parish Councils, Residents
9.	Rectification of existing land drainage systems:	Land Owners, MBC Planning Enforcement, KCC, EA, NFU, RAMSAK, Drainage Board Highways

Progress and next action summary report

1. Capital projects: Environment Agency

- a) New Lower Beult storage area
- b) Increased capacity of the Leigh Barrier
 - Prepare draft plan for the above projects including confirmation of forecast capital costs, ongoing maintenance costs, timeline for implementation and completion of the two projects and proposed sources of funding for the above.

Capital project funding: KCC, Central Government, Helen Grant MP

- Paul Carter of Kent County Council has already pledged to meet 50% of the cost of the Capital projects on the basis that Central Government pledge the other 50%.
- Helen Grant MP to use best endeavours to secure central government funding to match KCC's pledge and allow work on capital projects to commence.

Progress:

- **07.03.2014: Environment Agency submit bids for 2 capital projects: increasing capacity of Leigh Barrier & creation of Lower Beult Storage Area**
- **14.03.2014: Helen Grant writes to Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to ask for Government commitment to projects and request meeting with SoS**
- **20.05.2014: Helen Grant meets SoS to press the case for Government commitment to Medway Valley Schemes**
- **20.05.2014: SoS praises co-ordinated effort being made in Maidstone and the Weald and advocates need for 'Partnership Working'**
- **12.09.2014: Helen Grant calls second Flood Forum**
- **09.10.10: Statement from Secretary of State recognises 2nd Flood Forum, reinforces need for 'Partnership Working' and requests update post-meeting**
- **10.10.14: EA seeking funding from EU, LEPs: encouraging results – first phase between now and 2018. Detailed design and construction between 2018-2022**
- **KCC committed to feasibility study, total cost £1m, £405,000 partnership contributions, MBC and Malling committed £100,000 each**
- **Paulina Stockell reaffirms Paul Carter's commitment to funding**
- **EA reiterate KCC invaluable in seeking contributions from LEP & other bodies**
- **21.10.14: Helen Grant meets George Osborne to lobby for Government commitment to flood defence funding**
- **29.10.14: Helen Grant presents DEFRA Secretary of State with Updated Action Plan for Maidstone and the Weald**
- **11.11.14: Helen Grant meets DEFRA Secretary of State to get an update on progress for Maidstone and the Weald**

Next action:

- **Helen Grant to meet SoS ✓**
- **EA to work with KCC, MBC & others to seek funding through partnership working; LEPs, EU etc**
- **Decision on capital projects made at Autumn Statement 03.12.14**

Personal Flood Plans: Environment Agency, MBC, Parish Councils

- Drafting of template for personal flood plans for residents and local business owners based on good practice.
- Plans to include measures for prevention of damage to, and protection of, property for individual households; contingency plans for individual households in the event of a repeat of wide-spread flooding and possible power outages.
- Distribution of templates to residents.
- Engagement with residents to ensure awareness and implementation of personal flood plans and encourage personal responsibility for annual reviews of these plans.
- Seek involvement of the insurance industry to try and improve policy premiums for people who maintain a personal flood plan for their insured property.

Progress:

- **EA provide personal flood plan templates distributed at every public engagement meeting**
- **MBC provided support to parish councils; local emergency plans now completed for Collier Street, Tovil, Yalding & Staplehurst**
- **Parish Councils developing personal flood plans**
- **Extension of application deadline for the Repair & Renew Grant until 31st October**
- **Ongoing issues with insurance, Flood Re, business rates and mortgage rate relief**

Next action:

- **Parish councils to work with MBC where appropriate**
- **Helen Grant to take up issues of insurance, mortgage rate relief and Flood Re with the SoS**
- **EA to help with insurance problems where possible – companies should acknowledge capital plans and parishes to disseminate info**

3. **Provision of information: Environment Agency**

- Improve provision of information on Environment Agency website, including regular and coherent updates that can be easily understood by residents.
- Investigate other ways to provide information via technology, e.g. Twitter, an EA app, email updates etc.
- Investigate new ways to deliver relevant information via alternative methods, for those residents who are not users of the internet or other digital technologies.

Progress:

- **Environment Agency has produced flood information packs containing a guide for 'Preparing Your Property for Flooding'; 'Living on the edge'; 'Who Does What' and 'Sandbags: how to use them properly for flood protection'**
- **Updated EA website**
- **Kent Resilience Forum Emergency Handbook promoted by MBC**
- **Awareness Raising: Public Meetings in Yalding & Collier Street: 325 attendees;**
- **EA, NFF, MBC flood trailers 13 dates in Yalding, Collier Street, East Farleigh, Tovil and Maidstone**
- **118 Attendees to Leigh FSA tours. Yalding attended on 18 October 40 attendees.**
- **26 November update on progress with capital schemes 90 residents attend**

Action:

- **Better communication and collaboration between parish, borough and county councils**
- **3rd Flood Forum to be convened as New Year approaches**

4. **Flood Warden Scheme: Environment Agency and Parish Councils**

- Draft a job specification, an outline of responsibilities, and plans for recruitment of Flood Wardens.
- Appoint and train flood wardens.

Progress:

- **160 wardens trained so far: Little Venice – 7 Flood Wardens; East Farleigh – 3 Flood Wardens; Collier Street – 1 Flood Warden**
- **Flood wardens trained in conjunction with EA, MBC, TMBC, Kent Fire and rescue, Kent County council & Parish Councils**
- **Training held in July and October, more will take place if there is sufficient demand**
- **Packs being delivered to Parish Councils by EA using risk based approach**

Action:

- **Ensure all flood wardens trained and in place for coming winter & local community aware of who their flood warden is and what they are responsible for**
- **Development of community flood plans, community exercises and awareness raising as new members move in.**

5. Flood warning systems: Environment Agency

- Develop plans for new flood warning systems and messaging that provide s clarity and advice to residents.
- Creation of new flood warning areas so that warnings and responses can be better tailored to needs of individual areas.
- Seek to provide flood warning forecasts up to 12 hours in advance based upon improved collection and processing of rainfall data

Progress:

- **New flood warning systems with 6 additional areas went live 30th Oct**
- **5019 at risk, 4093 registered (82%) registrations for flood warnings, up 457 since Christmas**
- **MBC promoting flood warning system through Borough Update**
- **MBC to establish dedicated call answering as soon as any emergency situation occurs**
- **EA provide new number 0345 9881188 for Floodline to reduce call costs**
- **Improvements to Multi Agency Flood Plans include closer liaison between EA floodline messages and MBC communications team**

Action:

- **Increase flood warning registrations & ensure everyone aware of new flood warning system**

6. Contact lists: Environment Agency

- Development of comprehensive contact list to be provided to residents, with all contact details and responsibilities clearly outlined (concerning flood management and response).
- Creation of a contact list, with both primary and secondary details, for all of those residents in properties of most risk to flooding, to be held by parish councils. This is so that they are easily contactable in the event of future floods and can be given appropriate warning and advice.

Progress:

- **List produced by the Environment Agency contained in flood information pack**
- **MBC – dedicated call answering as soon as emergency occurs – new incident message system being implemented**
- **Parish councils have developed contact lists**
- **.EA have set up partner hotlines to improve communications between professional partners and wardens and the EA**

Action:

- **Exchange of addresses and contact details for Flood Forum attendees**
- **New incident messaging system to be in place by next meeting**
- **All personal flood plans to contain contact lists - Parishes managing personal data**

7. Road Closures: Police, Highways Agency, Parish Councils

- Investigate ways to ensure appropriate and timely response to evolving situations on the ground, so that road closures, and re-openings, accurately accommodate necessity.
- Look into role of flood wardens with regards to the possession of, and responsibility for, placing and changing of road signs.

Progress:

- Discussed the possibility of installing physical barriers where road closures needed
- Discussed issue of Police vehicles: possible partnership with MRUA for boats
- Bronze control centres to be opened pre-flood – ensure national assets are available
- Conversations taking place about military being available at the start of crises – different vehicles and specialised equipment
- KCCH have agreed that where a contingency plan has been formalised to their satisfaction they will allow parishes to close roads. Boroughs should divert waste collection and the county will divert bus services

Action:

- Paulina Stockell to raise outstanding issues at risk management committee
- EA, Parish Councils and Kent County Council to work together
- Highways Agency / Kent Highways representation at the next meeting: Kathryn Lewis KCCH Highways manager

8. Security: Police, Parish Councils, Residents – degree of personal responsibility

- Establish a means of monitoring evacuated premises during flood events to prevent looting and theft.
- Make provision in road closure plans to prevent road rage incidents arising from people disregarding closures; prevention and clearance of vehicle break-downs blocking access for emergency services; prevention of people disregarding closures and creating damaging bow-waves adversely affecting adjacent properties

Progress:

- Equipment available from Police
- Discussed problem of people and children in boats rowing between houses
- Agreed that police visibility key

Action

- Personal flood plans to include reminder to take high value personal belongings with them

**9. Rectification of existing land drainage systems by farmers and riparian owners:
Land Owners, MBC Planning Enforcement, KCC, EA, NFU, RAMSAK**

- Devise a process to check that rural ditches, ponds and streams are adequately maintained and kept clear by the landowners and farmers.
- Devise a process to check that development of rural property into residential use maintains adequate drainage on the land e.g. that newly built drives have adequate ditch drainage and that any existing ditches are not filled in, but retain a suitable width of water conduit piping for good drainage.
- Review whether dredging of any specific sections of waterways will be of any benefit to the locality whilst avoiding adverse effects further downstream.

Progress:

- **NFU to meet with EA on December 11**
- **Discussions taking place between Drainage Board, Kent Highways & MBC**
- **RAMSAK currently working with Hastings Borough Council, have 600 members in the area and want to work with relevant parties – EA, Kent Highways etc**
- **EA have set up a group of professional partners. Problems are identified by residents to parishes who feed them to the group. The group then decides who has responsibility and resources are pooled to solve problems. The group currently comprises EA UMIDB KCC, MBC and KCC**
- **Letter to parish councils suggested by Paulina Stockell about responsibilities**
- **Drainage Board issue request to improvements for watercourses**
- **EA have collected survey data of high risk elements of the main river network. Analysis will be performed when model is ready**
- **EA have removed blockages where appropriate**
- **New dredger ordered for next April**
- **Silt from dredging could be deposited at quarries – Peter Larkin**
- **12.11.14 - Helen Grant produces 7 point action plan agreed by Southern Water to address sewage problem in Wealden areas**

Action:

- **Paulina Stockell to raise issue at committee meeting**
- **Helen to meet with Southern Water on sewage problem in Marden & other villages ✓**

Attendees of the second Flood Forum Meeting
10th October 2014
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ

Helen Grant MP (Chair)

Josh Grimstone, Parliamentary Assistant to Helen Grant MP (Minutes)

1. David Edwards, MBC Director of Environment and Shared Services
2. David Harrison, MBC Emergency Planning Manager
3. John Wilson, MBC Councillor
4. Geraldine Brown, Yalding Parish Council Chair; Kent Association of Local Councils
5. Symon Wilson, Yalding Parish Council
6. David Goff, Collier Street Parish Council
7. David Ridd, Collier Street Parish Council
8. Edward Raikes, Hampstead Lane and Symonds Lane Flood Mitigation Group
9. Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency
10. Neil Gunn, Environment Agency
11. Paulina Stockell, KCC Councillor
12. Sarah Anderson, KCC Flood Risk and Natural Environment Manager
13. Mark Newman, Orchard View Garage, Yalding
14. Assistant Chief Inspector Jody Gagan-Cook, Kent Police
15. Russell Jordan, Group Manager Kent Fire & Rescue
16. Colin King, Kent Fire & Rescue
17. Karen Wheeler, RAMSAK
18. Patrick Bowring, NFU
19. Jeff Leahy, East Farleigh Resident
20. Peter Northen, Hampstead Marina, Yalding
21. Peter Larkin, Allington Marina
22. Des Long, Medway River Users Association
23. Peter Dowling, Medway Drainage Board
