

Cam Valley

Floods Update

February 2024 (Issue 1)

We saw extreme rainfall and flash flooding across the county throughout 2023 with many communities affected. Following the significant flooding that occurred in the Cam Valley in May 2023, Somerset Council, Somerset Rivers Authority, and the Environment Agency would like to share some news, information, and advice to support you and your parish.

We will continue to provide updates for you to share with your community as progress develops so you can stay informed and better prepared for the future.

Background: How are Flood Incidents Investigated?

In May 2023, the River Cam catchment experienced localised and intense rainfall. This resulted in widespread surface water and river flooding.

The Met Office recorded this event as 80-100 mm of rainfall in 1 to 2 hours.
Current investigations indicate over 150 properties suffered flooding.

Somerset Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) to examine flooding incidents in Somerset. The need to fully investigate a particular flood is decided on a case-by-case. Factors such as the likely source of the flood and the number of properties affected are considered. Where it is required, a full study is known as a Section 19 Investigation.

These investigations include background information such as the location and a summary of events. They also consider likely causes, before looking at the roles and responsibilities of involved organisations and the actions they took. The investigation concludes by making recommendations.

The 'Section 19' investigations resulting from the May flooding will be grouped as follows:

- West Camel & Urgashay
- Central Cam Valley (Queen Camel, Sparkford and Weston Bampfylde)
- East Cam Valley (North Cadbury, South Cadbury, Galhampton and Yarlinton)
- West Cam Valley (Yeovilton and Podimore)

They will also be carried out for Pitt Valley communities and Milverton, which also experienced flooding at this time.

Funding is in place for the investigation. We expect this process to take at least 18 months from when the flooding occurred. When completed it will be published on the Somerset Council website, along with all other local flood investigation reports:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/beaches-ports-and-flooding/floodinvestigations/>

Current Actions: Understanding the Extent of the Flooding

Following the flooding, the Environment Agency and Somerset Council have been looking at all the valuable information you have shared. We have also collected evidence from our own teams and partner organisations. The aim is to better understand and to map the extent of the flooding that occurred.

For the Environment Agency, the aim is to better understand and to map the extent of the flooding that occurred. After rigorous data validation and quality checks, these 'Recorded Flood Outlines' provide a record of past flooding in an area. They are not a record of whether individual properties have or will flood i.e., it is not a flooded properties dataset. However, Recorded Flood Outlines enhance our ability to improve flood event modelling and forecasting for an area. In turn, this can potentially enable us to expand the coverage of our flood warning service to include properties that might face future risks.

We will keep you informed over the coming months, as this data review and analysis progresses. Any properties contained within new predicted outlines will be contacted for supporting information and consultation.

As well as this, Somerset Council want to provide you with a more developed picture of the flooding that can help you to better understand your flood risk and what could happen in the future. With the recommendations from the upcoming Section 19 investigation, residents can also consider what steps of their own they can take to reduce their flood risk.

Help for now: Council Tax Discount

Somerset Council has created a specific local Council Tax discount of 100% where a property has become uninhabitable because of the 9th of May 2023 Flooding. This discount will be applied for one month where people had to leave their home for three or more consecutive days due to the flooding. Where the flood damage means that they have been out of their house for over a month, the discount will be repeated until they are able to move back in. This can be extended for up to a maximum of 12 months. Discounts only apply where properties were occupied as a sole or main residence on 9th of May 2023. Find out more by emailing Council.tax1@somerset.gov.uk

Supporting you to support your communities: Flood Wardens

Somerset Council and the Environment Agency support community volunteers across Somerset, including Flood Wardens. They help their own communities to plan and prepare for local flooding. They can play an important role during the first critical hours of any emergency and can help communities with the recovery after flooding.

After the flooding in May, we spoke to many of you wanting to learn more about this role and to get involved. Thank you to those who expressed an interest in becoming a Flood Warden. We are keen to support you with training and further information and will be in touch soon.

If you are interested in finding out more or are willing to become a Flood Warden, please contact the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team (floodwessex@environment-agency.gov.uk) for more information, training, guides, templates and to sign up to receive our quarterly Flood Warden newsletter.

Comments or questions?

Email: somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk

