

Winter Flooding Briefing

Bungay, Ditchingham Dam, Earsham and Wainford Mill

Introduction

This briefing is to inform and advise you about the flooding that took place in December 2020. Much of it you will already know. We will explain what happened, what our role is, how we work with partners and what the next steps are for your community. It will not give all the answers you want at this early stage.

What happened?

In December 2020 East Anglia received an exceptionally high amount of rainfall, the River Waveney area received 50mm in 18 hours, and a total of 71mm in 96 hours.

Across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk we issued Flood Alerts to 21 different areas and Flood Warnings to 16 locations during the flooding between 24 December and 2 January 2021. The flood alert for the tidal River Waveney from Ellingham to Breydon Water was in place and updated every 8 hours from 6pm on Christmas Eve to 10am on 2 January 2021.

Between 23 and 29 December 2020 flooding occurred in Bungay specifically, Bridge Street and Outney Road and in the surrounding areas which included; Ditchingham Dam, Earsham and Wainford Mill. The primary source of flooding was from the River Waveney and surrounding watercourses. 35 properties have reported experiencing internal flooding with a number of additional reports of external flooding, and potentially more impacted properties going unreported.

Our role during flooding

We cannot stop flooding, but we work to limit the impact and we do help communities to prepare. We provide 24/7 cover to respond to flooding and pollution incidents. We issue alerts and warnings to help people reduce the impact of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea. Our primary roles during flooding are:

- providing a warning and informing service
- operating the flood defences and structures we own and manage
- being part of a multi-agency incident command and control group

Environment Agency staff were working in the wider area responding to incident reports and checking structures and ensuring their correct operation. Not all the structures in and around Bungay itself are maintained or operated by the Environment Agency, but staff visited Bungay and in response to reports of flooding to ensure all structures were operational and had not been damaged.

Flood Warnings

We provide a warning and informing service through Flood Warnings Direct. We have a network of both rain gauges and river gauging stations to monitor the height and flow of rivers. If a river level is measured or forecast to reach above a typical range this means that flooding is possible, and a flood warning or alert may be issued.



At 17:04 on 23 December we issued the flood alert for the River Waveney from Diss and the River Dove to Ellingham, including Bungay: *be alert, stay vigilant and make early preparations.*

At 00:24 on 24 December we issued the flood warning for the River Waveney from Bungay to Ellingham: *flooding is expected, take action to protect yourself and your property.*

If you did not receive the Floodline warnings issued as listed above, please check that you are signed up to receive them by contacting Floodline on **0345 988 1188** or search for 'Floodline Warnings' on www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Managing and responding to flooding

During the flooding we worked closely with professional partners to minimise flooding across this area. This includes working with professional partners, including the police, fire service and the rest of our partners on the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). A meeting of the LRF took place on 28 April to review the incident and we continue to work together on the recovery side of the incident.

What has happened since the flooding?

We are now working on the recovery side of the incident collating flood data and inspecting flood structures in Bungay and across the area. We sent out a flood survey for affected residents in Bungay to complete and we have been reviewing our flood warning procedures and replying to customer enquiries. We have been working with partners and flooded communities to understand the full extent of the flooding.

The survey can be found here <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/I7HEVS/> or a paper copy is available by calling Tina Starling 07500 884454.

Maintenance

We have a regular maintenance programme for the main rivers in the catchment. In September 2020 Bungay Drains and Chainbridge Beck had a weed cut which was carried out by machine. During October hand vegetation clearance was undertaken on the Bungay Tin River. The Environment Agency will continue to undertake regular maintenance work where required.

Data

We are collating and processing the data received from our community information officers, who were on the ground after Christmas and the public survey. We also plan to undertake a survey of the individual properties in and around Bungay that are known to have flooded to ascertain their floor levels. This information will help inform our flood modelling and areas for further investigation. The data can also be used to review our flood warning service to ensure we provide an accurate and timely warning service for future flooding. We will let you know if changes are made to your flood warning service.

Community engagement

Bungay has an emergency planning group that consists of councillors and members of the public, interested in emergency planning including flooding. Later in the Summer, once we have collated all the flood data and in conjunction with Bungay Town Council will be organising a drop-in meeting for residents, who have been flooded or at risk of being flooded. If you would like to be part of a Community Flood Group to improve your community resilience by owning a flood action plan and flood toolkit, please contact Tina Starling at tina.starling@environment-agency.gov.uk or the clerk at Bungay Town Council, clerk@bungaytowncouncil.gov.uk

The flood group will be a key stakeholder in discussing the most suitable options available to manage the flood risk and support the community to be more resilient in the future.

Flood Investigation Report

We are now updating our flood risk model of the River Waveney to help improve our understanding of flood risk in Bungay and the surrounding area. This update will use information obtained from the December flood event to make the modelling as representative as possible. This modelling will help inform an 'initial assessment' to explore options to manage the flood risk, working with the community and our partners, such as East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council.

Have you been flooded? – please let us know

We are very keen to know about all the properties that have been flooded, so that any data we capture can help inform future decisions. If you have not contacted us to report flooding at your property, please let us know, as we are very keen to know the full extent of the flooding in Bungay. Please email enquiries_eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk or call 0203 025 5472.

Where can I find out more?

Register with our Flood Warnings Direct service by visiting our website: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

You can check if your property is at risk by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding>

Contact us

Your local contact is Nicki China available on: PSOENS@environment-agency.gov.uk. Or you can send us any feedback on this update by emailing enquiries_eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk.

