

Christmas Edition

Welcome to Bulletin No 10. A very Happy Christmas and a Flood-free 2012 – from all at the National Flood Forum

Charles Tucker attended the launch of the Ministerial Statement “Progress towards developing future flood risk management arrangements” on Monday 19th December.

We have today issued the following Press Release.

No Christmas Present for Flood Victims!

Flood victims and flooded communities will get no relief from insurance worries this Christmas, says the National Flood Forum. Worse, a Ministerial Statement from Defra issued on Monday 19th suggests that government is set to leave flood insurance to an un-regulated free market – a situation that even the Association of British Insurers says poses severe dangers for the most vulnerable.

Defra Minister Richard Benyon was due to announce his proposals on Monday for a new framework of flood insurance to replace the “Statement of Principles”*. But the Ministerial Statement (described as giving a “direction of travel”) included nothing to suggest that government would take any steps to replace the SoP. “It was so vague it was totally unhelpful” said Charles Tucker, Chairman of the NFF.

He added “We feel very let down by this lack of leadership from government – and so will the thousands of communities throughout the country where getting insurance after a flood is becoming more and more expensive. We called on Government to take the lead to ensure that flood insurance was fair and affordable. Now they seem to be walking away.”

The National Flood Forum – the UK-wide charity supporting and representing communities at flood risk – has worked closely with Defra, the Treasury, the Environment Agency, the Association of British Insurers, Local Government Association and others over the past 12 months to find a new Framework to replace the Statement of Principles.

Chairman, Charles Tucker said “All this time and effort will have been wasted if government fails to provide the leadership we expect from them. Flood victims will be dismayed and frustrated by the lack of any clear direction from government, after more than a year of discussions and workshops designed to find solutions to the ever-growing difficulty of finding flood insurance once you have been flooded. It’s government’s job to take the lead here – and we’re desperately disappointed and frustrated that they are not doing so.”

Fifteen months after the Flood Summit in September 2010, Monday’s Ministerial Statement “Progress towards developing future flood risk management arrangements” fails to move any of the key issues forward – and particularly gives no indication of government action to shape the insurance market for communities at high flood risk.

ENDS

* The “Statement of Principles” is the gentleman’s agreement between the insurance industry and government which gives some assurance to property owners that they will be offered insurance again after a flood. It ends in 2013.

Supporting and Representing Flood Risk Communities

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Longlevens Success



From left to right in the photo: Gloucester MP Richard Graham, Peter Cox, Cllr Kathy Williams, Kelly Bartlett, Jesse Smith, Anthony Perry (Environment Agency)

More than 1,000 homes in Gloucester were flooded over the summer of 2007, with a small area of the city being flooded twice within the space of a month. Longlevens bore the brunt of the devastation. As properties filled with up to four feet of water, many people, including children and toddlers, had to be carried out of their homes. Monday 12 December 2011 saw the opening of the Horsbere Brook Flood Storage Area by Richard Benyon, Minister for the Environment, designed to help prevent this ever happening again.

This excellent result was achieved through the close collaboration and a working partnership between the local authorities, the Environment Agency the land owner and the local residents through the Longlevens Flood Committee.

Kelly Bartlett, chair of the Longlevens Flood Committee said, *I would just like to say that this really is a momentous day for me and the people here whose homes were flooded by this brook. I really did question if this day would arrive but I am totally thrilled that it has. Flooding is something that will stay with each of us for the rest of our lives but I really feel that in our case, out of a terrible situation, good has prevailed and today sees the pinnacle of this for everyone.*

NFF Conference March 7th 2012

Remember – the Conference will be held at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London, on **Wednesday March 7th 2012**. More details will be published in January.

Given that the government has yet to show any leadership on Insurance this is likely to be a very lively conference! Speakers from our affiliated groups will give their experiences and we will explore innovative options that are emerging, as well as highlighting the issues where we believe the insurance industry needs to improve.

Environment Minister **Richard Benyon** will give the keynote speech and answer questions on the government's proposals. There will be speakers from the ABI, the Environment Agency and Defra, among others, plus "break-out" sessions where delegates can explore particular topics in a less formal setting.

- Watch out for more details in the January Bulletin.

There are a range of options if you would like to sponsor the Conference.

- To talk about this or to book a stall at the Exhibition, contact amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk

High Risk Reservoirs

The EA is running a consultation on defining High Risk Reservoirs, following the 2007 floods. If you would like to respond, go to <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/ho/flood/reservoir/risk>

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