

## Dear Flood Campaigner

Welcome to Bulletin No 9. We hope you find it useful – please pass it on to anyone who may be interested.

## Flood Information Trailer launched

Our new Flood Information Trailer (FIT) had its first outing on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Brought to Burstwick, near Hull, for the opening of new community flood defences, it was christened by **Ron Smith**, NFF Trustee and Chair of Burstwick United flood group. The event was recorded by BBC Look North, Seaside FM and the Holderness Gazette.

- **Richard Benyon**, Minister for Environment and Fisheries, formally opened the defences. **Ron** and **Heather Shepherd** both took part.

The FIT then travelled to Phoenix House in Leeds for the EA's annual Yorkshire Flood Wardens Seminar, to show delegates its capabilities.

It will be in use again on 12<sup>th</sup> December at Staines, Middlesex, providing information to the local community as part of the Lower Thames Strategy being drawn up by the EA.



Ron Smith cuts the ribbon to open the new Flood Information Trailer.

- The FIT is now available to support NFF events across the country, such as Flood Fairs and training sessions with communities. Let us know if you would like us to arrange an event in YOUR area.

We will also take delivery by Christmas of our Flood Recovery Trailer (FRT) that will be deployed to communities hit by severe flooding.

Both units were built with funding from the Environment Agency, for which we thank them. They are now entirely ours to operate and finance, so we need volunteer drivers, over 25 and used to towing large trailers with a 4x4. Can YOU help – as a driver or Sponsor? Email [amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk) for more information.

## Conference plans are developing

If you've haven't yet made a note of our 2012 Conference – do it now! It will be held at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London, on **Wednesday March 7<sup>th</sup> 2012**. Full details will be published early in the New Year.

The theme of the Conference is Flood Insurance post 2013. Government proposals to replace the "Statement of Principles" should be known by that time, so this will be a major forum to learn about these proposals. 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 be giving the keynote speech and answering 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](mailto:amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk)

## Supporting and Representing Flood Risk Communities

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## Lower Thames Strategy

**Heather Shepherd** is working with the EA, providing information to local communities about the Lower Thames Strategy. Last year, this scheme was expecting 100% government funding, but now nearly half will have to be found from local partnerships (see below).

**Heather** says "There are three public exhibitions this week alone – at Wraysbury, Staines and West Molesey. The first one was packed and I'm expecting the others will be too. People are obviously concerned that the change in funding means it will be several years now before the scheme can be constructed."

Another part of Heather's involvement is with small communities that will not be helped by the main scheme and will need individual household protection. It's to one of these communities that we're taking the Flood Information Trailer on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

If you're affected by the Lower Thames scheme, you can write to your MP and Councillors to ask for their help in getting partnership funding. Contact Heather at [heather.shepherd@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:heather.shepherd@floodforum.org.uk) or phone 01743 741725 if you would like advice on this.

## £35,000 a house for flood protection!

Householders in one of our Flood Groups in Essex were appalled when they were asked to contribute £35,000 each for their houses to be protected against flooding! After protests to David Rooke at the EA, and Heather's involvement, the demand has been squashed – and the scheme is being put forward for Local Levy funding, through the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).

## Community Funding

The Government's new funding system for FRM schemes guarantees SOME funding for ALL schemes – but 100% for only a fraction of them. Areas with deprivation receive extra funding, but it may still not be enough for the scheme to go ahead. Communities are expected to raise the remainder through any means they can – their local councils, local businesses, the RFCC, the EU, even raffles in the pub!

This places a new burden on communities already hard hit by flooding. Some we know are well up for the challenge – Morpeth has secured up to £11M from Northumberland County Council so their scheme can go ahead. For most communities it will be a long struggle, adding further stress.

- We want to hear your views and experiences of the new scheme – so that we can feed it back to decision makers in government.

## Membership Ideas

The NFF is considering setting up a membership scheme and we would like your views on the idea. There would be three grades of membership – Individual, Group and Corporate.

**Individual** Membership would be open to anyone interested in flooding and wanting to support our work with an annual subscription or donation.

**Group** membership would be open to any community flood group wanting to help develop our work and our fundraising, giving us a stronger voice to speak out for flood risk communities.

**Corporate** Membership would be open to councils and other public bodies, as well as commercial concerns wanting to support our work and objectives with an annual subscription.

The NFF has never had a membership scheme before, but it would enable us to reach a wider group of people, involve our groups more in raising awareness of flood risk and give more organisations the opportunity to help develop our work.

- We'd like to hear your views.

## Online Insurance Survey still live

If you have a story to tell about flood insurance and haven't filled in our [Online Insurance Survey](#) yet, please find a minute to do so. We need more information on YOUR experience of Flood Insurance. We are interested in all of your stories, both good and bad.

If you would prefer to talk to someone, please phone Amanda on 01299 403055.

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## Lead Local Flood Authorities

Most people have still no idea that their County, or Unitary Council where there is one, are now responsible for dealing with Local Flood Risk Management (FRM). This includes groundwater, surface water and “ordinary” watercourses not maintained by the EA.

Each LLFA has to produce its own Local FRM Strategy, but few have done much about it yet. And VERY few have plans to involve their local communities in developing it! That’s the strong message coming out of workshops that have been run by Defra over the past month.

**Paul Cobbing, Heather Shepherd** and **Paul Hendy** have, between them, taken part in all nine workshops across the whole country – from Newcastle to Bristol, Warrington to London, Southampton to Peterborough.

**Paul Cobbing** says “The English National Strategy expects LLFAs to put local communities at the heart of their Local Strategies. That means involving them from the start – not just telling them about it when it’s finished! We’ve been emphasising this at the Workshops and offering help directly to individual councils.”

- Has the LLFA where YOU live started to prepare their Local Strategy? Do let us know.

## Welsh National Strategy

**Paul Cobbing** and our Treasurer, **Paul Roberts**, attended the launch of the Welsh National FRM Strategy at Borth, near Aberystwith, recently, with the Environment Minister, John Griffiths AM.

Like the English Strategy, the Welsh Strategy is a requirement of the Floods and Water Management Act, but is totally separate. We like its reference to communities and recognition of the human impact of flooding. The NFF is in discussions with the Welsh Government about forming a Welsh Flood Forum.

## Want to protect your home or small business from flooding? Ask the NFF!

The National Flood Forum is the only INDEPENDENT organisation providing flood advice on how to protect your home or small business. We run events for communities and flood groups where we can show you what products are available and how they are used. We can also talk about how to make your home or small business resilient to the effects of flood.

- Want to protect your home or business? Want to know more? Phone Amanda on 01299 403055 or Heather on 01743 741725.

## Insurance Update

**Paul Cobbing** and **Charles Tucker** met the ABI last month to review progress towards a replacement for the “Statement of Principles”.

**Charles** and **Alan Bell** of Morpeth are meeting with staff at Defra on 1<sup>st</sup> December to discuss the revised Morpeth Model for Flood Insurance, the Charter for Flood Friendly Insurance, the Blue Deal and other initiatives.

See the revised Morpeth Model at [www.morpethfloodaction.org.uk/html/morpeth\\_model\\_v2.html](http://www.morpethfloodaction.org.uk/html/morpeth_model_v2.html)

A key feature is now the inclusion of a “community flood levy” on all household insurance policies, which would help fund a “pool” to limit costs for high risk properties.

Richard Benyon has pledged to consult on a proposal (to replace the SoP) this year and to reach a decision in the Spring, so we’re pleased to hear that HM Treasury are to convene a meeting of the Insurance Working Group soon.

## Defra Grant Review

Defra and the EA held workshops recently to review the outcomes of the two years of funding for Individual Property Protection schemes, run by the EA and delivered through local councils. **Heather Shepherd** and **Amanda Davies** participated. Contact Heather for further details.

## Give us your Views!

Please give us Feedback on the Bulletin. What would you like us to include?

Email your comments to [amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:amanda.davies@floodforum.org.uk)

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