**Resilient Hullavington**

# An update for the Parish Council following recent storms – 10 December 2024

Dear Councillors,

In view of the recent episodes of bad weather, I thought I would take the opportunity to provide a brief update on the functioning of the community resilience plan – and how it worked during the recent storms.

Over the past month, we have experienced two significant storms – Storm Bert in November and Storm Darragh in early December.

## Storm Bert – from 22 to 25 November 2024

The weekend of Saturday 23rd to Sunday 24th was exceptionally wet across south-west England with over 150mm falling in the wettest upland areas. Storm Bert also brought some very strong winds, particularly across south-west England with gusts exceeding 69mph), even for some inland locations. On 23 November the UK recorded its wettest calendar day – as an average across the whole country – since 3 October 2020.

We received a Yellow rain warning on 23 November, which was shared on Hullavington Happenings and other local social media.

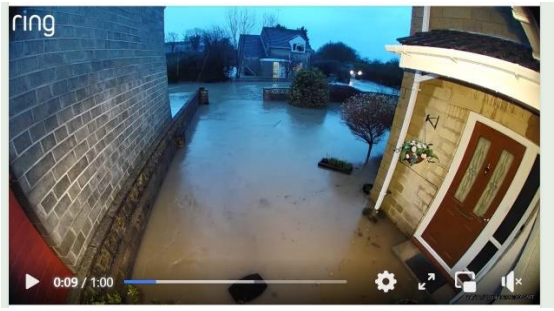
### Impacts

Storm Bert brought heavy rain and strong winds to Hullavington. Fortunately, we did not suffer extensive flooding like that experienced in Chippenham and Malmesbury and no injuries were reported in our parish.

However, we did get flooding with some significant impacts:

- The Gauze Brook burst its banks just north of the railway bridge on the road to Norton and two houses in Brookside were flooded. Cars that were able to drive through the floodwater on the adjacent road to Norton created waves, which added to the flood damage in Brookside. The flooding here was particularly concerning, not only because people's homes were flooded but also because of the risk, or likelihood, that the floodwater here was contaminated by overflow from the

settlement tanks of the sewage treatment works immediately upstream of the Gauze Brook at this location. Overflowing of the settlement tanks into the Gauze Brook during heavy rain is a frequent occurrence here. The incident was reported to the emergency desk at Wessex Water on the night it happened. The desk officer promised to send a team down to inspect but sadly we have received no feedback to date despite reminders. In view of the possible need to evacuate residents, the village hall team were alerted and offers of overnight accommodation and other help were made by concerned residents. Fortunately the help kindly offered was not needed in the end. Cllr Slater checked in with the residents who indicated that they had been able to raise vulnerable items off the flooded downstairs floors.

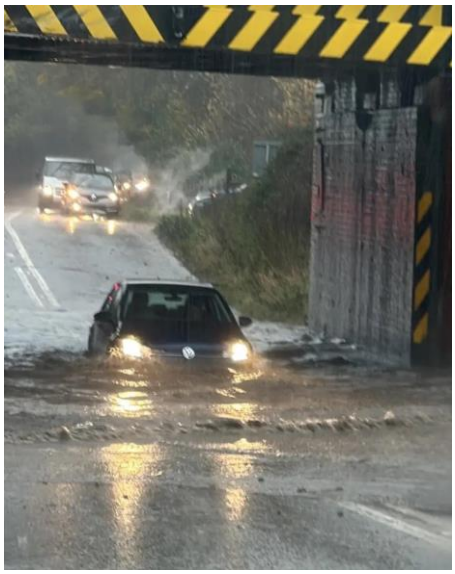


Houses in Brookside were flooded

Traffic jam on the road to Norton

- One house in Hill Hayes Lane was flooded due to water rising from a well.
- Despite recent clearing of all relevant road gullies and drains, all access roads to the village became flooded in the usual places for an extended period. Roads became jammed with traffic trying to make it through the floodwater and the village became effectively cut off from access by road. This created the risk of emergency services being unable to gain access. Residents who needed to return to the village were forced to park in Wellington Place to access their homes via the footpath at the end of Frog Lane.

The road to Malmesbury impassable



- Flood reports were made to Wiltshire Council using My Wilts. This was difficult in practice because the system didn't seem well configured for emergency flood reporting. A report about the flooding of Brookside homes seemed to get automatically categorised incorrectly to 'street lighting' and the details were lost.

Hill Hayes Lane cut off

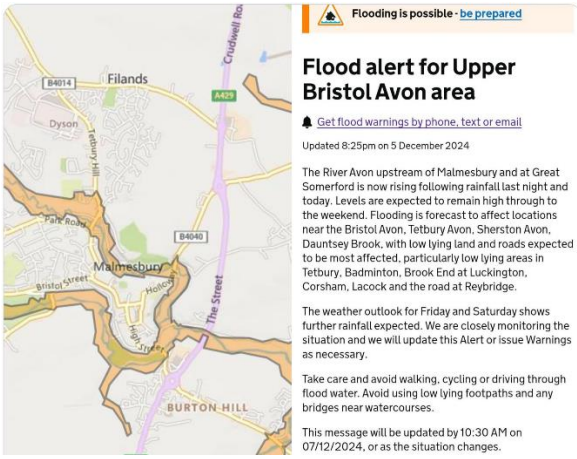
The road towards M4 Carting was flooded

A garden in Parklands

## Storm Darragh – from 6 to 8 December 2024

Storm Darragh brought more severe weather. We received Yellow weather warnings for rain and (especially) wind and a flood alert, which were communicated to the community via Hullavington Happenings Facebook Group.

Again Hullavington Happenings was an effective channel for people to report issues.




## Impacts

Fortunately Storm Darragh seems to have been less damaging for the community than Storm Bert. There was no flooding and damage appears to have been limited to blown down fences and trees. Fallen trees were reported on My Wilts and quickly cleared.

## Lessons Learned

This report has highlighted the effects of two relatively low strength storms and their impact on the community. If anyone reading this is aware of any significant errors or omissions, I would be most grateful for your feedback, preferably by email to jonatkey1@gmail.com .

The next step will be to seek feedback from the community about their experience of the storms, how things were handled from their perspective and how things might be improved for the future.

## Thanks

I should like to express my sincere thanks to all Community Emergency Volunteers for their support, including in particular Simon Durrant, Mandy House, Cllr Dave Martin, Sandra Samra and Cllr Hank Slater; also to everyone who took the trouble to report issues as they arose.

Should anyone have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to help.

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