



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Winter Preparedness and flooding

Winter preparedness is important for flood risk partners (Councils, Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authorities and Utility Companies), parishes and individual residents themselves.

Each winter the UK experiences flooding and our area is often also impacted, especially in locations that have experienced flooding in the past.

This information aims to help prepare communities and has important reminders for those more prone to flooding.

Roles and online resources

A new [flood and water information hub](#) has been created on Cambridgeshire County Council's website – they are the Lead Local Flood Authority. The pages cover:

- Who is responsible in relation to flooding.
- Important information for residents and businesses to help them plan for flooding (and importantly measures people can take in advance of any flooding)
- Materials to support community flood groups and grants available

People are urged to read the page on [Flooding – who is responsible](#) which contains a helpful flow chart on [who manages what](#). This page also has the easier ways to report issues and the contact details.

There are hundreds of kilometres of watercourses in the area. They are also managed by different people, including responsibilities for homeowners. As a Council we are responsible for 275km of watercourses. Details of rivers, ditches and watercourses, including who is responsible can be checked using the [watercourse map](#).

If there is a watercourse on, next to or under a property you own, then you could be a [Riparian Owner](#). The deeds for your property or land may tell you if this is the case. However, even if your deeds do not say you are responsible for an adjacent watercourse, the law will assume you are. Waiver of responsibility only applies where a title deed states specifically that you are not responsible. This means you are responsible for its maintenance to ensure it flows freely without obstruction, pollution or diversion, and you should also maintain your side of the riverbank. If you are a tenant, responsibilities usually sit with the owner; but it is worth checking your tenancy agreement.

Planning and preparing (resources)

- **Individual household preparedness** – making a flood plan is the best line of defence if your property is susceptible to flooding. The [Preparing for flooding](#) page has a template for a personal plan and helpful advice and information.
- **Signing up for FREE flood alerts** – it is easy to sign up to receive free flood warnings from the Environment Agency. This can be for a home or business premises in England. Visit the government's webpages regarding [flood warnings](#).
- **Check previous flood risks** – Cambridgeshire County Council's website has information about flood risk and if previous flood reports have been made for a specific area. Please visit their information regarding [Flood investigations](#) where you will also see a map to identify previous flood investigations. You can also check previous flood investigations using your postcode on their [flood map](#).

Flood groups in communities

Check for and join a flood group - There are some existing flood groups in Cambridgeshire. Active and inactive groups can be found on Cambridgeshire County Council's [flood group webpages](#).

Good community flood planning starts with understanding how flooding could affect your local area. This means gathering local knowledge and working together to identify:



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- Areas that flood easily - such as low-lying roads, footpaths, or properties near drains, streams, or ditches
- Important places - schools, care homes, community centres, and other key buildings
- People who may need extra help - including older residents, people with disabilities, those who live alone, or families with young children
- How you stay in touch - for example, community WhatsApp groups, phone trees, or local volunteer networks
- Knowing your area well helps ensure your community is better prepared and able to respond quickly if flooding happens.

We have been working with parishes in areas that have experienced flooding in more recent years to encourage groups to be established and flood plans to be put in place.

Setting up a flood group – if town/parish councils, or a group of volunteers want to set up a flood group we can help you. Areas with flood groups often respond very well during significant rainfall events. You can contact James.croft@scambs.gov.uk or visit Cambridgeshire County Council's webpages that contain [information and templates](#).

South Cambridgeshire District Council's role in a significant rainfall / flooding event

Sandbags – we do not provide a sandbag service to residents. Generally, it is the responsibility of residents to protect their own properties from flooding and that is why we urge people to plan ahead and make a plan if your home is at higher risk of flooding. However, we do have a limited supply of sandbags that can be delivered to homes that are at imminent risk of flooding only, and not as a preventative measure a day or hours in advance of potential flooding. By this, we don't mean if there's a weather warning in place for your area for a given day; we mean if the water is rising by a front door. In those situations, we prioritise those who are most vulnerable and we'll always do our best to get there but we cannot guarantee it. Information on

protecting your home or requesting sandbags in an immediate emergency can be found on our [flooding webpage](#).

Emergency Planning – We work with public sector organisations and industry bodies as part of the wider multi agency response in an emergency, including flooding. This ensures a joined-up approach when there is a major event and resources can be shared and called upon across the county if there is a greater need in some areas. This includes our communications teams working together to ensure people have the best information. However, signing up to alerts in advance will always provide the best information for your home or area.

Recovery and shelter – Our housing team stands up and provides rest centres and shelter for residents during an emergency when it is required.

Infrastructure and assets – The awarded watercourses team monitor and service the Council's responsibilities during a significant rainfall event to ensure that our watercourses remain free of obstructions and our pumping station works effectively. The team deliver sandbags and share their equipment and resources with flood risk partners. mechanical / machinery based, and hand works tasks, on approximately 275 km of open watercourses, culverts, pipes and associated structures within South Cambridgeshire

Members - District Councillors act as a vital link between communities and the Council, helping share trusted information, identify vulnerable residents and emerging issues, and escalate local concerns to the appropriate officers and partner agencies

Key contacts at the Council

- 1) Your local District Councillors can be located by visiting our [councillor webpage](#)
- 2) If you have any questions regarding awarded watercourses, contact our Awarded Watercourses Principal Operations Manager – Environment Lee Hillam on lee.hillam@scambs.gov.uk
- 3) If a parish is keen to consider creating a local flood plan, please contact james.croft@scambs.gov.uk
- 4) Residents at imminent risk of flooding during a major flood event should request sandbags on:



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- Office hours - call [01954 713 000](tel:01954713000) or email streets@scambs.gov.uk
- Outside of normal office hours, call [01253 501 055](tel:01253501055)