

# Flood recovery update

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News and guidance for everyone affected by the Winter 2008 flooding

## Flood fair success at Ottery St Mary

Hundreds of local residents visited a Flood Fair in Ottery St Mary organised by members of the East Devon Flood Recovery Group and the National Flood Forum.

Representatives from the Environment Agency, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council were on hand to give advice at the event in July, which was the idea of local resident Shan Merritt. There were a number of displays showing products and systems to help householders to protect their properties from flooding.



Some of the hundreds of people who sought flood protection advice at The King's School, Ottery St Mary.

## Still time to apply for a flood protection grant

Residents of East Devon whose homes are at risk of flooding can apply for a grant from a scheme being administered by the Environment Agency, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council. The funding, which can be used to buy products to protect homes, was first publicised at July's Flood Fair. Since then, the deadline for expressions of interest has been extended from 14 August to 30 September 2009.

The funding pot is limited to £35,000. Applications will be assessed against a number of criteria (see below), including the order in which they arrive. So it's in your interest to get your application in as soon as possible.

Each applicant can ask for up to £500 or 80% of the cost of the product, whichever is the smaller amount. You can apply for money to buy things like

flood boards, which slot into place across their front doors, and give some protection from flood water. You will need to meet the following requirements:

- Your application is for a residential property.
- Where a flood warning service is available, you make use of this free service.
- You agree to be responsible for purchase, installation, operation and maintenance. We cannot guarantee any product you purchase or be responsible for any failure of that product.
- If requested, you will allow an inspection of the purchased product. We will contact you in writing if an inspection is required.
- You provide a receipted invoice on completion.



Forms, available from town and parish councils and from Reception at EDDC's offices in Sidmouth, should be completed and returned to [jo.richards@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:jo.richards@environment-agency.gov.uk) or posted to Flood Recovery Group, c/o Jo Richards, Manley House, Kestrel Way, Sowton, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7LQ. The deadline is Wednesday 30 September 2009.

**See over for news of the work we are doing**

## Agencies team up with local farmers in bid to reduce surface water run-off

The Environment Agency and its partners on the East Devon Flood Recovery Group are teaming up with farmers to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and other properties in East Devon.

Over 350 properties in 30 towns and villages were flooded in October 2008. The vast majority were flooded by small streams or surface water run-off, rather than the main rivers flowing through the area.

Since then, extensive research by the Environment Agency has shown that the way land was managed was one of the factors contributing to the high level of run-off.

**Since dramatic storms hit East Devon in October 2008, Councils and Government Agencies have been working to clear up the mess left behind, to find out why the floods happened, and to work out what can be done to reduce the impact of any future storms on a similar scale.**

### Protect your property

Visit [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood) and type in your postcode to see if your home is at risk.

Listen out for severe weather warnings for flash floods on local radio and TV and you can phone the Floodline on **0845 988 1188** for information.

Farmers are now working with agencies to tackle soil compaction so that more water soaks into the soil and less runs off onto roads, which could reduce the risk of flooding in East Devon.

### Compaction

Soil compaction happens when wet soil is compressed, especially by the weight of livestock or machinery. When soil is compacted like this and is in poor condition, it becomes sealed making it almost impossible for the soil to absorb rainwater.

Richard Smith from the Environment Agency, who led the soils research, said: "When in good condition, well drained soil can absorb huge quantities of rain water. Our work has shown that an open loose soil structure can absorb 50 millimetres of rain per hour, but a hard compacted soil can shed up to 90% as surface water run-off. This problem is widespread in East Devon."

Richard has been working with farmers to help them to recognise problems related to soil compaction and drainage and to improve their soils, for example by breaking up their land following harvest. Farmers in Feniton will shortly be using a sub-soiler to do just that.

## Drains survey finds some blockages

Hi-tech CCTV surveys of storm water pipes in Feniton revealed that some of them were partially blocked, which could contribute to flooding in the event of heavy rain. Steps are now being taken to tackle any problems uncovered.

East Devon District Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency and Devon County Council, arranged with a specialist contractor to carry out the surveys.

### Experts

A remote-control camera travels along the pipe and sends back pictures (see photo), which can be recorded and viewed by experts.



As a result of the findings, EDDC and DCC have already done some clearance work and have also contacted the owners of any private pipe-work to discuss making improvements.

EDDC is also putting in two bids to DEFRA for funding aimed at improving the drainage system in the Feniton area.

### East Devon Flood Recovery Partnership



**For general enquiries please contact  
01395 517528 or visit [www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)**