

Storm Herminia

Floods Update

July 2025 (Issue 1)

Six months on from the flooding associated with Storm Herminia on 26th January, Somerset Council, Somerset Rivers Authority, and the Environment Agency would like to share some news, information, and advice to support you and your parish or town.

We will continue to provide updates for you to share with your community as progress develops so you can stay informed and better prepared for the future. In this issue, we're mainly going to focus on property repair and resilience. If there is a topic that you would like covered in a future issue, then please email: somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk

Tips for Property Repair and Improved Readiness

We've collected these tips from those who've had to rebuild and repair after flooding. If you have any of your own to add, then please email somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk

- Consider tiling floors downstairs and using removable rugs instead of fitted carpets.
- Lay any plasterboard sheets horizontally on walls downstairs, so less needs replacement should they get wet again.
- Use a water-resistant plaster on walls.
- Install electrical sockets 3 feet up the walls.
- Consider having white goods upstairs or fitted with long leads so that they can be lifted quickly.
- Use quick release hinges on kitchen cabinet doors. Carcasses can be sacrificed as they are fairly cheap. Alternatively, install stainless steel or bespoke hardwood cabinets.
- Use quick release hinges on internal doors downstairs.
- Keep higher value garden equipment stored in an elevated position if possible, using wall brackets or bars suspended from a roof.
- Consider where radiator thermostats are placed.
- Keep personal effects, important documents and valuables upstairs.
- Have multiple trestle tables or workmates to support lifted furniture.
- Have multiple plastic boxes to fill with items, ready to remove to safety.
- Know how to quickly remove the internal fire bricks from any log burner (and remove any ash).
- Keep good wellies, torch and medical supplies to hand in an Emergency Bag. There are tips of what else to include and a Household Emergency Plan template www.somersetprepared.org.uk/creating-a-home-emergency-plan/.

More tips and case studies can be found on Mary Long-Dhonau's website: <https://floodmary.com/>

Insurance

The stress of flooding can be intensified when home or contents insurance isn't in place, or where claims prove difficult. If you have relevant insurance, then follow your insurer's advice about actions to take. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) provides information about the claims process.

The British Insurance Brokers' Association, The ABI and Flood Re have worked together to create an **online directory** designed to help flood risk properties find insurance. If you are struggling to access insurance, contact the **National Flood Forum** for support and advice. They can also help if you experienced flooding and were not insured.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

PFR refers to property maintenance (such as repointing to prevent water coming through walls) and temporary or permanent measures that can be put on or in a property to help keep out as much water as possible. Examples include non-return valves for waste pipes, airbrick covers, flood resistant coatings on walls and flood barriers for doorways. Some measures help cleaning up after a flood easier and safer, so that the property becomes habitable sooner.

Different properties require different measures, but look out for British Standards Kitemark tested products. More information on PFR is available at www.somersetprepared.org.uk/get-support/property-level-flood-protection, the National Flood Forum and the Blue Pages and you can see some of the products by visiting the Flood Pod (a mobile PFR exhibition) which will 2-7pm at the Archie Gooch Pavillion, Brittens Field, The Rec, Ilminster, TA19 9FE on Thursday September 25th. National PFR expert Mary Long-Dhonau, known as 'Flood Mary', and others will offering advice.

Once installed, it's vital to keep PFR products maintained in good working order, for example, checking seals on doors and servicing pumps. Make sure you know how to install your temporary products, including these steps in a Household Emergency Plan (see below). Also consider who will do this if you are away.

Build Back Better is a relatively new scheme that offers householders the chance to install PFR measures up to the value of £10,000 when repairing after a flood if they hold a qualifying insurance policy. A growing number of insurance companies offer Build Back Better policies, with an updated list available here: www.floodre.co.uk/buildbackbetter

Don't Wait to Get Flood Safe

There is no need to wait before protecting yourselves and your property. Consider PFR measurers and having an Emergency Bag (see above), but also:

- **Sign up for Met Office alerts.**
- **Sign up to Flood Warnings** if available for your area.
- Be aware of your Community Emergency Plan and develop your own Household one (see above) for you, your family, your pets and animals and, if relevant, your business. For support with this, email somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk.
- Through your Parish Council, make yourself aware of any local Flood Action Groups and Flood Wardens (community volunteers working to reduce local flood risk) and nearby Places of Safety if you needed to leave your home.
- If you own property or land bordering a watercourse, keep on top of maintenance to reduce flooding risk. More on this in a future Issue.