

Report for Wickham Market Parish Council at its meeting on 18 November 2024

Update on Flood Resilience for Wickham Market

Introduction

Storm Babet caused significant disruption to communities across Suffolk between 18th and 21st October 2023. Wickham Market was one of the most severely impacted locations. Over 40 residential and commercial properties were internally flooded, and infrastructure and services disrupted. Suffolk County Council (SCC) as Lead Local Flood Authority, has therefore undertaken a Section 19 Flood Investigation. The resulting report will:

- Highlight the probable causes of flooding:
- Identify options to reduce future flood risk and increase property resilience: and
- Make recommendations for actions by relevant responsible organisations, landowners or homeowners.

Subsequent actions

In June 2024 the parish council Vice-Chairman and a local resident who helped residents on the night of the storm, met with SCC, the Environment Agency (EA) and our District Councillor to assess what happened on the night, which properties were affected by the flood water and what other local knowledge would assist SCC in preparing a report.

In August 2024 SCC published its report. This can be found on the SCC web site at [wickham-market-s19-flood-investigation-2024-08-28](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/wickham-market-s19-flood-investigation-2024-08-28)

The report identifies 4 areas of the village that suffered the most from the storm. The report has taken into account site visits, anecdotal evidence from residents and businesses and topographical and flooding maps of the area.

In its summary the report identifies work carried out to date which includes:

- The EA and SCC Highways planning to de-silt the River Deben under Rackham's bridge in Autumn 2024 – this was attempted and deferred but may still happen before the end of the year
- EA has started to improve its hydraulic modelling with data from the storm
- Residents and landowners alongside the River Deben have been asked to remove debris in the river
- The primary school are carrying out investigations of their drains
- SCC are investigating ownership of the piped watercourse beside the tennis courts

The report then recommends future actions in the short, medium and longer term to be actioned by the EA, landowners, Highways, SCC and residents. There is an expectation that Wickham Market Parish Council will include the risk of flooding in its Emergency Plan and that has been done.

In assessing the report the Vice-Chairman submitted several comments and queries to SCC. Of particular note were:

- Who is going to contact residents asking them investigate "rainwater collection systems"? What type of systems are these and who would fund these?

- What are “Natural Flood Management” options? We assume these could be ditches or new ponds. Where would they be located? Who would fund these?

Furthermore there are grants of up to £5,000 that are available to residents of flooded properties funded from the Governments Flood Recovery Framework to help flooded property owners make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding. Advisory postcards were produced by the EA, some of which were distributed and some deposited in the village library.

Guidance can be found at:

[Property flood resilience \(PFR\) grant scheme - Suffolk County Council](#)

Recommendations

1. The parish council are recommended to read and absorb the SCC Flood Investigation report for the village and its action plans
2. For councillors to actively assist SCC to deliver the action plan
3. To hold account the various agencies to deliver their respective actions
4. To regularly update the parishioners of the village, perhaps via its Newsletter

David Chenery
Vice Chairman
November 2024