

## Emergency Planning & Preparedness – Compton Pauncefoot & Blackford

This document has been written to support personal emergency planning by village residents and to provide a reference point with contacts and useful information. It does not replace the need for individuals to take personal responsibility and consider risks specific to each household or individual. There is a huge amount of information and advice available via the internet – there is no intention to extract and repeat everything here – but we provide useful pointers and guidance.

The Parish Meeting (PM) has no elected Councillors or paid Clerk and very limited powers to raise or spend monies. Therefore in the emergency planning & preparedness context the PM's main role is to coordinate and to issue alerts. In these circumstances the PM has not written a formal Emergency Plan that might be seen in larger Parishes with greater resources.

There are approximately 35 houses in each village and around 125 adult residents in total.

### Risks (which could lead to emergency situations), Self-help & Mitigations include:

**1. Flooding.** The stream through the villages is designated a “Main River” which has implications for planning or other changes via Somerset Council (SC) and other organisations including Environment Agency (EA). It is a tributary of the River Cam and flows into the Yeo and onwards to the Parrett. Flooding appears to be an increasing risk due to the occurrence of severe weather events with prolonged and heavy rainfall (such as seen on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023). Flooding events are caused both by rising river levels (fluvial) and runoff from fields & roads (pluvial). In each village there are a few houses at potential risk of flooding from river and/or runoff. Houses previously not considered “at risk” are now having to reassess. Landowners bordering streams and ditches should understand their “Riparian” Rights & responsibilities. Slowing water flows with Natural Flood Management helps mitigate flooding downstream.

Tim Adams (former Parish Clerk) has written a lengthy document that includes history of local floods, explanation of riparian rights, contacts & advice. The document is available on request.

**DO NOT** enter flood waters unless absolutely necessary and even then only if you are certain of the depth. There may be open drains/gullies or other obstacles that are not visible. Moving flood waters can easily knock you over – even if not deep.

**DO NOT** drive through flood waters unless certain of depth and obstacles. e.g. Many cars have been caught out on the corner between Home Farm/Downyard in Compton Pauncefoot and become stranded.

**DO NOT** make changes near watercourses (inc ditches) without checking if planning (SC) or other permissions (EA) are required. Changes made in one place can have a significant impact downstream.

**DO NOT** store logs, garden furniture etc near the stream - may float away & cause blockage in culverts etc

**DO** consider appropriate plans (according to your own circumstances) such as sandbags (plastic gel bags may be better), toilet bungs, airbrick covers, flood doors, grab bags (with keys, medication, phone charger, passports, insurance and other important documents) etc. Torches and reflective jackets may be useful.

**DO** plan to safely move valuables, electrical items, cars, shed contents, pets etc to higher rooms & ground

**DO** sign up for EA flood & MetOffice rainfall Alerts & River Level Alerts – details below.

**DO report all flood events to SC. If they don't know about them they cannot help.**

**DO** consider engaging with the parish informal "adopt a gully" scheme. Safely clear the tops of nearby drains and advise PM & SC Highways (or via fixmystreet website) of problems.

**DO** consider offering “Good neighbour support” - checking wellbeing and safely helping as necessary

**DO** check if your oil tank, sewage treatment plant or septic tank is at risk from floodwaters. E.g. any electrical/mechanical parts including pumps may need to be raised higher than potential flooding. Flooded soakaways may silt up. Potential for pollution during flooding should be considered and mitigated.

**DO** consider safely switching off some or all power if sockets etc likely to become flooded – with implications for alarms, fridge, freezers etc.

**DO** take time to understand your rights and responsibilities as a “riparian owner” if you own a property with a watercourse (includes culverts, ditches, streams, rivers etc) through or beneath the land or adjacent to boundary. Information available from internet and/or flood warden.

### **Parish Meeting (PM) role and actions**

- PM is pressing SC Highways to clear filled gullies and undertake regular maintenance to ensure operation.
- PM & EA/SC are targeting better alerts with a river level gauge in Blackford (installed Jan 2024) as well as rainfall alerts from Bratton Seymour or other data collection points. Contact PM to be added to alerts.
- PM encouraging farmers ploughing/planting follows best practice including FWAG SW recommendations
- PM working with SRA, YRT, FWAG, farmers etc to encourage Natural Flood Management such as tree planting and attenuation ponds. It is unlikely the PM has any additional role in NFM.
- PM will issue alerts if it has additional information e.g. from EA, SC Highways, Police or road closures

**2. Snow/ice.** The Parish has rural, ungritted roads and is surrounded by hills; this can mean limited access for emergency services, shopping, school etc. Impact likely to be a few days at most - but can be severe in the short term. Black ice can be unexpected and is a significant danger. During snow/ice events:

**DO NOT** take unnecessary journeys or risks whether by car, cycling, walking etc

**DO** check travel advice inc local radio, tv & other travel websites. BBC, National Highways, AA/RAC etc

**DO** consider dangers of slipping and falls

**DO** consider keeping sufficient food supplies (tinned, freezer etc) to reduce need for trips to shops. Online shopping may be unable to deliver if roads are not cleared. Ensure water supplies - in case pipes frozen.

**DO** keep a shovel handy, both near house and in your car.

**DO** check your heating oil is sufficiently topped up in case deliveries get delayed

**DO** keep chopped wood or coal handy if using woodburners or open fires

**DO** consider safely helping as "good neighbours" – checking wellbeing, clearing paths, shopping help etc

**DO** help spread grit safely on ad-hoc basis as necessary. PM owns 6 grit bins to help mitigate snow/ice on public roads, pavements and access to public buildings etc. Please do not take grit for personal use at home.

### **Parish Meeting role and actions**

- PM will work with SC Highways & farmers who may help with road clearance

- PM and SC Highways ensure grit bins are refilled as necessary.

- PM will issue alerts if it has additional information e.g. from Police, Fire Brigade or road closures

**3. Power cuts.** Most likely due to severe weather but more recently there is also a risk of planned blackouts if the grid is overloaded.

- Most houses are oil heated (no mains gas) and need electricity for pumps & programmers.

- Power cuts are likely to take down internet (with routers needing power) & mobile comms can also be impacted especially if using Wi-Fi. Most landlines are moving to internet based service with implications during power cuts. Check you have capability for emergency calls in a power cut.

- Some houses have solar/grid batteries with power sufficient to help in small ways e.g. charging mobiles

**Report power cut:** Phone 105

**DO NOT** use BBQs indoors

**DO** consider emergency alternatives through safe usage of woodburners/open fires, Camping Gaz type cookers/lights, candles (use with care), battery torches, Powerbanks for mobile charging etc

**DO** consider safely helping as "good neighbours" – checking wellbeing etc

### **Parish Meeting role and actions**

- PM will issue alerts if it has additional information e.g. any available facilities such as mobile charging

**4. Trees down & landslip.** Most likely due to severe weather including high winds, weight of snow, rain loosening roots, landslip etc.

- Care should be taken when driving.
- Blackford Hollow is a particular risk for both trees and landslip.
- Impacts may include damage to property, blocked roads, power cuts etc

**Report** to landowners, Somerset Highways, Power companies etc as necessary

**DO NOT** take undue risks

**DO** check and maintain trees on your land and boundaries in order to reduce risks and prevent problems.

**DO** check trees on boundaries and verges even if not in your ownership in order to report to owners, reduce risks and prevent problems. Verges are typically owned by Somerset Council.

#### **Parish Meeting role and actions**

- PM will issue alerts if it has additional information and assist with reporting
- PM may be able to co-ordinate farmers, landowners etc as necessary
- PM may be able to co-ordinate road closure warnings
- PM may be able to co-ordinate help with chain saws and clearance

#### **5. Other risks**

*Fire* with thatched houses and many older properties as well as field crops nearby that can be highly combustible. Consider if any preparations, mitigations needed.

**DO NOT** take undue risks to put out a fire

**DO NOT** have bonfires/BBQs that could cause danger to buildings, vegetation, crops & have consideration for neighbours (smoke annoyance, air quality – especially for those with lung conditions) & pollution etc

**DO** consider own risk preparations including grab bag (with keys, medication, phone charger, passports, insurance and other important documents etc). See [Prepare for Emergencies](#)

**DO** use and make regular checks your fire detection/alarms are working. Preferably mains linked (kitchen, living rooms, upstairs etc) with emergency lights. Backup batteries should be regularly checked and tested.

**DO** use and check Carbon Monoxide/CO alarms e.g. if using woodburners, gas heating/cooking, oil boiler indoors

**DO** keep fire extinguishers and fire blankets available (& check their condition annually)

**DO** check location of water stop cock, electricity consumer unit & meter etc and ensure all family aware.

**DO** online safety check below

*Car crash* or other accident in the village closing roads.

**DO** avoid speeding. Even though we have no speed limits drivers are encouraged to drive with care and consideration for cyclists, children, horses etc. Electric cars are very quiet and may not be heard in advance.

*A303 & RNAS Yeovilton* are nearby - potential for major incidents? Outside scope for this document.

#### **Parish Meeting role and actions**

- PM will issue alerts if it has additional information e.g. e.g. via Police, Fire Brigade or road closures

**Potential impacts and mitigations** of events such as above should be considered - including

- Alerts (WhatsApp, email, text etc). PM will take a role in co-ordination & issue of alerts
- Neighbour or other support
- Use of community facilities (churches, Reading Room/village hall). Contact information below.
- Some houses may have solar/grid batteries providing power sufficient to help in small ways if power cuts e.g. charging mobiles.

## Useful websites and contacts:

**Somerset Council (SC) (Unitary Authority that includes former Somerset County Council & South Somerset District Council)** <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/> Phone 0300 123 2224 responsibilities include: Planning, Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), Flooding, Highways. Responsible for watercourses except Main Rivers.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/beaches-ports-and-flooding/flooding-information-and-advice/> Advice and guidance on preparing for or recovering from flooding

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/> Reporting problems including Highways, potholes, gullies

<https://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/> Multi-agency advice and help for emergencies

<https://www.sometsriversauthority.org.uk/> Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), Flood advice and multi-partner agency. Riparian rights & responsibilities explained.

## Dept for Transport

DfT Highways responsible for A303

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport>

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/>

## Environment Agency (EA) - Responsible for Main Rivers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

<https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> Flood warnings

URGENT environmental incidents call the Environment Agency's incident hotline 0800 80 70 60.

FLOODLINE 24-hour flood information service is 0345 988 1188

<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/your-watercourse-rights-and-roles> Riparian rights & responsibilities explained.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse> Your responsibilities and rules to follow for watercourses on or near your property, and permissions you need to do work around them.

**Emergency Alerts** is a UK government service that will warn you if there's a danger to life nearby. In an emergency, your mobile phone or tablet will receive an alert with advice about how to stay safe.

<https://www.gov.uk/alerts>

## CommunitiesPrepared

<https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/> National community resilience and advice

<https://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/> Multi-agency advice and help for emergencies

**Prepare for Emergencies** Government advice, inc downloadable & printable household emergency plan

<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/>

**GeoWessex** Flood Online Reporting Tool to report flooding to SC & EA. Not for emergency responses.

<https://swim.geowessex.com/somerset> ALWAYS report internal flooding to help get future prevention works. New website: tbc???????????

**Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South-West (FWAG SW)** representing the region's farmers and landowners in the delivery of wildlife conservation, advising on flooding related issues etc

<https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/>

**Yeovil Rivers Community Trust (YRCT)** aim of restoring, enhancing and creating all types of natural aquatic habitats such as ponds, streams, rivers and wetlands in Yeovil and the wider landscape in Somerset and Dorset

<https://www.yrct.org.uk/>

**Blackford Church:** Mike Parry

<http://camelotparishes.co.uk/blackford>

**Blackford Reading Room:** Potentially a “Community Place of Safety” – tbc: Sophia Tayler

<https://www.blackfordreadingroom.com>

**Compton Pauncefoot Church:** Michael Keene

<http://camelotparishes.co.uk/compton-pauncefoot>

**Compton Pauncefoot & Blackford Parish Meeting:** Jane Monk, Chairman/Ian Tibbitt, Clerk

Tim Adams, Flood Alerts

**River Cam level at Weston Bampfylde**

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/3078>

**Rainfall gauges**

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/rainfall-station/52150> RNAS Yeovilton

<https://cfh.aquaticinformatics.net/AQWebPortal> Community Flood Hub includes other rainfall gauges

**River Level Flood Alerts apps** – useful, free apps for basic usage; covering all EA River Level Monitoring & Gauges. You can tailor real time/live alerts for your needs. Blackford and the Weston Bampfylde river level gauge at Sparkford currently likely to be best option for Blackford & Compton Pauncefoot.

<https://pegelalarm.at/> PegelAlarm currently does not include the latest River Level Gauges on River Cam

<https://www.riverapp.net/en> RiverApp includes the latest CFH River Level Gauges on River Cam

**WhatsApp Flood Alerts** from new Blackford River Level Gauge (installed Jan 2024). Alerts currently not available via EA. Channel on

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaDbh9KCXC3GHj3iAv3t>

**Blackford River Level Gauge** (installed Jan 2024). See Appendix 1 for more information

<https://cfh.aquaticinformatics.net/AQWebPortal> Community Flood Hub (CFH) with live river level, rainfall and more from multiple river level and rainfall gauges

**EA/Government Flood Warnings** somewhat generic warnings for wide area

<https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/environment-countryside/flooding-extreme-weather>

**Next Warning Service (NWS)** is an Environment Agency project to “build a replacement Flood Warning System, to future proof this essential public digital service for the next 10 years”

**MetOffice/Government Weather Warnings** somewhat generic warnings for wide area

<https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKMETOFFICE/subscriber/qualify>

**Insurance:**

- **Flood Re** is a joint Government and insurance industry initiative to enable you to find affordable insurance for qualifying properties that are at risk of flooding or have been flooded.

<https://www.floodre.co.uk/>

- **Association of British Insurers (ABI)** provides information about the claims process.

- **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.

- 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. A growing number of insurance companies offer Build Back Better policies, with an updated list available here: [www.floodre.co.uk/buildbackbetter](http://www.floodre.co.uk/buildbackbetter)

**BeFloodReady:** provides guidance and information on Property Flood Resilience (PFR), helping homes, businesses and communities to BeFloodReady.

<https://www.befloodready.uk/>

**Blue Pages:** Flood Directory – companies offering products & services

<https://bluepages.org.uk/>

**Flood Hub:** Assorted useful information & advice inc Resilience, pre and post Flooding, Recovery etc

<https://thefloodhub.co.uk/>

**FloodMary:** Useful advice including Flooding, Resilience & Recovery

<https://floodmary.com/>

**National Flood Forum:** A charity to help, support and represent people at risk of flooding

<https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>

**Priority Services Register (PSR):** free UK wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity, gas or water supply

<https://www.thepsr.co.uk/>

**'ICE' or 'Medical ID'** apps. Add emergency contacts or medical information to your mobile phone (often called 'ICE' or 'Medical ID' on smartphones) so that emergency services can access this information without having to unlock your phone with a passcode

## **Fire**

Online safety check <https://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/>

Fire safety advice <https://fireengland.uk/fire-safety/fire-safety-home>

## **SARAH Act 2015 Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism**

If a claim for negligence is later brought against the Good Samaritan, courts in England and Wales must take into account whether the person acted for the 'benefit of society' and took a 'predominantly responsible approach' in protecting other people.

**Police** non emergency: Phone 101

**Power cut:** Phone 105

**Somerset Council:** 0300 123 2224

**Wessex Water:** 0345 600 4600

**Do not be complacent due to false conclusions based on past floods or other emergencies. Every flood or event is different.**

**We welcome feedback and comments as well as suggestions for additions.**

Tim Adams

Flood Warden

Compton Pauncefoot & Blackford Parish Meeting

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## Appendix 1. Blackford River Level Gauge (installed Jan 2024).

WhatsApp Flood Alerts from new Blackford River Level Gauge (installed Jan 2024). Alerts currently not available via EA. Channel on <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaDbh9KCXC3GHj3iAv3t>

### Alerts

Amber Alerts at 0.60m and Red Alerts at 0.94m.

### Peak levels:

9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Blackford 1.35m (estimate) Weston Bampfylde 2.86m 60-120mm locally over 7 hours

9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 Blackford 0.57m Weston Bampfylde 0.92m (8<sup>th</sup> Feb)

18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 Blackford 0.85m Weston Bampfylde 1.36m (17<sup>th</sup> Feb) 39mm rainfall in 24 hours

30<sup>th</sup> Sep 2024 Blackford 0.95m Weston Bampfylde 1.20m (1<sup>st</sup> Red Alert)

## Community Flood Hub (CFH) Web Portal

Additional river level gauges have gone in at North Cadbury, Yarlinton, Rimpton, Weston Bampfylde, West Camel and Bridgehampton with a rainfall gauge at Shepton Montague.

The EA has arranged a new web portal viewable in both desktop and mobile device formats. (See some screen shots of various different aspects below).

<https://cfh.aquaticinformatics.net/AQWebPortal>

The portal is open and does not require an account or subscription to access the data.

EA & SRA gauges are made publicly viewable and free to view. Other subscribing partners data may be made public in future if they join the platform and give permission. EA are also trying to incorporate community monitoring and rainfall gauges if possible and where available.

CFH Alerts are currently sent to a small group of community members per community – this is to keep the administration burden for the EA sustainable, to control costs (as SMS messages cost money) and finally this approach fits best with the emergency response hierarchy/pyramid the EA and SC prefer.

RiverApp have a method of self-subscription to better automated alerts that allows flexibility such as multiple gauges or varying alert levels etc and alerts including email, text etc.

## Blackford Gauge Feb – Aug 2024



Sample web pages:

The screenshot displays the CFH Community Flood Hub interface for the location '42640 - North Cadbury Corkscrew Lane'. The interface includes a navigation menu on the left and a main content area with several data panels.

- North Cadbury River Level:** A text panel describing the gauge location and alert levels. Alert levels include Normal Level (Threshold: <math>\leq 0.5</math>), Enhanced Monitoring (0.5), Flood Alert (0.8), Flood Warning (0.9), Flood Warning Update (1), and Flood Warning Update 2 (1.3).
- Wincanton 24HR Rainfall Total:** Shows 'Precipitation Incremental' as 0 mm, recorded on 2024-06-23 04:00:00 (UTC+00:00).
- North Cadbury Latest Level:** Shows 'Height of Gauge (River Stage)' as 0.322 m, recorded on 2024-06-24 06:47:16 (UTC+00:00).
- North Cadbury Site Image:** A photograph showing a riverbank with trees and a stone structure.
- North Cadbury - 7 Day Flood Status:** A chart titled 'North Cadbury Corkscrew Lane Flood Status' showing 'North Cadbury Corkscrew Lane Water Level & Wincanton Rainfall' from 2024-06-17 to 2024-06-24. The chart features a color-coded background for flood status: Normal Range (green, 0.000-0.400), Enhanced Monitoring (yellow, 0.400-0.800), Flood Alert (orange, 0.800-0.900), Flood Warning (red-orange, 0.900-1.000), Flood Warning Update (red, 1.000-1.100), and Flood Warning Update 2 (dark red, 1.100-1.200). A blue line represents the water level, and a grey area represents rainfall. A vertical dashed line is at 2024-06-24.
- North Cadbury - 1 Month Stage Data:** A chart titled 'North Cadbury Corkscrew Lane' showing 'North Cadbury Corkscrew Lane Water Level & Wincanton Rainfall' from 2024-05-26 to 2024-06-21. It shows a significant spike in water level around 2024-05-28, followed by a gradual decline to a stable level around 0.32 m. Rainfall is shown as vertical bars.



Sample web pages:

