

# Help and advice on flooding issues in Little Hadham

## SOME CAUSES OF FLOODING:

**River banks overflowing, and water run off from fields, dwellings, sustainable drainage being overwhelmed, and sewer surcharging.**

River flooding happens when a river cannot cope with the amount of water 'run off' draining into it from the surrounding land and it tops its banks. Often this 'run off' water will also cause surface water flooding on roads before the water eventually drains into the River. The 'run off' water occurs when land is waterlogged and the drainage ditches and piped culverts are already full of water or when sustainable drainage on properties is already full. This seems to occur in Little Hadham for about 9 months of each year due to the rainfall from the Autumn to Spring, then the summer storms that have become a more frequent occurrence.

From New Year's Day 2016 there have been five occasions of the highway flooding between the Village Hall and Ford End, highway flooding at The C15 where it meets the junction with The Smithy, and also at Green Street and Cradle End. There have been 23 severe weather warnings, 11 during June, the last being 20<sup>th</sup> July. Each weather warning was of potential sufficient rainfall to cause flooding issues and did cause problems in nearby areas such as Bishops Stortford, Dunmow, Thaxted, Buntingford, Hitchin, Stevenage. There have been three flood alerts issued for the River Ash - the last being on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

There have been numerous incidents of the Sewer system surcharging with rain water, and the contents of the sewer escaping onto homes and onto the highway and footpaths at several locations between the traffic lights and South Cottages. This means the sewer is blocked and when households use their showers, baths or toilets, then the contents are exiting onto someone else's home or onto the road further down the village. Thames Water investigated and say this is caused by illegal drainage connections from homes and land, such as drainage from gutters or drainage ditches being piped directly into the sewer. This type of drainage should go direct into a soakaway in your property or be routed into a Watercourse or ditch.

## IS YOUR HOME AT RISK OF FLOODING?

Click on the below link to display the current Environment Agency Flood Risk Map. Then enter your postcode to see how it affects your home or business.

[Flood Risk Map](#)

The River Ash Floods of 2001 and 2013 affected 71 homes and several businesses at the A120 Traffic Lights, Albury Road, Standon Road, and Stortford Road, and from the Village Hall through to South Cottages. Also some properties at Green Street and Cradle End were affected. This resulted in over half a million pounds worth of flood damage each time, and some residents being moved from their homes for months at a time, or living amongst the debris whilst the repairs are carried out.

# MONITORING THE RIVER ASH FLOOD LEVELS

The below link will take you to the Environment Agency River Levels site for the River Ash. When the River Level rises to 52cm then it says that flooding is possible. On average, 1mm of rainfall will cause the River Ash to rise by 3cm. Therefore 25mm or an inch of rain is enough to raise the River Level by 75cm which is above the level shown as a risk. During the Floods of 2001 the river level rose to 197cm, 195cm during the 2013 flood.

[River Ash Flood Levels](#)

## FLOOD WARNINGS

When the River Ash levels start to rise to a flood level, the Environment Agency issue a Flood Warning. The below link will take you to the Environment Agency Flood Warning website.

[Flood Warning Website](#)

There are three levels of warning:

Flood Alert – Flooding is possible be prepared.

Flood Warning – Flooding is expected, immediate action is required.

Severe Flood Warning – Severe flooding, danger to life.

Warnings can also be received by phone, text and email by registering with the Environment Agency to receive the information. You can register online at the flood warning website, or phone 0345 988 1188 (24 hour service), or by email to [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

When driving through flood water, a foot of water can cause your car to float. The Fire Service has had to rescue motorists many times who have driven into floodwater.

Drive slowly when going through floodwater. To drive fast sprays the water up into your engine and you are likely to stall the car. Water then gets into the exhaust system and engine and then it's time for you to walk. Driving fast also sends bow waves into roadside properties and flooding them. Insurance companies are encouraging householders to take the index numbers of the cars that flood their homes so they can make a claim against the registered car owner.

When wading through floodwater remember that you are walking across drains where the covers may have lifted and floated away. You are in danger of stepping onto a large hole that is the drain and being pulled into it by the pressure of water. To be safe use a long stick and probe the area that you are about to walk into, and get others who are with you to follow in single file.

# SOME HELP AVAILABLE

## **Environment Agency:**

Please see entry for Flood Warnings.

## **National Flood Forum:**

[National Flood Forum Website](#)

Tel: 01299 403055

The National Flood Forum is a national charity dedicated to supporting and representing communities and individuals at risk of flooding.

They do this by:

Helping people to prepare for flooding in order to prevent it or mitigate its impacts

Helping people to recover their lives once they have been flooded

Campaigning on behalf of flood risk communities and working with government and agencies to ensure that they develop a community perspective.

Facilitating and supporting community flood groups. They now have 160 affiliated groups in England and Wales

Helping communities to recover from flooding

Providing a telephone help line for all flood related enquiries, including insurance.

Providing information and guidance through our website and our regular bulletin

Flood surgeries and exhibitions to help people with their problems raise awareness

Training for local authorities, agencies and the voluntary sector

Blue pages directory of products to assist with flood resilience.

## **Flood Insurance:**

Many homes that have been flooded now have difficulty obtaining flood insurance, and if they do get cover they have high premiums and excesses of over £15000 to pay before they can make a claim. This also makes the home difficult to sell and new people to move into the Parish as a mortgage cannot be obtained without insurance cover. In April 2016 Flood Re went live which helps homes built before 2009 to obtain flood cover at a far lower premium and at a far lower excess, but new build are not eligible for the flood cover. The home is insured as normal through your insurance provider and the flood element of the insurance claim is sent to Flood Re. In the event of a claim the whole process is still managed by your own Insurance Company who continue to pay the claimant.

[Flood RE Website](#)

## **Multi Agency Flood Forum**

This was formed by the Little Hadham Parish Council following the Flood in February 2013. The LHPC invited interested parties to meet and discuss options of how to reduce the incidences of flooding.

These included:

Sir Oliver Heald QC MP  
Environment Agency  
Highways  
EHDC Land Drainage Officer  
County Councillor Graham McAndrew  
Thames Water  
Herts County Council  
Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue  
And several homeowners and farm landowners.

Some of the outcomes have included:

Drainage works carried out at The Ford and at Green Street.  
Installation of new sewer pumps to help reduce surcharging.  
River Ash cleared of vegetation, and debris from people having bonfires on the river bed. This debris washed down river and causes blockages that affect other homes.  
Fire service requested to driver tenders slowly through flood water as homes had been flooded by bow waves created on their way to a rescue.  
An information day held at Little Hadham Village Hall displaying flood prevention products.  
The EHDC Repair and Renew grant enabled six homes to install flood resilience products such as flood gates, water pumps, and also one way sewer valves to stop surcharging.  
A detailed study by the Environment Agency of how flood water retention could help reduce flooding which has now been incorporated into the Flood Alleviation Scheme and By Pass.

## **Flood Alleviation Scheme and Bypass:**

The Flood Alleviation Scheme has stated that it will enable 69 of the 71 homes and businesses at risk of flooding to be moved from the current flood problems as the likelihood of flooding will be reduced to 1 in a 1000 year event instead of the current 1 in 100 year event.

The construction of the bypass will enable the road embankments to be used to hold back water on farm land, and allow it to drain away slowly and safely later on.

Please see the [Bypass webpage](#) for the up to date progress.

Some photos of flooding issues

Highway flooding from The Ford through to past Village Hall and the Parish Playground





Impact on Village Hall



Sewer contents leaking onto footpath and highway



Green Street flooding



Outside the Nags Head Pub





A120 traffic lights junction



Ashcroft Lane, A120, new drainage ditch





A120 at junction with Ashcroft Land through to traffic lights behind photographer



A120 from Stortford Road towards Albury where the intended flood alleviation embankments will hold back the water that naturally floods the fields and help prevent flooding elsewhere.

