Members' Briefing   **Flooding**
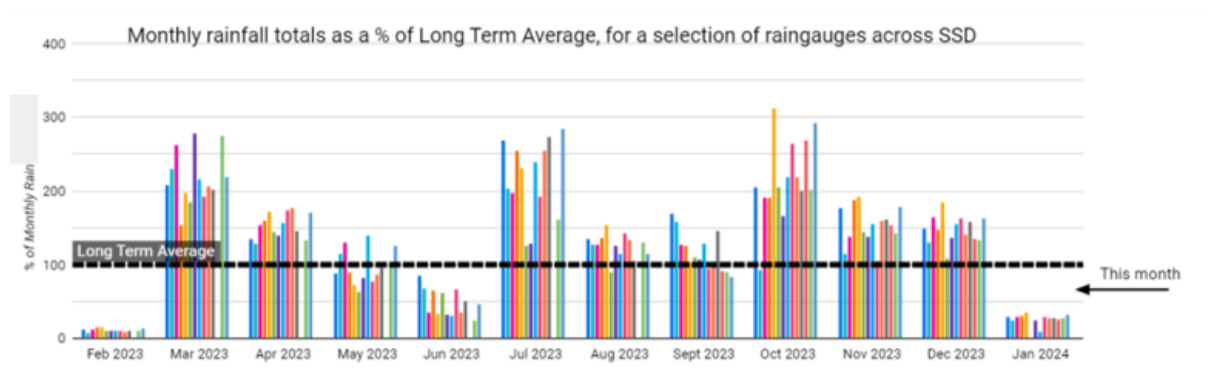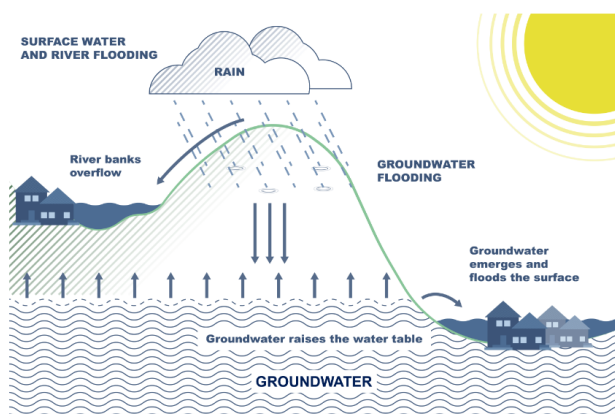
January 2024

Flooding from groundwater is currently one of the highest risks across Hampshire. A wetter than usual summer and autumn has raised groundwater to significantly higher levels than the seasonal average in many areas.

Monthly rainfall totals as a % of Long Term Average, for a selection of raingauges across SSD

Groundwater flooding occurs when the natural water level under the ground (the water table) rises to the surface. Flooding can be devastating and can cause damage to homes and other property, as well as roads and frequently overwhelms drainage and sewer networks. Underground rooms, such as cellars and basements, are particularly at risk. This type of flooding is more likely where there is chalk under the ground - it can also happen in places with sand and gravel, such as river valleys.

There are currently **10 Flood Warnings and 30 Flood Alerts** in place across Hampshire covering both groundwater and river flood risks (correct as at 15.01.24)**.** This information is regularly updated at:

hampshire - flood alerts and warnings - GOV.UK (check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk)

Action being taken by the County Council

The County Council meets regularly with partner agencies including district and borough councils, the Environment Agency and Southern Water to share information on the current situation and plan appropriate action.

Over the past ten years, the County Council has invested more than £22 million in the construction of flood and water management schemes to protect areas that are most at risk of flooding and is currently working on a number of flood alleviation schemes. There is an ongoing commitment to work with partners **–** including the Environment Agency and the water companies – to reduce flood risk and increase community resilience across Hampshire.

During the past six weeks a specific programme of drainage asset cleansing, e.g. gullies, catchpits etc, has been undertaken in known higher risk areas to ensure surface water systems are as clear as possible and can operate optimally. Further cleansing work is already underway, following Storm Henk, at various sites where silt and detritus have been deposited reducing drainage capacity and efficiency.

A number of pumps are on standby in case groundwater causes the public highway to flood and a large supply of filled sandbags is available, ready for deployment, should the need arise (note that these are for highway purposes only). In addition, stocks of Flood, Ice and other hazard warning signs have been increased and high pressure jetting and tanker resources remain on continuous standby.

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Information for the public

There are a number of different types of flood alerts and warnings, with associated actions, that the public might see. It is important to be aware of the differences and to act accordingly. These are:

Flood Alert – Prepare (flooding is possible)

- There is an increased risk of flood water but no impacts
- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Prepare your property for potential impacts

Flood Warning – Act (flooding is expected)

- Move family, pets, valuables upstairs or place higher
- Turn off gas, water, electricity
- If you have property protection e.g. flood barriers, instigate these

Severe Flood Warning – Survive (danger to life)

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

Flood alerts and warnings are issued by the Environment Agency and can be viewed at Check for flooding in Hampshire - GOV.UK (check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk)

Finding the latest information

You and your communities can sign up to receive Flood Alerts here:

Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Alternatively, sign up by calling Floodline;
Telephone: 0345 988 1188
Textphone: 0345 602 6340
This is a 24-hour service with alerts sent by email, text or phone.

Reporting a flood

The Environment Agency is responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers and the sea. Incidents can be reported to their hotline on 0800 80 70 90.

The County Council is responsible for managing the risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. Further information and how to report this type of flooding is available here:

Report flooding | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)

It is always advisable for residents to take photos of any flood water affecting them in order to evidence the impacts for insurance and investigation purposes.

It is also important for flooding to be reported to the relevant body as swiftly as possible so that this information can be used to identify properties at risk, initiate investigations and also for evidence to identify and claim potential funding for future flood resilience or alleviation schemes. If we are not aware of the scale or impact of flooding then it significantly reduces any likelihood of actions being taken.

Sandbags

The County Council **does not provide sandbags** to properties impacted by flooding, unless the water is coming directly from the public highway.

Further information on the availability of sandbags, can be found here: [Who can provide sandbags | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)](hants.gov.uk)

Protecting property from flooding

It is the responsibility of homeowners to protect their property. While it is not always possible to completely protect a home or business against flooding, positive action can be taken to reduce the damage and the amount of water that gets in, and also the cost and time of cleaning up. Further information is available at:

https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/flooding/floodprevention

Also refer to the further guidance below:

- [Protecting your property – National Flood Forum](#)
- [Protecting property from flooding - Met Office](#)
- [Prepare for flooding: Protect your property - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)
- [Adapting your home or business to the risk of flooding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)

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In addition to the information above, please continue to **follow the County Council on social media** – at [Hampshire County Council (@hantsconnect) / X (formerly twitter.com)](twitter.com) and on Facebook and share related messaging.

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