

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE PANEL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2025

The Council announced in its winter 2024 edition of the newsletter that it was changing its flood risk procedures.

In June of this year the current Community Flood Resilience Panel came together to take this forward to drive a proactive and coordinated action plan that strengthens the community of Alcester's ability to prepare for, and if needs be, recover from flood events in the town.

The panel has identified three key areas to initially action.

1. Community Risk Awareness

The first task being undertaken is the delivery of an information leaflet to those residential properties that have previously been flooded. The leaflet provides an easy-to-follow guide on preparing for a flood, do's and don'ts during flooding and early actions post flooding. The leaflets will be hand delivered by the Panel who will also seek to find out if any vulnerable people live at any of the addresses in order that this information may be collated and passed on to the emergency services in the event of a flood. The Panel will also use this opportunity to introduce the plan to have flood volunteers in the town and to enquire if residents may be interested learning more about these roles.

The timetable for this phase of community engagement is from 1st -14th September.

Initially we are targeting residential properties but will be undertaking a similar exercise with our High Street traders. To this end we will work with Councillor Ashfield as Lead Councillor for Business and Tourism.

The aim of this initiative is awareness not to alarm.

2. Community Action

The Winter 2024 newsletter referred to flood volunteer roles being assessed under the title of Flood Guardians.

The Panel has extensively, in consultation with ATC Admin Team, considered what the extent of the volunteer roles should, and just as importantly, should not be.

It has been concluded that these roles must be non-risk activities.

Briefly the roles will be:

- Monitoring / log and report on performance and changes to specifically identified water courses/ditches/culverts/drains. Such monitoring will be by perimeter inspection only.
- Monitoring /log and report environmental data such as Environment Agency River gauges/ Met Office weather APP/ Local River watch cameras.
- Community Liaison. To be a trusted point of contact for residents to report flood concerns. To assist in future seasonal flood preparedness messaging.

As the roles are to be primarily the early eyes and ears of the town, it was felt that their title should be 'Watchers' rather than 'Guardian' and that they be part of the Flood Watch Group, which is the subgroup name for this initiative.

It is anticipated that interviewing prospective volunteers will take place the latter part of September/ early October. Only volunteers who sign up to a Volunteer Agreement specifying their role will be part of the Flood Watch Group.

Flood Alleviation Initiatives

The Panel has been keen to learn what other groups have done to try and alleviate the impact of river flows by undertaking natural flood management work and to this end has met with Shipston Area Flood Action Group. This group came together after the 2007 flood and have since then installed over 860 natural flood management measures upstream of the town which have slowed the flow of the river.

The Panel has also met with a representative from The Heart of England Forest. As part of its plan to conserve and replant native broadleaf woodland in England the charity plants trees on land it owns some of which is situated adjacent to the River Arrow and its tributaries, providing an important flood alleviation impact.

The Heart of England Forest work in close collaboration with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The Panel met with representatives of the WWT on site at Runway Park near GreenMech Ltd. Here we saw firsthand the work they are currently undertaking at the River Arrow to carry out river restoration and flood plain enhancement. WWT have several projects they are undertaking along the Arrow up to the end of 2026 and have recently submitted to SDC a bid for CIL monies to carry out large natural flood management schemes across the river Arrow and river Alne catchment area. Such works would reduce flood risk in Alcester as well as Henley and Great Alne.

The Panel recognised the importance of such initiatives in helping with the flood risk in Alcester and therefore plans to help showcase their work and encourage involvement by the community of Alcester in local events.

To this end the Panel has asked WWT and Heart of England Forest to provide a calendar of events that would be of interest to our local community to attend.

The panel believes that it is important to promote positive messaging about flood management schemes as well as informing about flood risk awareness.

The Panel will also be assisting ATC in its work with other statutory agencies such as Warwickshire County Council, Stratford DC, Environment Agency and other stakeholders to secure funding for capital works to the towns flood defences.

Conclusion

These are the initial steps of what will be a continual plan that will help the town protect itself from future flood impacts in perpetuity.

The Panel will regularly update Full Council on actions taken and proposed next steps.