Flooded community aims for resilience

SOUTHWELL
Bringing a community together to be resilient

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Southwell
Nottinghamshire

7,300 residents
21% aged 65-84 (> national average)
17.25% aged 25-44 (< national average)

Good access to rail and road networks

Complex flooding mechanisms
2007 – ± 100 houses
2013 - ± 225 houses

* good facilities
* schools
* shops
* Leisure Centre
* conservation areas
* listed buildings

* Economically prosperous
* high proportion of managers and other professional occupations.
INTO ACTION AFTER JULY 2013

FLOOD!

Highly motivated group want to “get something done’

Survey peoples' experiences

Co-ordinate volunteer groups with specific skills

Southwell Flood Fund established with Nottinghamshire Community Foundation to build a community contribution towards mitigation costs
Fundraising
Events, donations, bucket collections raised over £22K

Auction by our MP of paintings by a local resident

Cake stall at a Garden Party

Rainy Golf Day!
Contacts/networks formed Sept 2013

Public Meeting in Southwell Minster
600 attended
100 signed up as volunteers

First Stakeholders' meeting with agencies/authorities

Heather Shepherd, Community and Recovery Support, National Flood Forum visited
Lack of maintenance and awareness
70 riparian owners on main watercourse through town - Potwell Dyke; blocked culverts, trash screens, fly-tipping

Road/gully cleaning
Liaise with local Councils to clear roads of parked cars prior to cleaning

Watercourse clearance
100 volunteers – 700 hours
July 2013 to May 2014
Local knowledge and experience helps with analysis and options

Residents meet with JBA Consulting
March 2016

Residents walk round town with AeCOM (ex-URS) Flood Consultants – December 2013
Local skills and research

Nottingham Trent University, Brackenhurst campus, Southwell
PhD research student, Natural Flood Management

Technical Sub Group
Formed to review flowpaths and analyse mitigation options with NCC and JBA

Woody debris dams across upstream watercourses

Field corner bunds
Community Resilience and Emergency Plan

Road Closure Scheme
20 closure points

Communications Hub
Southwell Town Council and Southwell Flood Forum

Warden training
13 training sessions
Nov 2013 to Nov 2017
60 Wardens recruited and trained
Community resilience events
June 2014, June 2015 and May 2016
From this......

'Education' and information

...............to this

87% take-up of £5K Repair and Renew Grant

Southwell Community Resilience Handbook delivered to every household
Information and support

www.southwellfloodforum.org.uk

Library Help Desk
two sessions per week
December 2013 to May 2015

Community resilience display
Southwell Library June 2014
How does Southwell match up to the Resilience Model?
Community connectedness

Halfway between the close-knit neighbourliness of a village and the economic strength and infrastructure of a town - No large-scale business for major sponsorship, financial or 'in kind'.

Many interest groups, U3A, churches, Lions, etc = existing social groups and networks of 'engaged' people

Some local landowners resistant to mitigation/NFM measures - 'remote' from the flood risk problem

Many schools - pre-school to secondary – large cohort of pupils and parents
Risk and vulnerability

Flash flooding, irregular unpredictable events – mix of pluvial, fluvial, groundwater, sewer

Multiple riparian owners of main watercourse through town – maintenance issues

Installation of Natural Flood Management measures by local University

University of Nottingham community workshops on Flood Risk management
Available local resources

Community skills – wide, varied and relevant

Residents whose daytime jobs are in EA and NCC give support on a voluntary basis, plus ex Chair of TRFCC

Many long-term residents with historical knowledge of drainage and flooding

Support from some landowners, Fire station and Town Council
Planning and Procedures

Pre 2013 very little flood risk awareness or preparedness – one Flood Warden

Formal organisation - core committee with a bank account, Informal roles and processes – organic growth

Post 2013

- Community Resilience and Emergency Plan
- Road Closure Scheme
- Communications Hub in conjunction with Town Council
- Work in progress, continual evaluation, training and updates
Challenges

* Sustain the level of interest, energy and motivation into the future
* Demands on time – people too busy to be involved
* Tension between residents' differing priorities
  - clear-up after flood – personal and environment
  - understanding flood risk mechanisms
  - wanting to hurry things along, query timescales
  - mitigation measures, maintenance, emergency plan
  - publicity
  - fundraising
Challenges

* 'Selling' the concept of 'community resilience' – not a sexy topic!!
* Engaging with nurseries, schools and college
* Widening the scope of the Emergency Plan to embrace all emergencies and 'dovetail' with schools, leisure centre, churches etc (e.g. education, volunteers, respite centres)
* Flash flooding, irregular unpredictable events – complacency
* Healthy older population - active lives, holidays, childminding – less available to volunteer
* Younger population – active lives, busy jobs, family life - less available to volunteer
* Small independent businesses and retailers – few resources for emergency planning
Looking forward to a rosy future

Addressing the challenges mentioned

FRAMES partnership on Natural Flood Management and Community Resilience with

• Trent Rivers Trust
• National Flood Forum
• Southwell Flood Forum
• Environment Agency
• Nottinghamshire County Council

KEEP CALM AND FINGERS CROSSED