

# LOWER WINTERBORNE VALLEY FLOODPLAN

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## 1.0 Introduction and Scope

**This plan is intended to assist residents of the Lower Winterborne Parish Council (Kingston, Muston and Anderson) in the event of a flood. The plan is intended to help with mitigating the effects of flooding by protection of homes and managing activities during a flood.**

This plan is based on the one compiled in 2019 and has been updated following the lessons learnt from the floods in January 2023.

Information for anyone living in the Parish, who may be affected by flooding, plus responsibilities of volunteers, is described within this document, however it must be emphasised that the primary responsibility for protecting property lies with the property owner.

There is a list of organisations within this plan that may assist during a flood. The fact that these organisations are listed does not necessarily mean that they will be able to commit to assisting during a flood. Their participation will be dependent on resources available at the time.

## 1.1 Key Contacts for Villagers representing the Parish Council are:-

Flood Warden	James Allan	0771769357
Deputy Flood Warden	Simon Hart	07900 312173
Deputy Flood Warden (Wares Close)	Derek Mills	0794 7009344
Clerk to the Parish Council	Alison Clothier	07771590038

## 1.2 Flooding Event Types

The villages in the Lower Winterborne parish will be subject to groundwater flooding, fluvial (river) flooding and possibly flash or road flooding. We are too far away from the Stour to be directly affected by it when it is in flood.

## 1.3 Causes of Flooding

The Lower Winterborne Valley areas are affected by high groundwater levels. The whole area is influenced by the chalk hills to the north (Bulbarrow Hill and surrounding areas) which hold water and then, with continued rainfall, become saturated. This water permeates through underground cracks and fissures and finds its way down stream causing the water table to rise. Very often the river Winterborne will start to flow in Zelston which is a lower level than Winterborne Kingston. As the water table rises the river will start to flow at higher levels e.g. Anderson then Kingston and eventually the river will flow all the way from Houghton all through the lower Winterborne Valley to Sturminster Marshall where it meets the Stour.

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As rainfall continues, the water table will continue to rise until eventually Kingston will be lower than the table and springs will start to appear. These springs come out of the fields along West Street and find their way into the road. In 2013, 2014 and 2023, the volume of water coming down the river was such that the lack of capacity at culverts results in them backing up. The consequential overflows from this add to the flow down West St where they flow down towards the centre of the village by the Village Hall. This puts a strain on the drain system leading into the Winterborne, which eventually can't cope with the levels of water.

At Muston, historically the river has overflowed to the extent that it runs down Muston Lane towards Anderson causing fairly serious road flooding which consequentially threatens some properties. Recently active river maintenance seems to prevent this but this does require monitoring.

## 2.0 Flood Warnings.

2.1 Detail of Flood warnings for groundwater in the lower Winterborne, will be provided by the Environment Agency Office. (EA)

2.2 There are four warning codes provided by the agency. These levels of warning are as follows:

Flood Alert	Flooding is possible. Be Prepared Monitor Weather forecast
Flood Warning	Flooding is expected. If appropriate block doorways and make local arrangements
Severe Flood Warning	Severe Flooding is expected. Imminent danger to life and property. Evacuation of property may be required
Warning Removed	There are no Flood Alerts or Flood Warnings currently in force in our area

## 2.3 Flood Alert

When this warning has been given by the Environment Agency, we can expect to see flooding in the fields high up West Street and gardens at North Farm House – but not yet any flooding of roads or danger to properties. The river level will be fairly high.

## 2.4 Flood Warning. / Severe Flood Warning

This will be issued by the Environment Agency when their measurement devices at Delcombe Wood (Milton Abbas) indicate they have reached such a high level that a surge discharge from the hills is inevitably going to cause flooding. In 2014 & 2023 this occurred when the level exceeded 139m. Severe Flooding would be expected when an even higher level is detected at the bore hole. However these levels have not been tested over time/and or many significant events (the bore hole has only been in used since the 1990's and only recently continuously monitored) and so it is possible that the Flood Wardens may have a better idea of imminent flooding than the Environment Agency.

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2.5 However, the warnings issued by the Environment Agency are generated by sensors located in the ground that detect the rising water table at certain places throughout Dorset and will provide a good guide. The Environment Agency record levels that can give early warning of impending flood via the internet <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency> The Environment Agency also have a Flood Warnings direct Scheme which will notify of impending flood via phone or email.

Anybody who feels they may be at risk, or who has flooded in the past should subscribe to The Environment Agency warning scheme.

2.6 There are relevant local indicators available in our area which must not be ignored: -

In Winterborne Kingston events generally progress as follows:

- When the Dew Pond (normal winter occurrence) in the field between Bagwood Lane and Orchard Lane, becomes a “lake” and overflows into the lane.
- Water starts to pond in North Farm House grounds.
- Strong flow on the River Winterborne.
- Ponding higher up the field above and in the field adjacent to Kingston Barnyard .
- When springs start to appear out of the road and fields in West Street.
- The water flowing down West Street forms a steady flow down to the village Hall. The Road at the bottom of West Street in Winterborne Kingston starts to flood as drains can’t cope. (Occurred recently in January and February 2014 & again in January of 2023)
- When the water in the Winterborne reaches top step in the garden of “Greensbridge” in Sackville Street.

**These indicators mean the threat in Kingston is high and all measures possible to protect property should be taken.**

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## 3.0 Flood Risk Areas

When the above events occur, flooding is most likely going to happen very soon. Flooding has impacted properties in December 2000 and more recently in 2014 and 2023. The affected properties are primarily located at the bottom end of West Street, Sackville Street and Wares Close.

The effects will also include road flooding and access problems in West Street, Sackville Street, North Street/Bere Rd and Muston Lane. Obstruction of Noah Henville Corner was an issue in 2023, forcing vehicles to drive through the flood waters in Sackville Street in order to get to and from Broad Close. For this reason, collapsible barriers have since been installed on the footpath between Broad Close and North Street to allow vehicles to enter and leave without encountering the flood in the event of an emergency.

## 3.1 Recurring Maintenance Issues

In Winterborne Kingston the drains down West Street tend to block up with debris over the year and need to be cleaned out annually as a minimum. In addition, there is a drain on the corner of Church Lane/Bere Rd which blocks frequently, this should flow towards the village hall but when blocked threatens properties in Church Lane. There are also issues with the drain opposite Lillac Cottage on Noah Henville Corner.

The drain outlets on Bere Road/ North Street flow into the Winterborne to the west of the road bridge by the Greyhound Pub. When there is a significant amount of water flowing down west street and the river level is high, they become overwhelmed. When this happens flooding of the road is likely to happen. When the floods reach a certain depth, it flows over the road and down Noah Henville where it pools at the junction of Wares Close and Sackville Street.



Village hall in 2000 W. Kingston

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## 4.0 Level of Response

The level of response that could be expected from the authorities to a flooding incident will depend on what is flooded or is at risk of being flooded. There are five priority categories: -

PRIORITY	FLOODING AFFECTING	RESPONSE
1	People	Action to protect life
2	Houses	Action to protect life and property
3	Roads	Action to protect life and property
4	Commercial Property	Possible action to protect property
5	Gardens/Agricultural land	No action

## 5.0 Prior to Flooding

5.1 The Flood Warden will, on an annual basis, walk the relevant sections of the Winterborne and liaise with the Environment Agency, Riparian owners, Parish Council, District council, DCC Highways as necessary to make sure the water course is prepared to handle winter flows through the villages.

5.2 Make sure there is a store of sandbags held in Winterborne Kingston to be made available if required by property owners in the Parish. Sandbags (empty) are held by the Flood Warden and a limited amount of sand is held close to Kingston. Large stocks of filled sandbags cannot be held as they deteriorate, so additional quantities will be procured in the event of an emergency.

5.3 The Parish Council has a budget for the procurement of sand/bags in the event of an emergency although Dorset Council have usually supported the Flood Warden with sandbags. The Parish Council annually around September sends a letter to Riparian Owners in the Parish, advising them of their responsibilities to keep banks of the river clear. More information regarding the responsibilities of riparian owners can be found later in this document or by clicking on the below link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>

5.4 Encourage householders at risk to make provisions at home to prepare for flooding including holding a personal stock of sand held at home, perhaps in a dustbin and give advice on blocking airbricks etc. (This can be done easily with board and silicone.) Owners should also be made aware of other Flood alleviation steps they can take and of any grants that may be available from the EA or other public bodies.

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5.5 In Winterborne Kingston, two petrol driven pumps are held by the residents of Wares Close that will be used to pump excess water through the back of Wares Close/gardens into the River Winterborne if required. This is to protect the residents of Wares Close/part of Sackville Street in the event of Flooding. This came about as a result of flooding in 2000 and additional pump was purchased in 2023 to provide redundancy and additional capacity. If Wares Close is threatened, then the Deputy Flood Warden for Wares Close has control of this pump. The pump is used to lower the water level in underground storage tanks in Wares/Sackville St, which in turn lowers flood level in Wares Close a little, reducing the threat to houses. The pumps will be checked annually to make sure it is functional.

5.6 An additional Petrol driven pump is held by the Flood Warden in Winterborne Kingston and is available for them to deploy as and when they feel necessary within the Lower Winterborne Parish. This pump will be checked and maintained annually.

5.7 The Flood Warden will attend Environment Agency workshops and liaise with them as required.

## **6.0 Preparing For a Flood**

The Flood Warden will notify the owners of those properties considered at risk and advise them to deploy any flood defenses they may have. They will ensure that the sand store is full, that they have a supply of sandbags, and that the pumps are working and have sufficient fuel available. The warden can be contacted for sandbags but they will decide if and where they are needed and make arrangements to deploy with local volunteers.

The Flood Warden will also ensure that EA alerts are posted to the Village Face book Group and on the Parish Council Website.  
Owners of properties at risk should then take appropriate steps.

Distribution of sandbags will be coordinated by the Flood Warden on a need basis –  
GARDENS WILL NOT BE PROTECTED

The Flood Warden will coordinate with Dorset Council re Signs and possible closure of roads.

Talking to relevant authorities and making sure everyone is aware of the issues This may include the:

- Environment Agency
- Dorset Council
- Lower Winterborne Parish Council
- Highways Dept
- Police
- Bus Company
- Southern Electric

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## 7.0 During a Flood

During a Flood Alert or Warning there will be regular checks made for signs of imminent flooding.

At the first sign of flooding in the village, the flood warden is to be contacted. Using local knowledge, he/she will alert all those most at risk and raise volunteers for furniture shifting/raising, the filling of sand bags etc.

- Flood Wardens hold a limited number of “flood” signs which they will deploy at the agreed locations with Dorset Highways.
- Police, Council Highways Department and Bus Company will be contacted regarding warning signs for the road and information on buses.
- The Flood Wardens will be available by telephone or by personal contact.
- The Flood Warden will keep a log of calls made and actions agreed during the danger period and flooding
- The pumps will be activated in Wares close as required. An additional pump is held in Kingston and is available to the flood wardens should it be needed.
- The Collapsible barriers on the footpath between North Street and Broad Close may be lowered in order to allow vehicle traffic from broad Close to leave the village without driving through flood water. Keys for the bollards are held by the Clerk to the Parish Council, The Flood Wardens, the Chair of the Parish council and anyone else they deem appropriate.
- The flood warden will provide information to Dorset Council, Emergency Services and the Environment Agency as required.
- The water levels at key points in the village will be monitored during the whole event by the Flood warden in order to advise the Environment Agency post flooding.
- The Flood Warden will supply details of properties flooded to the Environment Agency and Dorset Council Flood Risk Assessment Teams and the extent of flooding and levels. **These details are not given to insurance companies.**
- Should you be unlucky to be flooded, turn off electricity and if possible, gas. Beware of contamination from the flood water which may contain harmful bacteria/sewerage from septic tanks etc. Inform your insurance company straight away as you may have to move out.
- **The deployment of sandbags and the use of any pumps will be at the discretion of**

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the Flood Wardens. Gardens will not be protected.

## 8.0 Post Flood

- The Flood Warden will keep Parish Council informed as required.
- The Flood Warden will Investigate the causes of flooding and record information- including levels.
- They will also analyse the event and identify problems which will be shared with the local community and Parish Council in order to find solutions.
- Update the Flood Plan if required.



## 9.0 Duties of Relevant Authorities

### 9.1 Environment Agency.

- Issues groundwater flood information.
- Will take action if required to clear the river Winterborne (this does not remove Riparian owner's responsibilities) if it is threatening homes. Riparian owners may be billed.
- Receives and records details of flood incidents.
- Monitors the situation and advises other organisations
- Deal with emergency repairs and blockages on River Winterborne as a last resort
- Responds to pollution incidents
- Advise on waste disposal issues

### 9.2 Dorset Council

- Coordinate Emergency arrangements
- Maintains safe conditions on roads or closes them.
- May put Flood Warning signs on Roads and organise diversions – (Flood wardens normally do this).
- Clears obstructions of highway drains (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/drainage-and-manhole-covers>)
- May supply the Flood Warden with dry sandbags/sand – but are not willing to distribute to the public direct.
- Clear blocked watercourses (land drainage act powers – not River Winterborne which is Main River)
- May possibly arrange for pumps in an emergency
- Assist with environmental health issues (pollution)
- Emergency planning support group liaison

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## 9.3 Flood Warden on behalf of Parish Council

- Ensure Environment Agency Flood Warnings and Alerts are distributed.
- Distribute sandbags if they are required from their stock and provide help and advice where needed.
- Monitor the River Winterborne and advise the Parish Council, Riparian owners and the Environment Agency where required.
- Identify vulnerable people.
- Monitor any vacant properties they have been made aware of. Liaise with emergency services if necessary.
- May arrange for collection of used sandbags if not contaminated. If they are, they should be taken to household recycling centre (rubble).
- Deploy flood warning signs at appropriate roadside locations.
- Carry out any required reporting of flooding to the relevant authorities.

## 9.4 Southern Electricity, Gas and BT

- Attend emergencies relating to their service at properties putting life at risk as a result of flooding.

## 9.5 Emergency Services

- Rescue, respond to emergency incidents as required, and assist the populace where a need is identified.

## 9.6 At Risk Property owners

- Take all possible steps to prevent water entering property (which may not be possible with rising groundwater).
- Keep an emergency pack in case of flood.
- Switch off gas and electricity if you are flooded and notify your supplier.
- If going away make sure a third party has a key and consider notifying the flood warden that your house is unattended.
- Move valuable possessions above floor level or take upstairs. Protect the legs of furniture by placing them inside plastic bottles with the tops cut off.
- If flooding levels are very high, consider blocking toilet, sinks washing machine outlets etc.
- Notify Flood Warden of or Dorset Council of foul drainage problems.
- Move cars from flood risk area

## 9.7 Riparian Owners.

- Have a duty as part of their property ownership to maintain the river Winterborne /ditches to accept flow from upstream neighbours and pass it on downstream without restriction.
- Generally a Riparian owner is responsible for the bank they own and outwards to the centre of the Winterborne. It is important that they carry out these responsibilities and the Environment Agency can enforce this maintenance if required. Riparian owners may not use hard materials in the river or bank without Environment Agency approval.

## 9.8 All Residents

- If possible avoid driving through flood water. If it is essential to do so drive very slowly to avoid creating a wave that may damage adjacent properties or overcome flood defenses.
- Please be aware that washing machine discharges have to go somewhere if you're septic/ treatment plant is flooded.
- Be considerate and help your neighbours and those effected as much as you can.

## **Appendix A: Family Flood Plan**

The Environment Agency's Floodline is there to help keep you informed of any flood situations in your area, but do you know what to do if your property is at risk?

Make yourself a Flood Plan so that you are ready to protect you and your family from flooding should the worst happen...

### FAMILY FLOOD PLAN

1. Make a list of useful telephone numbers, and keep them in a safe place close to hand.
2. Find out who, in the immediate area holds sandbag stocks and where. Keep these details somewhere safe and close to hand.
3. Make a Flood Kit – it is good idea to have a kit containing a few essentials made up and stored where everyone in the house knows where to find it.

Your kit should include:

Key Personal Documents (insurance)	Wellington Boots
Torch	Waterproof Clothing
Battery or wind up Radio	First Aid Kit
Mobile Phone	Blankets
Rubber Gloves	Any important medication

If you have children, consider what they will need

4. Get into the habit of storing valuable papers and belongings upstairs or in a high place downstairs.
5. You should know exactly where to turn off the gas and electricity and even be able to find them in the dark if your property floods.
6. Make sure the car is parked in a safe place if it may be flooded
7. Make a list of things you need to take with you in case of evacuation.  
Having a plan for your family pets. Decide NOW where you will go and how you will get there. If you decide to stay in the house but decamp upstairs, make a list of things you will need. You may need to be able to lift up furniture clear of the flood water.

Make your plan now not when you are flooded!

## Appendix B: Further Advice.

### Internet Advice

Dorset Council Flooding Advice click on :-

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/flooding>

For the Environment Agency click on:-

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

For the Delcombe wood Bore Hole click on:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/9049>

Lower Winterborne Parish Council click on:

<http://lowerwinterborneparishcouncil.co.uk/>

Report Blocked Drains:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/drainage-and-manhole-covers>

Responsibilities of Riparian Owners:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>