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# CCATCH – Southampton Itchen Community Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012      19:00am – 21:00pm

## Meeting report

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### Introduction

The meeting, held at the Riverside Club, Priory Avenue, St Denys and was hosted by the Solent Forum ([www.solentforum.org](http://www.solentforum.org)) was attended by 29 members of the local community and stakeholders from organisations who have a role in flood prevention.

This report aims to capture the essence of the discussion and is not meant to be a formal minute of the meeting.

### Session 1: Welcome & Introductions

Mike King (Solent Forum) welcomed people to the meeting and set the scene in the following way

What is this meeting about?

- Introduce the CCATCH project to the community
- Developing a shared understanding of local flood risk and what can be done to help those at risk
- Tap into local knowledge to inform next steps.

What we intended to cover?

#### Part 1: Presentations

- Introducing the CCATCH project
- The National Flood Forum and the need to develop local resilience

#### Part 2: Participation

- Sharing understanding for local flood risk
- Identifying components of an Emergency Plan for the area





## Session 2: Introduction to the CCATCH project

Karen McHugh (Solent Forum) introduced the CCATCH project covering the following points

- Explained that the project is part of a wider European project called CC2150 (Coastal Change in the year 2150 and beyond)
- That the UK (Hampshire, Kent and Sussex), Netherlands & Belgium are involved
- 5 locations in Hampshire have been chosen of which Southampton Itchen is one
- The Aim of CCATCH to help the community prepare and adapt to any flood risk
- An outline of how the Solent Forum would like to work with the community

## Session 3: The National Flood Forum

Heather Shepard (National Flood Forum) introduced the work of the forum covering the following points

- The purpose of the forum is, as a charity, to help people prepare for flooding.
- The experience they have in working with different communities all over the country.
- The difference that can be made when communities' set-up community groups to lessen the affect of flooding on their properties.
- An outline of what resistance and resilience means.
- Showed examples of resistance products used on properties, which effectively stops flood water entering. Also examples of how properties can be made more resistant to flooding so that if they do flood, less damage occurs.
- Explained that flooding over the past decade has definitely got worse in some locations despite people's perceptions, and that it was a complex mix often of higher tide, storm surge and heavy rainfall patterns.





## Questions & Answers after Flood Forum presentation

Q: What data are you relying on to say we are risk of flooding?

A: The main data is about rivers and coastal flooding, it comes from the Environment Agency. On surface water flooding there is no data, but mapping is expected by 2015

Q: If there is Council involvement on new developments how will they address the issue of 40 new flats all going in to a Victorian sewerage system?

A: The issue of insurance needs addressing

Q: Who is addressing the inappropriate build on flood plains and urban areas with overstretched infrastructure?

Q: How much does new development contribute to surface water?

A: Flooding must be looked at holistically and managed as a whole

Comment: From a local perspective surface water is not the issue. What's more relevant to us is tidal flooding. The normal maximum tide flood level here is 5m. We'll get a wet foot, that's all.

A: A flood event is a confusing time. Bognor Regis normally suffers coastal flooding but this summer it wasn't that - it was surface flooding which they'd never had before.

Q: Insurance - with the increased risk of flooding the Association of British Insurers (ABI) has a joint statement of practice with the Government which ends in June 2013. Are you confident of the continuation of this joint statement?

A: It's called the Statement of Principles, and it is not a binding statement, it's a gentleman's agreement and that's all. There is no guarantee. The Government has renewed this once. The industry has asked for something new and more solid. Negotiations are at a delicate stage. They are considering a pooling system to give access to insurance a level playing field. The issue is how to set this up. If you need to know more the National Flood Forum has a support phone line for insurance issues.

## Session 4: Local Flood Risk

Bernadine Maguire (Southampton City Council) presented a series of maps that showed the modelled tidal flood risk for the area, both present day and future. Her key points were as follows:

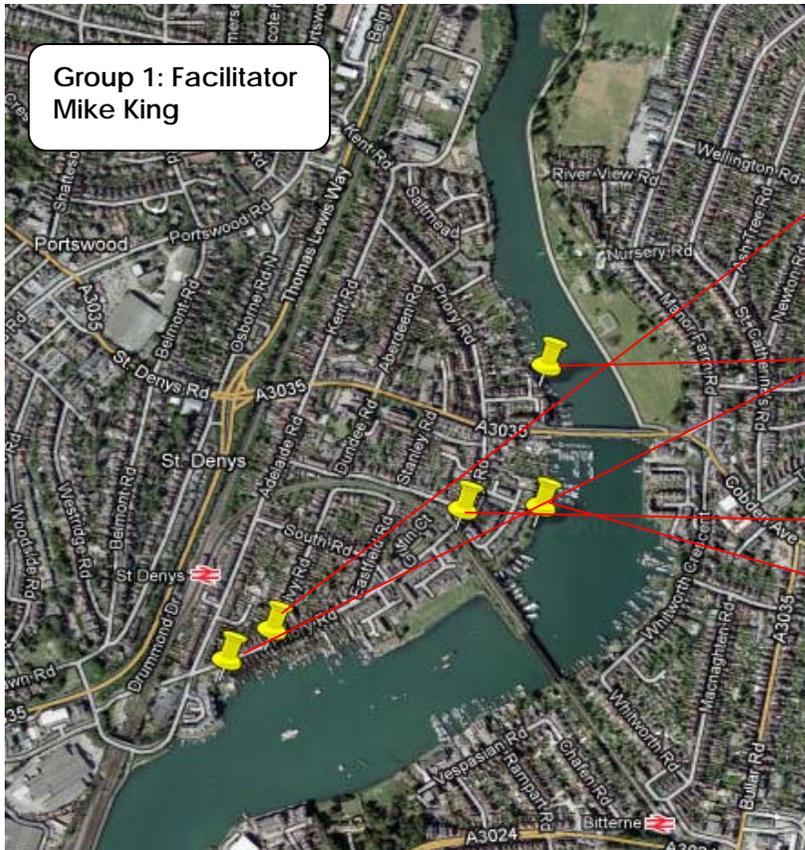
- Based on the latest information the sea level around Southampton is projected to rise by approximately 73 centimetres over the next 100 years.
- Assuming the projected rise is realised, the tidal flood risk for the area would increase considerably over time.
- The potential extent of an extreme flood event has been modelled (within the Southampton Coastal Flood & Erosion Risk Management Strategy) which enabled us to identify the areas most at risk present day and over the next 100 years (at 2030, 2060 and 2110).





- Due to the narrow flood envelope within this area at present the proposed option to manage the flood risk is property level protection to individual properties in the highest risk areas where there is the potential for internal flooding to residential property.
- The proposed option to manage flood risk in this area in the long term (2060 and beyond) is a frontline floodwall.
- Other sources of flood risk which could have a greater impact on the area in the future if more frequent intense rainfall events are experienced, as projected, include surface water and groundwater. The flood risk from these sources would also be exacerbated by sea level rise.

The participants were then invited to break into 4 small groups to discuss the flood risk from their own perspective. Each group had a map on which they were asked to indicate locate particular flood risk issues and/ or experiences. Each group worked with a facilitator.



Group 1: Facilitator  
Mike King

Point 1: "Priory Rd- Tops sea wall on high tides. Extreme event is 5.6 above datum. Very predictable. Difficult to say if it is getting worse. Tidal is probably not getting worse but priory road flooding due to heavy rain and poor drainage is getting worse. Can drains cope with flood water - tend to get blocked after a tidal flooding event."

Point 2: "Slipway a weak point in flood defences - Council responsibility"

Point 3: "A lot of properties have flood walls at the bottom of their gardens and have 'riparian rights' associated with this that means they have a responsibility to maintain them. But not all properties have walls. If neighbours walls are not maintained then impacts on everyone else."

Point 4: "Rail Bridge over road causes a problem as it is a low point where water collects - takes a longer time to drain away"

Point 5: "Some properties not protected and we feel vulnerable to future predictions of flood risk - real issue is combination of storm surge and heavy rains, water backs up the drains and has no where to go - if sea level rises this situation could get worse"





Group 2 -  
Facilitator  
Henrietta Hopkins

Point 1: "Situation has been static in the last 100 years. There has been no change in lived??? experience. The worse tides reach a maximum of 5.6m. What have changed are the mitigation levels in our own back gardens. How high walls are built is an issue. In some places there is 0.5m variation in the height of the walls, but to be of any use they need to all be at a consistent level. How sound are these walls?"

Point 2 and 5: "The sewerage works are a concern. What happens to all of that if we have a flood? An unpleasant foam comes downstream from Portsmouth Waterworks"

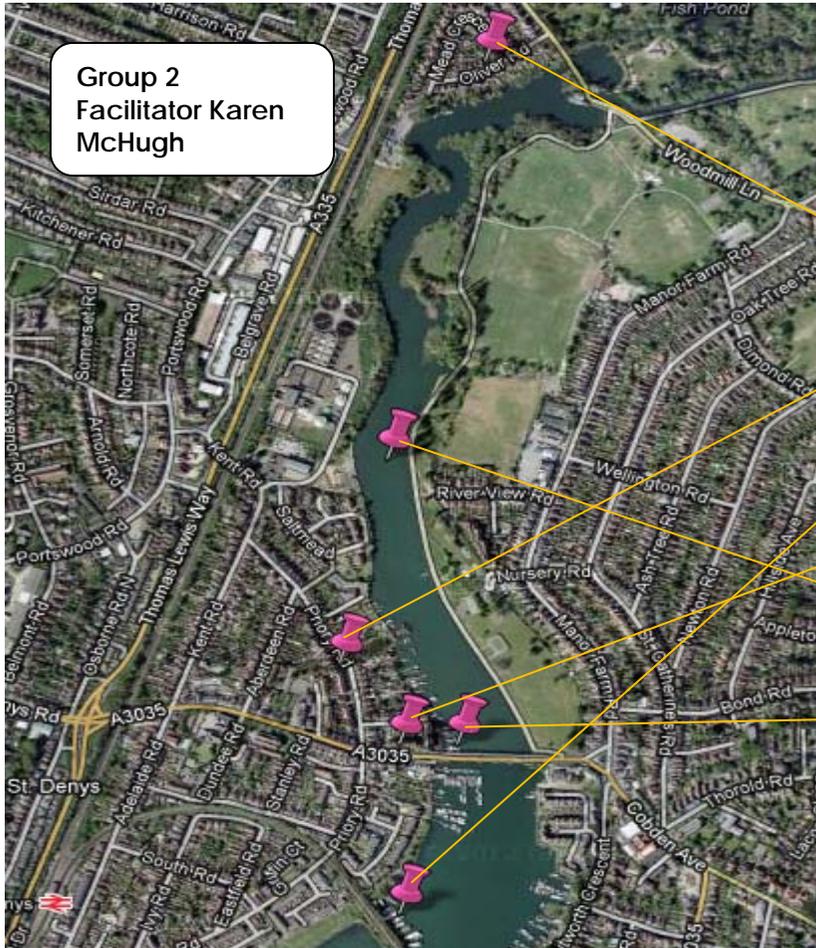
Point 3 / 4: "In Priory Road at lower levels there is significantly more risk. Water goes on the road and floods the car park. Southern water does not maintain the storm drain - it's not closing and that's a risk."

Point 6: "In 1999 and 2008 we had flood events. The wall does no good because water wells up underground. We should look back at the historic record for those events. For neither new information event was it the largest astronomical tide."

Point 7: "I concur with Arrow 1. Going back 60 years the general consensus is that flooding is marginally better. The Manor Farm Road used to flood but I've not been aware of this in my lifetime. On the Northern Terrace, Coopers Arms used to get water up to the window sills - and I've not seen that in my lifetime either. The railway at Cobden Bridge restricts the surge"

Arrow 8: "I really want to understand what the risk is. It's also a reminder not to under estimate the expansion effect of the green areas."





Group 2  
Facilitator Karen  
McHugh

Point 1: "Surface water - floods into garages. Highways drainage issue"

Point 2: "Priory Road - Historical sewage problem during flooding events - has now been sorted out"

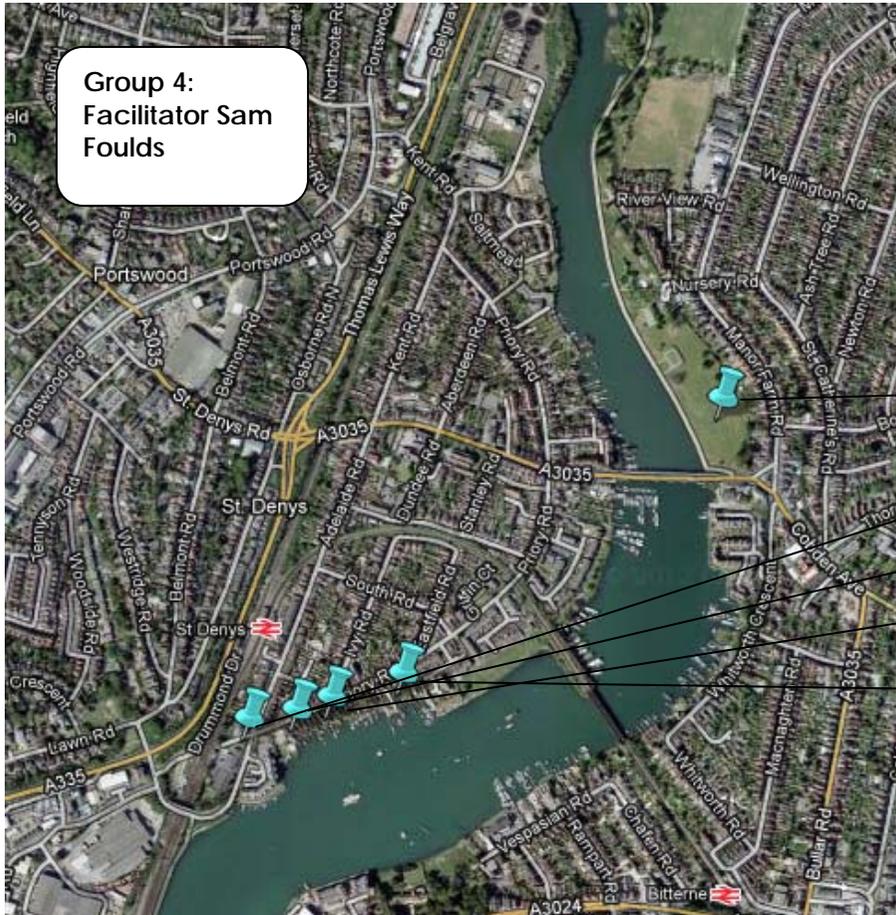
Point 3: "during flood events the house boats are in danger of coming off moorings - could cause a lot of damage. Need for higher mooring posts."

Point 4: "Underground car park flooded - non return valve was fitted but did not work"

Point 5: "Barge collects sewage - will this continue. Dredged river for this reason."

Point 6: St Deny's rowing club flooded.





Group 4:  
Facilitator Sam  
Foulds

Point 1: "Green space regularly flooded"

Point 2: "Pub cellar flooded in 1989 - no flood valves"

Point 3: "Drain issues - many appear to be blocked."

Point 4: "Water comes up through floor boards on higher tides"

Point 5: "Properties and gardens flooded in 1999 and again in 2008"





## Session 5: Emergency Flood Plan

Participants were asked to swap groups for this session so they were working with different people. The lead facilitator then described a scenario of a storm surge on a spring tide and a period of heavy rain all leading to a significant flooding incident. In the light of this situation the groups were asked to develop their response to 3 questions

- What would you need to know?
- What would you need to do?
- Who would you look to for help?

The key points arising from the discussion are set out below and will be used to help create an Emergency Flood Plan for the area.

### *What I would need to know?*

- When is the high tide?
- What is the air pressure, current and trending
- How long will the flood last
- Where can you get defences quickly
- I want to know exactly what sort of flood event we're talking about. 5.7m? That's the highest we've ever had. I want to know what the wind levels are and in which direction it's blowing. It's important to get these things right.
- Buy a tide table / lunar calendar / barometer - any tide above 4.3 with a storm surge is when it is likely to happen. Low pressure with a spring tide and moon - watch for the signs and enjoy being a river dweller.
- People need to know how high their property is. From this they can work out at what point (height above chart datum) their property becomes at risk – all this requires is a survey
- We need information for people whose houses are at different levels - that's the issue. When they know the risk to them at a house level they can take the appropriate measures.
- A gauge on the bridge would also help people judge the level of risk
- We need to map exactly where the risks are. Saying 'at this point the drains are likely to overflow' for example
- The important thing is where you live - it's down to which house you live in
- Floodline – to receive a flood warning. They phone or txt a warning if registered
- Look at the tide tables and work it out for ourselves
- Produce a condensed tide table just to show the times of extreme tides – advertise this locally; bin collection, City View, Echo, Laminated handout
- Talk to neighbours – some people may be on holiday
- Need to know what neighbours are doing as they may or may not take precautions
- Who has small boats – for rescue?
- I want to know where we can find protection measures like sand bags



*What would you need to do?*

- Stop water entering
  - Block the lavatory
  - Have access to Sand bags and other temporary defences
  - Shut up houses as much as possible
- It happens very suddenly - ideally you would have time to prepare yourself mentally
- Stay dry - get some wellies.
- Consider safety - for some of us would need life jackets
- Mains electricity - what's the risk of electrocution - we need the technical answers
- Remember it will be salt water
- Where do you move everything?
- Neighbours need to look out for each other
- Help each other, particularly help to protect adjoining property to prevent water damage to own property
- Keep valuable and important paper work safe
- Stop cars driving down the roads as the wake makes the situation worse

*Who would I look to for help?*

- I will need help moving my furniture
- We need to know on which high tide it will flood. Those at significant risk can then be given help in advance
- The flood wardens need to be telling other people
- I don't know who my flood warden is
- I was once a flood warden. No one will listen until they have actually got their feet wet
- Environment Agency flood line, but people can be over worried by the alerts - of course the EA have to cover their backs, but it can be worrying, particularly for the elderly
- Sometimes the information given on the EA website isn't correct
- A computer prediction is never as good as the human brain working it out.
- Insurance companies – help moving to temporary accommodation whilst restoring home after flooding
- Landlord
- Council; education, publicity and making aware of flood risk
- Fire brigade and police
- Organisation that maintains the surface water system – problems with this can make the situation worse
- Need to better understand who is responsible for what e.g. the valves in the new flats by Cobden Bridge



## Other issues

During the discussion other issues were raised which while relevant to the local flood risk they were not necessarily relevant to the Emergency Flood Plan discussion. Those issues have been recorded here.

- I can't see this sort of event happening - and even if it does it won't threaten properties.
- We need to see the evidence that shows are properties are at risk.
- Flood modelling should take the individual circumstances in to account. Priory Road will see significant flooding before the properties higher up are affected
- What is the gradient between Dock Head and outside the rowing club?
- How does the Dock Head measurement differ from where we are this evening?
- Where the gauges on the walls - they would tell us what is happening
- We need to know what 'significant' rain is. How much is 'significant' to make it a potential flood event?
- Are we here because of climate change or because we are at risk from flash floods?
- I understand the natural maximum with the flood plain cap is 5.6m is this correct?
- 9 – 12 Priory Avenue – have an 'informed maintenance agreement' (joint insurance) – could share resistance products
- Not all parts of the community should be treated the same – prioritise those at most risk
- Priory road is more vulnerable and should be treated as a priority
- A grant to fix privately owned flood walls would help with maintenance costs
- What happens in the situation of abandoned houses – who maintains their walls
- Good local networks in this community – it is the river, the tides and the floods that bring it together. Need to ensure this is maintained.
- Sewage system – what happens if it floods

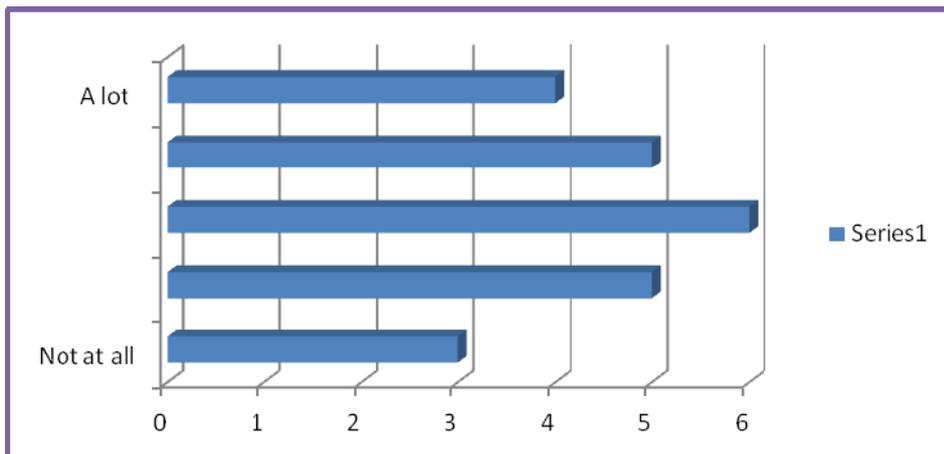




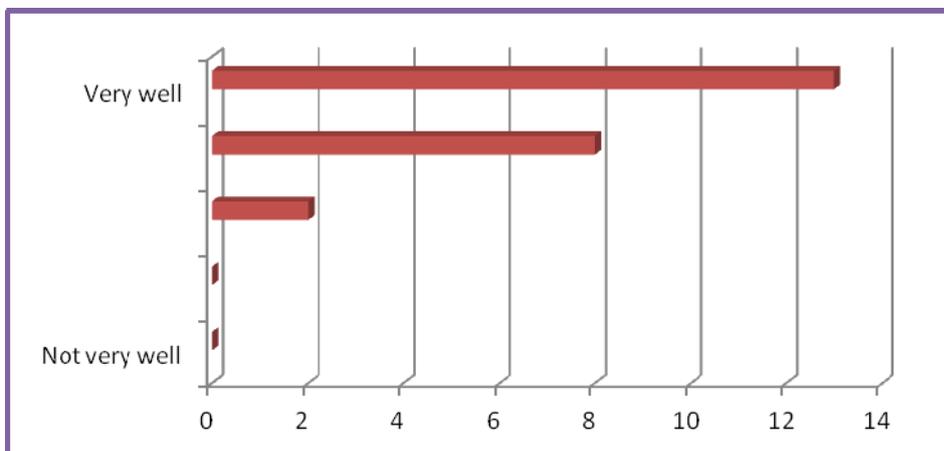
## Evaluation

The CCATCH project is keen to better understand people's response to flood risk. As people arrived they were asked to answer 2 questions and to plot their answers on a scale.

How much at risk do you feel from flooding?



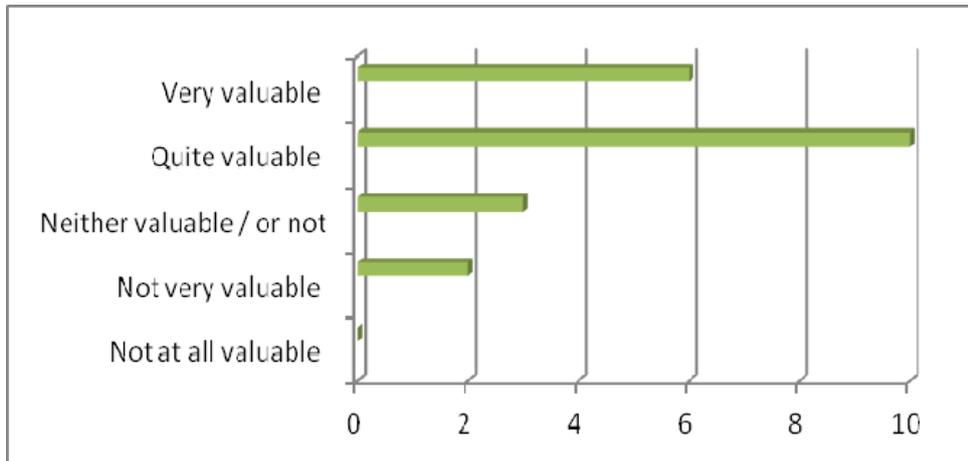
How well do you think that you understand local flood risk?





As people left they were asked two further questions

How valuable did you find this evening's workshop?



### What would you like to happen next?

- Become part of a community group to discuss further action -16 people
- Help produce Emergency Plan -9 people
- Be involved in long-term design of coastal defence scheme for area – 11 people
- Receive newsletter – 19 people
- No more involvement – 0 people
- Other – Assessment of effective resistance measures for our high risk Priory Road area – 1 person

