

Coastal Communities Adapting to Change Project

Upper West Itchen and St Denys

Issue 2: Final Newsletter



Introduction

We have been working with the community on the West bank of the Itchen (between Horseshoe Bridge and Mansbridge) for the last 12-18 months to help prepare for coastal change, in particular sea level rise. The Coastal Communities Adapting to Change Project (CCATCH) is being run by Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and the Solent Forum with the aid of an European Union grant.

The project is now coming to an end and this final newsletter summarises the work of the community.



Initial Contact with the Community

We first contacted the community in August 2012 and delivered a letter and leaflet to 271 properties identified by Southampton City Council as being at risk of tidal flooding (all properties at risk of flooding in any one in 200 year event). A total of 45 people responded, and subsequently these respondents were invited to a public meeting at the Riverside Club on Priory Avenue on 8th November 2012.

This meeting was attended by 29 people and a strong interest in forming a Community Group emerged.

Community Group Meetings

The Southampton Itchen Community Group was launched at an evening meeting on Thursday 24th January 2013. This meeting, attended by 15 people, explored how the community could work together in the future and work specifically on some of the most important issues raised. The group prioritised practical actions which they would like to take forward.

Practical Actions for the Community Group

- Build up a database of reports and images and fine tune local maps.
- Provide clear information on flood risk such as land height information for properties.
- Work together on a consistent height flood wall along the garden of properties.
- Installation of local tide gauges.

A number of task and finish groups were set-up to take forward the actions and were asked to progress them over the coming months and report progress at the next Community Group meeting.

The Community Group then met again on 23rd May 2013, attended by 16 people, to take forward actions and begin to think of long-term actions.

The Belsize Flood Resilience Project

Southampton City Council bid for the funding to take forward this project over the winter 2012/13 and were successful, using the CCATCH Southampton Itchen project as a basis for the bid. This project will focus on reducing the risk of flooding through property level protection and preparedness of the community to respond to future flood events in the area at highest risk of flooding at the lower end of Priory Road/Adelaide Road.

A final Community Group, attended by 20 people, was held on 4th December 2013, and the purpose of this group was to review what had been achieved in the project and develop the project Adaptation Plan. It also provided information about the Belsize Project, which will develop community adaptation over the coming years.

Task and Finish Groups

The Southampton Itchen Community Group set-up a number of task and finish groups to progress actions. These actions form part of the Adaptation Plan. Each group comprised members of the community and one or two project officers to help with coordination and reporting.

Website Group	This group was set-up to create a website, distinct from the CCATCH Project webpages. The group felt that it was important that they had ownership of this website so it was set up using word press and is administrated by a community member. All information generated by the task and finish groups have been put on the website. The website serves to show the Southampton tidal data, the land and water heights around the local area and link it to the BBC weather forecasting system, so that the community can at a glance see when high spring tides may occur and whether storm conditions may also be forecast. It also gives an opportunity for the community to upload data to the system. The site is called Community Tide News: St Denys West Itchen. The link to the site is http://itchentides.org.uk/ .
The Levels Group	This group was set up to establish the height of land was around the neighbourhood and people's properties to allow comparison with the river water levels. The information this group generated was extremely informative and is available on the community website.
Flood Marker Group	This group was tasked to scope out where a set of markers could be sited to show historical flooding and what information might be shown at these locations. As a result of this work, three flood markers will be installed at The Hard Priory Road, Cobden Bridge and Woodmill Bridge.
The Walls Group	A group of approximately 24 residents, in the upper end of Priory Road, were interested in improving the walls running through the backs of their gardens. These walls are of varying heights and conditions and there was an aspiration for the community to improve the standard of protection.

Property Level Protection

An important element of the project was to demonstrate Property Level Protection (PLP) to the community. Two houses in Priory Road (Number 84 and 82) had Property Level Protection products installed. Number 84 was used to demonstrate these resistance and resilience products at the Autumn 2013 Public Event. The National Flood Forum also attended the event to demonstrate products.

Autumn Community Event – Celebrating Living by the Waterside

This event was held on Saturday 19th October 2013 at the Hard, Priory Road and between 60 and 80 people attended. The event informed the wider community of St Deny's of the work that the CCATCH project had been doing, in partnership with local people, over the past year to help them respond to the risk of flooding. It also gave an opportunity for the wider community to comment on the work.

The components of the event included:

- The National Flood Forum's Flood Information Trailer, providing people with help and advice about property level protection.
- A demonstration house, where the CCATCH project had installed property level protection.
- A photographic exhibition illustrating waterside living, both past and present.
- A children's drawing area where children were encouraged to draw pictures of waterside living in the future.
- A computer showing the newly developed community website.
- Information on the new tide makers and information boards.
- A pop-up consultation stall where people were asked to share their views on the good and not so good aspects of waterside living.



What else has been going on?

Technical Factguide - This has been developed in with the help of the community. It is available via the project website.

Southern Water - A visit to Southern Water Waste Treatment Plant took place in 2012. Southern Water attended a number of Community Meetings and it is clear that the Community need to ensure that any problems with the sewer or wastewater system are correctly reported to Southern Water.

Community Flood Plan - A meeting in 2012 was held with a small group of residents to discuss how to produce a community flood plan. This will be taken forward by the Belsize Project.

Local Reports and Photos - A number of residents have information on their flood experience. Some of these are available on the Community Website.

The Adaptation Plan

The final project output is an Adaptation Plan which shows the community vision for the future and the actions it needs to take to achieve the vision. This was developed at the final Community Meeting in December 2013.



The Southampton Itchen Community Vision

'A community that values its waterside location and is continually learning to live with the river. Where those at risk take personal responsibility for their own flood defences and where the community works collaboratively to manage any increase in the risk of flooding that may occur in the future.'

Key areas for adaptation are as follows:

Activity	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Who leads
Website	X	X	X	Peter Taylor and the Friends of Riverside Park
Installation of flood marker	X			Southampton City Council
Local flood wall construction	X			Andy Varley and the local residents
Flood wall maintenance	X	X	X	Andy Varley and the local residents
Installation of Property Level Protection in properties at risk	X			Belsize Flood Resilience Project
Develop and implement an Emergency Flood Plan	X	X	X	Belsize Flood Resilience Project
Produce an Adaptation Plan for the community	X			CCATCH

Legacy of Ongoing Communication

Parts of the community have long been aware of the nature of tidal cycles and the potential risk of flooding and enjoy living by the waterside. It is hoped that the community will continue to work together after the project finishes in March 2014.

The CCATCH Southampton Itchen Project wished to leave a lasting legacy for the area. In addition to the Adaptation Plan it leaves a community website, and other resources including tide markers, property level protection in Priory Road, the Southampton Pathfinder Project (The Belsize Project) and a Technical Factguide.

The Solent Forum will continue to be available to help members of the community communicate with each other, and can send out mailings on the community's behalf if requested. All of the information contained in this newsletter can be found on the overall project website at www.solentforum.org/current/CCATCH/Southampton_Itchen/.

This Newsletter draws to a close Hampshire County Councils part on a very successful European Project, working with communities in England (Hampshire, West Sussex and Kent), The Netherlands and Belgium. A Practical Guide and Lessons Learnt Report has been produced to share the learning with communities who might be at risk from flooding in the future.

More Information

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