



**RURAL
FLOOD RESILIENCE
PARTNERSHIP**

Parish Council Flooding Case Studies

Introduction

About the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership (RFRP)

Climate change is causing more frequent and severe flooding, disproportionately affecting rural communities and farming businesses. Rural areas face significant economic and infrastructural damage, hindering recovery and isolating remote communities. Recognising these challenges, the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership, comprising the Environment Agency, NFU, ACRE, ADA, CLA, and Natural England, has been formed. This partnership aims to strengthen collaboration, better understand the unique vulnerabilities of rural areas, support rural communities to strengthen their flood resilience and support adaptation opportunities to reduce flood impacts.

The RFRP Action Plan - Planning for Flood Resilience

Objective: To ensure that planning for future flood resilience is being routinely considered by rural communities and those working with them.

NALC collaborated with ACRE on a joint survey, to progress work on assisting communities to plan for flooding. The survey asked parish councils what information they need in respect of planning for flood resilience. The survey was launched on 2 July 2025 with a deadline of 29 August 2025. It was distributed to 43 county associations of local councils, and they were asked to forward to the parishes in their county. We received a total of 654 responses. The following case studies are based on follow up interviews with parishes who responded to the survey.

About ACRE

Action with Communities in Rural England is the only national charity that is 100 per cent committed to providing all people who live outside of big towns and cities with the means and support they need to build homes and working lives that are every bit as thriving, fulfilling and sustainable as their urban counterparts.

Thriving rural communities improve the quality of life of their residents and support those most in need. However, rural areas are often poorly understood and ignored in policy development. As a result, they don't have fair access to essential infrastructure, services and jobs, making it harder for people to get the resources and support they need to realise the potential of the rural economy. We want to change this. We are passionate about seeing rural communities flourish, and are unapologetic for wanting the very best for those who are so often overlooked and disadvantaged just because of where they live.

About NALC

Since 1947, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has been England's only recognised national membership organisation for community, neighbourhood, parish and town councils. We work with county associations to support, promote, improve and create sustainable councils. 10,000 parish and town councils in England represent 35 million people with 16 million electors, raising around £900 million in precept and investing over £2 billion in communities. Some of the largest councils have a precept of over £1 million a year. Around 100,000 councillors spend over 14 million hours a year serving those councils to help change their community.



Alcester Town Council (ATC)

Location / County

Stratford-on-Avon District of Warwickshire, West Midlands

Relevant statistics

- Population 6,035 (2021 Census); 6,424 (ONS Mid-year estimate).
- Electorate: 3011 (Stratford District Council, 2020).
- Precept: (2025-26): £410,120.

Brief Description of the Village / Parish

Alcester is a historic market town located approximately 8 miles west of Stratford-upon-Avon and 7 miles south of Redditch. With origins dating back to Roman Britain, the town is situated at the confluence of the River Arrow and the River Alne, within a picturesque valley landscape on the western edge of Warwickshire. While this setting contributes to Alcester's rural character, biodiversity and recreational value, it also exposes the town to heightened flood risk from both river levels and surface water accumulation.

Type of Flooding Experienced

Surface water and fluvial (river) flooding.

What Was the Problem / Issue

Alcester experienced a major flooding event in July 2007, during which approximately 150 homes were inundated. Although subsequent flood management works were undertaken by the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water, several areas of the town remain vulnerable. Increasingly wet, stormy, and mild winters—consistent with climate change projections—have further intensified local flood risk, prompting the need for a coordinated climate and flood adaptation strategy.

What Action Did You Take

ATC established a Community Flood Resilience Panel to lead a proactive, coordinated approach to flood mitigation and preparedness. A key challenge was securing volunteer engagement and communicating clearly to residents that flood resilience is a shared responsibility and that they are responsible for protecting their own property. To address this, ATC developed a comprehensive communication strategy providing accessible, practical guidance tailored to all demographic groups within the community.

How Was the Community Involved

Town councillors conducted targeted visits to households in previously affected areas, distributing an ATC-produced [information leaflet](#) and encouraging residents to complete a Household Flood Plan using an accompanying [template](#). Residents were also [encouraged to sign up for the Environment Agency's flood warnings](#). These visits provided opportunities to recruit volunteers for community-led mitigation initiatives. Information was further disseminated through ATC's website, social media channels, and a quarterly printed newsletter delivered to every household.



A central volunteer-led initiative is the Flood Watcher Scheme, in which trained volunteers monitor early indicators of potential issues affecting the town's flood defences. Roles include drain surveillance, river monitoring, bridge obstruction checks, and data collection. ATC reviews the data and reports issues to the appropriate agencies—for example, blocked drains are reported to the Lead Local Flood Authority, Warwickshire County Council, for cleansing.

How Did Other Agencies Support

ATC has worked closely with several external organisations to support the flood mitigation strategy:

- **Environment Agency:** Conducted surveys of the River Arrow, River Alne, and the flood defence bunds installed in 2012, identifying essential maintenance requirements.
- **Severn Trent Water:** Collaborated with ATC to map and assess the performance of local water management assets.
- **Warwickshire Wildlife Trust:** Utilised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from Stratford District Council to deliver natural flood management interventions in the surrounding catchment. ATC maintains regular communication to understand how these measures contribute to upstream flow attenuation.

What Were the Challenges and How Did You Overcome Them

Key challenges included:

- Identifying the underlying causes of localised flooding.
- Establishing and maintaining effective relationships with statutory bodies and agencies, including securing site visits and meetings.
- Defining clear, risk-free volunteer roles to ensure appropriate insurance coverage.
- Identifying ownership and ensuring regular maintenance of flood assets, particularly drainage infrastructure.
- Accessing suitable funding streams.

These challenges were addressed through persistent engagement, structured communication, and the development of clear operational frameworks for volunteers and stakeholders.

What Changes Have Been Implemented / What Is the Current Situation

The Environment Agency continues to classify areas adjacent to the River Arrow and River Alne as having a 1% annual probability of flooding (a '1-in-100-year' risk). Since the installation of major flood defences in 2012, Alcester has not experienced significant river flooding. The current risk from fluvial flooding is therefore considered low. The town remains susceptible to isolated flash flooding during periods of intense rainfall. The Community Flood Resilience Panel continues to monitor risks and adapt its work programme accordingly.

What Policies Have You Adopted

ATC's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) ([Alcester NDP: Made version - July 2021](#) policy NE5) requires that all development proposals assess and demonstrate how flood risk mitigation and prevention measures will be integrated into site design and layout. Proposals failing to provide satisfactory evidence of such measures will not be supported.



Funding Sources

No external funding has been provided to date for the workstreams undertaken by the Community Flood Resilience Panel.

Contact Details

- Email: clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk
- Website: www.alcester-tc.gov.uk



Cubbington Parish Council

Location / County

Warwick District of Warwickshire, West Midlands

Relevant Statistics

- ONS Data 4,201, Mid-year estimate 2024
- Electorate 3164
- FY 25-6 expenditure £45,753

Brief Description of the Village / Parish

Cubbington is a civil parish located on the north-eastern edge of Leamington Spa in Warwickshire, approximately three miles from the town centre. The village consists of two distinct areas: the historic village core, often referred to as Cubbington proper, and New Cubbington, a larger residential area developed to the west following significant post-war expansion. Most of New Cubbington was built as a planned housing estate after the Second World War. Development plans were prepared in 1946, with construction taking place mainly during the 1950s. The area was developed around Rugby Road, the village's main route, and includes a mix of semi-detached and detached houses, together with bungalows, creating the residential character that remains today.

Type of Flooding Experienced

Primary river (fluvial), secondary surface water.

What Was the Problem / Issue

Cubbington lies within a steep-sided catchment that produces high levels of surface water runoff, leaving properties in the Pingle Brook valley vulnerable to flooding. The brook, a tributary of the River Leam, flows mainly through culverts beneath the village. The area has experienced repeated flooding, including a major event in July 2007 when extreme rainfall caused the brook to overflow, flooding roads and disrupting the sewage pumping station. More recently, a smaller flood in June 2023 caused surface water and flash flooding, raising concerns about future risk. Although property damage was limited, the event exposed weaknesses in the local drainage system, including suspected blocked gullies and drainage failures. The June 2023 storm was estimated as a 1-in-15-year rainfall event, exceeding the design capacity of some local sewer systems, which are generally built to withstand storms with return periods of between 1 in 5 and 1 in 10 years.

What Action Did You Take

Following the localised flooding in June 2023, Cubbington Parish Council established the Flood Prevention and Maintenance Working Group led by a parish councillor to coordinate a response and address residents' concerns. The group brought together key agencies, including Severn Trent Water, Warwickshire County Council Highways, Warwickshire County Council Flood Management Team, and the Environment Agency, to investigate the causes of flooding, clarify responsibilities, improve collaboration, and support residents affected by flood risk. Over five months, the group gathered evidence, reviewed maintenance programmes, inspected flood-prone locations, assessed drainage and watercourse infrastructure, and engaged directly with residents to improve understanding of local flood issues.



Working with partner organisations, the group delivered a range of practical actions. These included producing a Flood Guidance Leaflet for residents, increasing drainage inspections and gully cleaning in vulnerable areas, undertaking CCTV surveys of sewer networks, and securing annual inspections of the Pingle Brook. The group also identified ownership of the 2014 flood alleviation scheme, enabling it to be inspected, cleaned, and added to a maintenance programme. In addition, a network of volunteer Community Flood Street Wardens was established, flooding concerns were escalated with responsible agencies, and flood management was embedded as a standing item on parish council agendas to ensure ongoing monitoring, partnership working, and community engagement.

How Was the Community Involved

Shortly after the flooding event of June 2023, many local residents attended the July 2023 parish council meeting to voice their concerns and call for action. Much of the discussion was directed towards Severn Trent Water, although local opinion and recollections of previous flooding incidents also shaped what became a lively debate. Despite the strength of feeling within the community, there was limited factual evidence available at the time to clearly identify the root cause of the latest flooding event.

In response, the parish council established a network of volunteer Community Flood Street Wardens and successfully raised the profile of Cubbington's flooding concerns with all relevant agencies. Parish councillors, residents, the local school, websites, newsletters and leaflet drops were all used to engage those living in the streets most at risk. A key message emerging from this work was the importance of community involvement. Without residents registering concerns and reporting incidents, agencies are unable to gather the data needed to inform investment decisions and prioritise inspection and maintenance programmes. Parishioners are the community's eyes and ears and should report problems whenever they arise rather than assume they are someone else's responsibility.

How Did Other Agencies Support

Agencies provided technical support, on-site surveys, jetting services, walking the Pingle Brook (classified as Main River), CCTV records and sewers survey, hydraulic checks and confirmation of existing design capacity. Newsletter and guidance notes printed by Severn Trent Water.

- **Strong coordination and governance:** Advance agendas, detailed minutes, and an action tracker ensured clear accountability, ownership, and timely delivery of actions.
- **Comprehensive technical investigations:** Agencies carried out surveys, inspections, modelling, and maintenance activities to assess drainage performance and confirm the capacity and condition of key infrastructure.
- **Environment Agency assurance:** The Environment Agency confirmed the Pingle Brook was in good condition and subject to regular annual inspections as a Main River.
- **Severn Trent Water network verification:** CCTV surveys found no defects or capacity issues in the surface water and foul sewer systems and confirmed the accuracy of existing asset records.
- **Improved highway drainage maintenance:** More frequent inspections and jetting operations were introduced in flood-prone areas to improve drainage effectiveness.
- **Asset ownership and maintenance resolved:** The 2014 flood alleviation scheme was identified as a Warwick District Council asset, subsequently inspected and cleaned, with ongoing maintenance arrangements put in place.



What Were the Challenges and How Did You Overcome Them

The current overview of Cubbington is that it is not seen as a high-risk flood area due to the low numbers of problems reported and logged on the responsible agencies' databases. This risk assessment is obviously dependent on all agencies maintaining the existing infrastructure effectively. For residents of Cubbington, it is important that any issues are raised with the relevant agencies and that residents receive an incident number as a formal record.

What Changes Have Been Implemented / What Is the Current Situation

Cubbington Parish Council has strengthened its flood resilience arrangements through a revised Flood Working Group mission statement, approved in July 2023. While the parish council is not directly responsible for drainage infrastructure, sewers, or watercourses, the group now takes a more proactive role by working with relevant agencies, supporting residents at risk of flooding, monitoring service delivery, and representing areas of the village most vulnerable to flood events.

A number of practical measures have also been introduced. Community Street Wardens have been appointed at five key locations to provide local monitoring and support during periods of flood risk, while Warwickshire County Council has worked with landowners to improve ditch maintenance. Residents have received assistance in challenging inaccurate flood-risk insurance classifications, leading to positive outcomes, and concerns over recurring water main failures on Rugby Road have resulted in Severn Trent Water committing to a replacement water main, due for completion by the end of 2026.

What Policies Have You Adopted

The [Cubbington Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) (NDP) was 'made' (adopted) by Warwick District Council on 8 December 2025. The NDP will now be used in the consideration and determination of planning applications within Cubbington, including flood risk management linked to new developments.

Referenced wording, "CNDP OBJECTIVE 5 - to ensure new development is of a proportionate scale and supported by sufficient infrastructure so that it minimises impact on Cubbington's existing communities." (Cubbington Neighbourhood Development Plan, Referendum Version, December 2025, P45).

Funding Sources

The 2014 flood alleviation scheme is owned by Warwick District Council (it was not on their asset records) WDC primary funded the scheme.

Contact Details

- Email: clerk@cubbingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Website: [Cubbington Parish Council](#)



Great Alne Parish Council

Location / County

Stratford-on-Avon District of Warwickshire, West Midlands

Relevant Statistics

- 807, ONS - Mid-year estimate
- Electorate 655
- FY 25-6 expenditure £65,000

Brief Description of the Village / Parish

Great Alne is a small village in Warwickshire, England, 7 miles north-west of Stratford-upon-Avon and 15 miles from Warwick. It takes its name from the River Alne and was first chronicled in the charter of King Ethelbald (723–737). In 1969 Warwickshire County Council designated part of Great Alne as a Conservation Area, including most of the village east of the Memorial Hall and twelve listed buildings of local architectural and historical value. The name Great Alne takes its name from the River Alne. First chronicled in the charter of King Ethelbald (723-737) "near to the river which our ancestors used to call, and which is called to this day, 'Alwine'." The Celtic work Alwine meaning bright or clear.

Type of Flooding Experienced

River (fluvial)

What Was the Problem / Issue

Great Alne parish is situated in a basin surrounded by hills, with the River Alne running through it and a large catchment area. Flooding primarily caused by the river rising periodically renders all of the village's main access routes impassable, causing significant disruption to daily life and essential services. It affects children's school attendance, hinders health workers and carers from providing support to older residents and those who are extremely vulnerable, and disrupts workers' ability to commute to and from their place of employment. Flooding also impacts the delivery of goods and services into the village, reduces the reliability of public transport, limits the effectiveness of emergency service responses, and adversely affects the profitability and sustainability of local businesses.

What Action Did You Take

The initial response involved attempting to manually clear ditches, but the scale of the problem required a more organised approach. This led to the formation of a Flood Action Group, involving parish councillor Ian Taylor, local resident Roger Bennett and other community members, to systematically identify flooding causes, engage stakeholders, and develop a programme of works. All drains in Great Alne were identified, referenced and their initial status recorded to enable monthly reporting of change over time. To enable the wider investigation, the parish council successfully bid for funding for a number of climate related projects from the Stratford District Council Community Climate Change Fund.



The parish council hired a drainage company to conduct camera surveys and cleaning of the drainage system, which uncovered issues such as tree roots, utility cables, and collapsed pipes. These findings were documented in reports and videos. The evidence gathered was presented to Warwickshire County Council, making a compelling case for intervention. The County Council responded by undertaking significant works, including installing new pipes, replacing grills, and altering drainage flows.

How Was the Community Involved

The Flood Action Group is managed by Ian, Roger, and Kyla (the clerk at the time), with additional community volunteers, it meets regularly to discuss progress, update on actions, and coordinate efforts with the parish council. They have established working relationships with local landowners and farmers to maintain ditches and address drainage issues.

Drain Guardians Initiative: Community members were assigned as 'drain guardians', each responsible for monitoring and reporting on a set of drains near their homes. They provide regular condition ratings and help clear debris, fostering local engagement and ownership of flood prevention.

How Did Other Agencies Support

The Flood Action Group identified and engaged with landowners, farmers, and agencies such as the Environment Agency and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Building relationships with these stakeholders was crucial for addressing drainage issues, maintaining ditches, and implementing solutions like leaky dams. Warwickshire County Council have attended the village on several occasions to perform emergency drain clearance works due to heavy rainfall and the Flood Action Group maintain communication with the county council, using both the council's central reporting system and direct contacts to escalate issues. Regular reports are also presented at parish council meetings every two months.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust helped implement leaky dams and other natural flood management measures.

What Were the Challenges and How Did You Overcome Them

While some initial resistance was anticipated, the majority of stakeholders were cooperative and supportive of the project. The most significant challenge was securing formal recognition of the identified issues and obtaining commitment to action from the county council and other key organisations. Once initial investigations had been completed, it became clear that the scale and complexity of the issues extended beyond what the Great Alne Parish Council (GAPC) FLAG volunteer team could deliver independently. As a result, the project faced the challenge of transitioning from a volunteer-led delivery model to one that relied on external stakeholders with the authority, resources, and responsibility to implement physical improvements.

These challenges were overcome through persistent advocacy, robust evidence gathering, and proactive stakeholder engagement. The project focus shifted from direct FLAG volunteer delivery to stakeholder management and coordination, ensuring that the appropriate organisations were engaged and held accountable for delivering specific elements of the overall project plan. Considerable time and effort were invested by GAPC in building relationships, presenting evidence, and maintaining dialogue with key stakeholders. This



sustained engagement ultimately secured the necessary support, formal recognition, and delivery commitments required to achieve the project's objectives.

What Changes Have Been Implemented / What Is the Current Situation

After significant progress, the parish is now focussed on maintenance, with regular monitoring of drains and continued engagement with stakeholders to address remaining issues and ensure the system functions as intended. The Flood Action Group remains vigilant, especially during heavy rainfall.

Key drainage system improvements around the village have significantly reduced the occurrences of highway flooding, enabling noticeable improvements in the key project goals. Following successful delivery of the Great Alne Flood Alleviation project, the impact of the improvements has already been seen by Great Alne residents, neighbouring communities and those who travel through the parish.

What Policies Have You Adopted

[2026 Parish Assembly Flood Report.pdf](#)

Funding Sources

The Flood Action Group successfully applied for funding from Stratford District Council's climate change fund, securing approximately £5,000 to employ a drainage company for surveys and cleaning. Additional grants were obtained for related projects, such as water retention for a community orchard.

14. Contact Details

- Clerk: clerk@greatalne-pc.gov.uk
- Website: [Great Alne Parish Council](#)



Heighington Parish Council

Location / County

Heighington, North Kesteven, Lincolnshire

Relevant Statistics

- Population 3,123 ONS Mid-Year estimate 2024
- Electorate 2500 (estimate)
- Precept: FY 2025-26 expenditure £118450 (2026- 27) £124,687

Brief Description of the Village / Parish

Heighington is a picturesque village and civil parish in the North Kesteven district of Lincolnshire, located approximately 5 miles south-east of the city of Lincoln. The parish is known for its attractive limestone houses, historic character, and strong community spirit. The village has a range of local amenities, including a primary school, church, village hall, shops, pubs, sports facilities, and recreational areas. It is surrounded by attractive Lincolnshire countryside and benefits from walking and cycling routes, including access to the nearby River Witham corridor.

Heighington is a thriving rural community that combines the charm of a traditional English village with convenient access to Lincoln's employment, shopping, and cultural attractions, making it a popular place to live and visit.

Type of Flooding Experienced

Groundwater and surface water

What Was the Problem / Issue

Heighington is particularly vulnerable to both groundwater and surface water flooding due to its unique geology. Historical features, such as old, capped wells and the primary school being built on a former millpond, may contribute to current flooding problems. Efforts to reduce flooding in one area can unintentionally increase flood risk elsewhere, as water naturally finds alternative routes.

Response to flooding occurrences has been challenging as some householders did not take responsibility for having their own personal flood plans in place and assumed that there would be other people on hand to sort them out. During Storms Babet (October 2023) and Henk (January 2024) this was not the case as the local authorities were swamped with demand for sandbags when emergency resources were stretched.

What Action Did You Take

In 2025 the Heighington Community Emergency Plan was created. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) consists of various councillors and officers of the parish council. We also gathered details of local residents who have indicated they would be willing to volunteer in an emergency situation. The Emergency Plan was further updated following a



review and table-top test with the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Emergency Planning team and it is now active.

Heighington Parish Council provides information about rainfall and groundwater level to inform residents of the potential for localised flooding. We also hope this information will be of wider interest to gardeners and farmers.

How Was the Community Involved

The community played a significant role in both emergency response and long-term resilience activities. During flood events, residents, farmers, local builders, and volunteers helped distribute sandbags and support affected households. The parish council recruited volunteers for future emergencies and held public meetings to explain flood resilience measures and encourage residents to sign up for groundwater sensor alerts.

Communication was maintained through newsletters, social media, and the parish website. The local school also became actively involved by helping promote flood awareness, contributing articles to the village magazine, and educating children about emergency preparedness, including the preparation of grab bags.

How Did Other Agencies Support

Several external organisations supported the parish's flood resilience work:

Project Groundwater (Lincolnshire County Council) – Provided technical expertise, installed groundwater sensors, supported property-level resilience schemes, assisted with community engagement, and helped develop the emergency plan.

District Council – Worked alongside the parish council and other partners on flood resilience initiatives and community engagement.

Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) – Supported wider awareness, training, events and the sharing of good practice. It also assisted with emergency planning, supplied a weather station, supported preparedness activities and helped develop local resilience arrangements.

What Were the Challenges and How Did You Overcome Them

The village experienced localised flooding in December 2012, November 2019, October 2023, and January 2024. Since 2012, improvements to the sewer network and ongoing drainage and ditch maintenance have been carried out, which are likely to help reduce future localised flood risk.

One of the main challenges occurred during Storms Babet and Henk when emergency services and county council contact lines became overwhelmed, making it difficult to obtain sandbags and report flooding issues. The parish council also recognised that local arrangements and communication procedures were not sufficiently developed at the time.

In response, the parish council adopted a more proactive approach by developing a Community Emergency Plan, improving communication channels, encouraging the use of reporting tools such as FixMyStreet, establishing an out-of-hours contact number for emergencies relating to parish council premises, recruiting volunteers, and introducing ongoing monitoring of rainfall and groundwater levels. Regular reporting from a locally managed weather station also helped keep flood risks under review.



What Changes Have Been Implemented / What Is the Current Situation

Several significant improvements have been made to strengthen the community's flood resilience. A formal Community Emergency Plan has been established, while groundwater sensors now provide real-time water level monitoring and alerts to residents. The parish council funded a sand bin and has a small supply of sandbags at one of its premises. Ongoing flood alleviation works at the school will create a storage area capable of holding around 6,000 cubic metres of water, helping to protect the site and reduce downstream flooding. In addition, 16 at-risk properties were offered grants of up to £15,000 for property-level resilience measures. Plans have also been developed to restore the historic drainage channel and install slow-flow water butts throughout the village. Together with ongoing monitoring, volunteer involvement, and improved communication arrangements, these measures have significantly enhanced the parish's preparedness for future flooding events.

What Policies Have You Adopted

The Parish Council developed and published a Community Emergency Plan, with input from the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum to formalise procedures and contacts for flood response.

[Heighington Community Emergency Plan](#)

Thank you to the Environment Agency for providing the groundwater level data and to a local resident for the data analysis and report. [Water Levels, Emergency & Flood Plan – Heighington Parish Council](#)

February 2025: LCC Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee have published their report on the [impacts of Storms Babet and Henk](#)

Funding Sources

Main funding source has been [Project Groundwater – Lincolnshire County Council](#)

Contact Details

- Email: parishoffice@heighington-pc.gov.uk
- Website: [Heighington Parish Council](#)



Nether Whitacre Parish Council

Location / County

North Warwickshire Borough of Warwickshire, West Midlands

Relevant statistics

- Population 1078 (2021 census data)
- Electorate: 875 (2014 Warwickshire County Council data)
- Expenditure FY 2025-6 £22,544

Brief Description of the Village / Parish

Nether Whitacre is a historic, rural civil parish located in the North Warwickshire district of Warwickshire, England. Characterised by expansive open spaces, green fields, and active farmland, the parish contains approximately 460 homes and roughly 950 residents. The parish includes the main village settlement of Nether Whitacre alongside the neighbouring hamlet of Whitacre Heath. The entire parish is tightly protected under the West Midlands Green Belt to safeguard its open, agricultural character from urban sprawl. The defining hydrological feature of Nether Whitacre is the River Tame, which closely snakes along the western and north-eastern boundaries of the parish.

Type of Flooding Experienced

Surface water flooding.

What Was the Problem / Issue

The Environment Agency (EA) engineered flood defences to protect Nether Whitacre (specifically focusing on the adjacent Whitacre Heath area of the parish) between 2012 and 2014. This caused a few initial issues with surface water flooding.

What Action Did You Take

There was a flood group which liaised with the EA to develop a pump to take surface water over the flood defences. Drain issues still flood the village making many of the roads impassable. There are hessian sacks in stock in the village and church halls and sand on the village hall car park. The local church is the safe meeting place in an emergency.

Between 2012 and 2014, Nether Whitacre Parish Council worked as a localized, proactive body to address rising surface water risks. Because parish councils have limited statutory budgets and lack the legislative powers of major agencies, their strategy focused entirely on community reporting, multi-agency escalation, local infrastructure monitoring, and statutory planning resistance. The parish council's main targeted actions during this specific period included: multi-agency escalation and drainage campaigning, physical maintenance and riparian enforcement, protection alignment with the Lower Tame Scheme, and through direct planning resistance and runoff controls.



How Was the Community Involved

Now the EA have engineered flood defences (bund) the main parish council issue is with land drains that are not regularly maintained and quickly become overloaded leading to flooding. The village becomes almost cut off, mainly due to commuters who try to go through deep water and become stranded, blocking the route for others with larger vehicles. The parish also operated an ongoing community reporting campaign, mobilizing residents to systematically log blocked street gullies and silted watercourses directly into the county council's highway tracking systems to speed up localised intervention.

How Did Other Agencies Support

The EA engineered flood defences (bund) some years ago along the river Tame to protect the parish from flooding. This caused a few initial issues with surface water flooding. The parish council had a flood group which liaised with the EA to develop a pump to take surface water over the flood defences. The parish council actively documented localised flash floods along rolling terrain hotspots to lobby Warwickshire County Council (WCC). The council lobbied WCC to be prioritised but their available equipment is limited, and they have many other areas with this council's issues. The parish council is on a cyclic timetable for maintenance, WCC have 111,000 drains to clear and call outs are prioritised to dwellings, followed by roads which are impassable. We were successful in arranging for work on one small additional drainage scheme. The council escalated reports to Severn Trent Water concerning the systemic overloading of the local drainage network. They pressured the utility provider to address sewer backflows and pump station faults that routinely mixed with surface water during heavy rain downpours.

What Were the Challenges and How Did You Overcome Them

Drain issues still flood the village making many of the roads impassable. Hessian sacks are now in stock in the village and church halls, and sand can be obtained in the village hall car park. The local church is now the designated safe meeting place in an emergency. Now the EA have engineered flood defences (bund) the main challenge for the parish council is with land drains that are not regularly maintained and quickly become overloaded leading to flooding. The village becomes almost cut off, mainly due to commuters who try to go through deep water and become stranded, blocking the route for others with larger vehicles.

What Changes Have Been Implemented / What Is the Current Situation

The council identified blocked, privately-owned boundary ditches and field drains that were triggering overland flows onto public highways like Coton Road. Councillors directly engaged with local farmers and landowners to remind them of their legal "riparian responsibilities" to clear silt and debris. As the Environment Agency (EA) finalised and executed the Lower Tame Flood Risk Management Scheme between 2012 and 2014, the parish council served as a vital community bridge. The council provided local insights to ensure that major river engineering defences built to protect Whitacre Heath did not inadvertently block, bottleneck, or back up local surface water paths trying to drain naturally down the slopes into the River Tame. Nether Whitacre operates a hybrid resilience model that relies on heavy civil engineering pieces, statutory planning protections, and highly targeted, property-level defence measures.



What Policies Have You Adopted

Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2038 (Made January 2024)

Referenced policy wording: “Future development shall retain, protect and, where possible, enhance land designated as Green Open Space and promote flood risk management benefits where appropriate.” (Environment Policy EP1) [northwarks.gov.uk]

“In Green Open Space, the maintenance and improvement of flood defences will be sought, supported and encouraged in conjunction with the Environment Agency.” (Environment Policy EP3) [northwarks.gov.uk]

[North Warwickshire Borough Council – Nether Whitacre NP](#)

Funding Sources

The Whitacre Heath Flood Risk Management Scheme (2018/19): The parish council, working alongside local ward councillors, successfully campaigned to add a dedicated £71,800 standalone flood scheme to Warwickshire County Council's Capital Programme. The complex funding model for this scheme included: £35,000 directly allocated from the Environment Agency (EA), £12,000 allocated as a targeted grant from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) and £10,800 drawn from the county's core Flood Risk Management (FRM) reserves. The PFR Repair Grant Schemes: Following severe weather disruptions, the parish council acted as a communication engine to hook up internally flooded properties with DEFRA-backed grants of up to £5,000 per property.

Contact Details

- Email: clerk@netherwhitacreparish.gov.uk
- Website: NetherWhitacreParish.gov.uk



Key Lessons Learned from the Case Studies

Great Alne Parish Council

The detailed report commissioned for Warwickshire County Council, which evidenced the condition of the local drainage system, proved to be the critical factor in driving progress. Without a robust evidence base, it is unlikely that stakeholders would have accepted the scale of the issues or committed to the improvements now planned across the parish. This demonstrates the importance of gathering credible evidence to support flood resilience initiatives.

Heighington Parish Council

- Be prepared and plan for the worst, even if plans are never needed.
- Work closely with your Local Resilience Forum and make use of their expertise and support.
- Effective communication and information sharing with residents is essential.

Cublington Parish Council

Successful flood resilience depends on effective coordination between agencies, robust evidence gathering, active community participation, and ongoing maintenance of drainage and flood assets. The case demonstrates how a parish council can act as a catalyst for action by bringing stakeholders together, maintaining momentum, and ensuring residents' concerns translate into practical improvements.

Alcester Town Council

Community flood resilience is most effective when it combines physical flood defences, informed residents, active volunteers, strong partnerships with agencies, and long-term planning for climate change. This integrated approach helps communities remain resilient to both current and future flooding challenges.

Nether Whitacre Parish Council

Effective flood resilience in rural communities depends on sustained partnership working, good drainage maintenance, active community involvement, and a combination of engineered, planning and emergency-response measures. The parish council's role as a coordinator, advocate and community representative is critical in managing ongoing flood risks despite limited powers and resources.

Overall Takeaway Across All Case Studies

Flood resilience is most effective when strong local leadership brings together residents, volunteers, agencies and landowners to support evidence-based decision-making, proactive asset maintenance and coordinated action. While flood defences and infrastructure remain important, long-term resilience depends on partnership working, community engagement, preparedness, and continuous adaptation to changing flood and climate risks.