

Residents encouraged to prepare ahead of flooding season

As the seasons change and we head into Autumn, residents are being encouraged to prepare homes and businesses for flooding over the winter months.

West Oxfordshire District Council is launching an information campaign to help people prepare for floods and understand what to do in the event of a flood.

By providing key information on types of flooding, who to contact when, how different organisations and agencies provide support, what to do and what products to use, the District Council hopes that this will make a big difference in how people manage should we get flooding in the coming months.

Cllr Norman MacRae, Cabinet Member for Environment, said; “Unfortunately we are seeing more extreme weather events which are causing flooding across West Oxfordshire and impacting homes and businesses.

“As a district council we are doing all we can to help people within our limited powers and as part of that we want to help people prepare ahead of any flooding so we can limit the damage done if the worst happens.

“On our website, we have provided information on how to prepare a personal flood plan, how to sign up to receive flood warnings and what to do in the event we do get a flood. For those without internet access, information will be available in our Witney offices.

“I would encourage anyone who has experienced flooding in the past, or is in an at-risk area, to look at the available information and get their home or business ready should the worst come to pass.”

District Councils have limited powers and responsibility in the event of flooding, with the main one being to help provide temporary short-term placements in an emergency if people are not able to stay with friends and family or make alternative arrangements. However we have been working hard since the floods last Christmas to prepare as much as possible for this winter.

Most of the responsibility for responding to flooding, and maintenance to prevent it taking place, sits with other agencies including the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Environment Agency, and the water companies.

At the start of November, the District Council hosted the ‘Flood Fair’ in Witney where all the responsible organisations were in attendance to speak to residents and offer advice and support. Over 100 people attended and were able to speak to the District Council, County Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency, all of whom have different responsibilities in preventing and responding to flooding.

The District Council has also been working with partners to grow a network of sustainable drainage systems that prevent flooding and working closely with people who reported floods to help with bids for external funding for flood protection.

As part of a response to flooding, residents will continue to be able to access sandbags free of charge in emergencies from 13 locations across the district which are kept topped up by West Oxfordshire District Council.

More information around flood prevention and support for those affected by flooding in West Oxfordshire can be found on our website, here westoxon.gov.uk/flooding