



**Witney Flood Group**  
Charity No 1204457

Overview, Actions and Progress  
Waterways Day, 23 November 2023



Witney Flood Group

# Who we are

- **Formation – January 2021, following 2020 Christmas floods**
- **Now a registered Charity**
- **Trustees**
  - William Wareing
  - Tony Stark
  - Mike French
  - Keith Jameson
- **Passive Members**
  - >50 households and businesses at risk

# Our Aims



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- **Joined Up thinking and Teamwork**
  - With EA, WODC, WTC, OCC, Thames Water
  - Engage and support those at risk of flooding
  - Represent silent voices
- **Watercourse Maintenance**
  - Looking after what we have already got - removal of silt, fallen trees, obstructions
  - EA – Main River
  - WODC – Ordinary watercourses
  - Riparian Owners - throughout
- **Gauge Boards at more Key Locations – Coming Soon!**
- **Greater Channel Capacity through the Town**
  - Town Bridge Reconstruction
  - Langel Common Footpath
- **An Attenuation Scheme for Witney**
  - Between Worsham and Crawley
  - Hailey Road Drain



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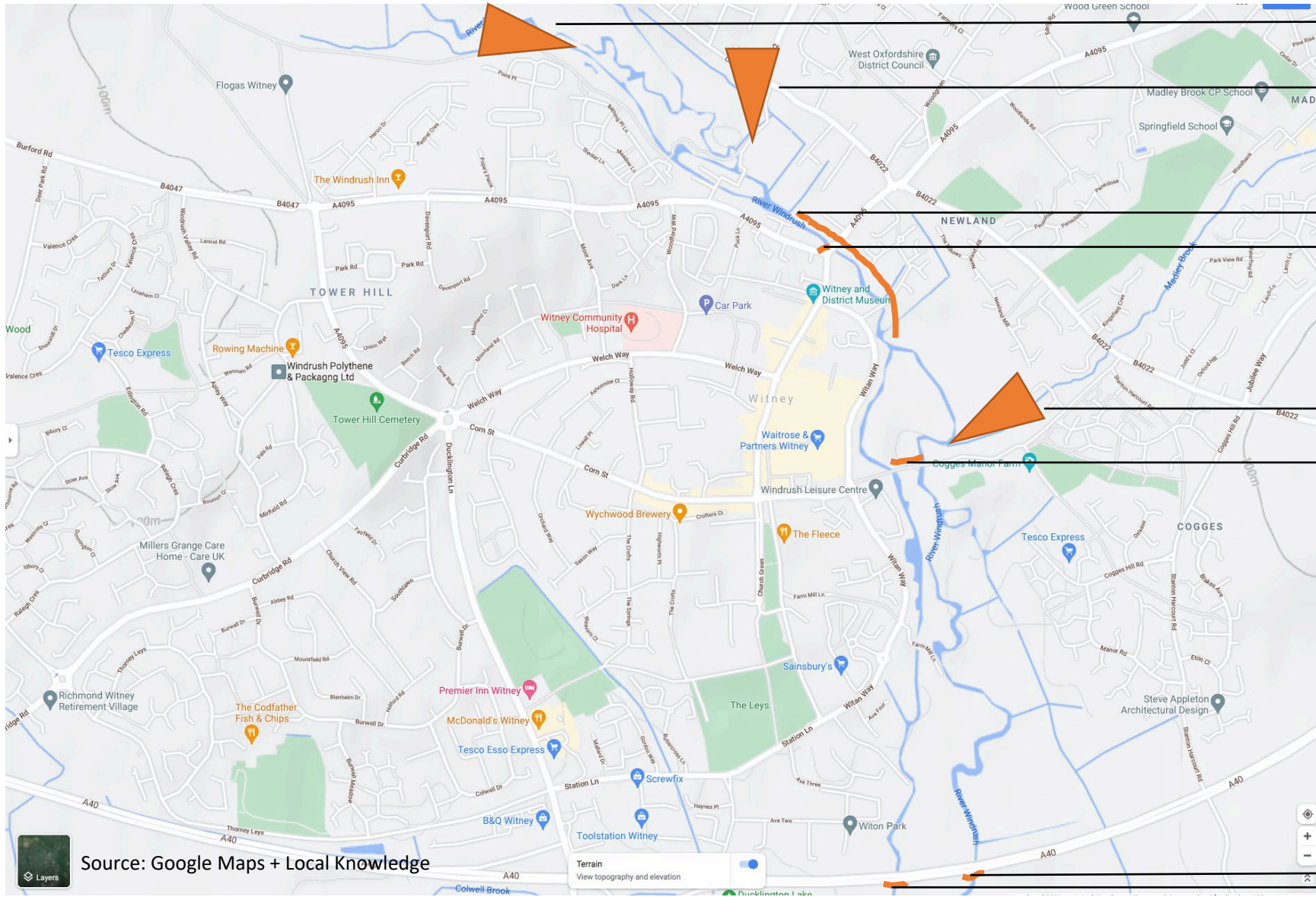
# Witneys Unique Challenges

- **Lack of channel maintenance, especially silt removal**
- **Development on floodplain**
- **More building and extended developments**
- **Awareness**
- **At risk locations**

# Witney's Unique Situation



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**Bathing Place**

**Eastfield Road/Hailey Road**

**Constrained Single Channel**

**Town Bridge**

**Madley Brook**

**Langel Common**

**Old Railway Embankment**

Source: Google Maps + Local Knowledge

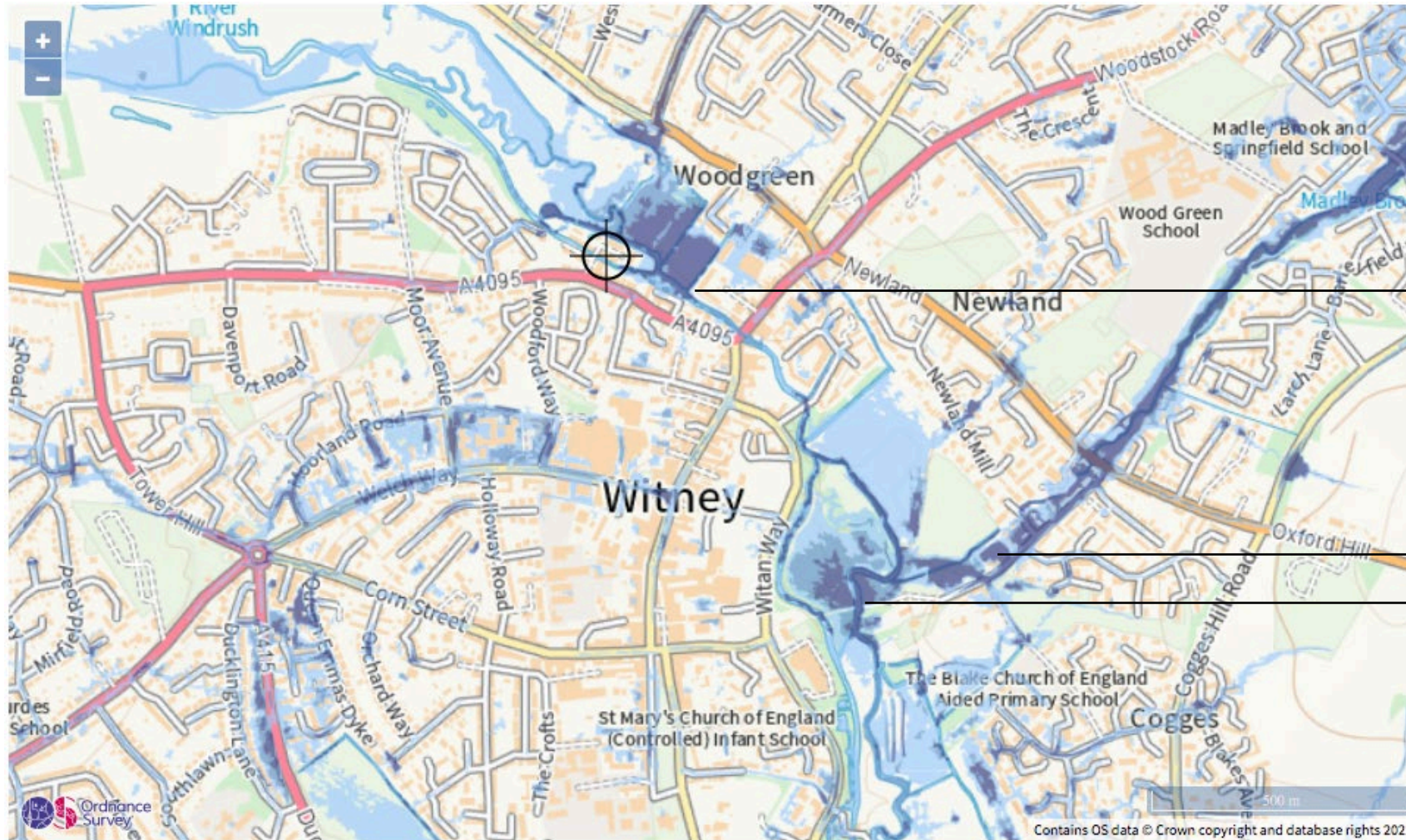
Terrain  
View topography and elevation



# Constrictions on EA Flood Map



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**Town Bridge**

**Madley Brook**  
**Langel Common Footpath**



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# Progress with WODC, OCC, WTC and EA

- **WODC**

- Positive, Engaging and Concerned
- Working relationship with Drainage Team
- Support for Witney Sensors Project
- Councillor Support
- Planning Team

- **OCC**

- Flood Risk Team
- Emergency Planning Team
- Flood Warden Scheme
- Joint Agencies Meetings
- Grant for Sensors Project

- **EA**

- Flood Model Update
- Flood Alleviation Scheme Business Case
- Accountability of Riparian Owners
- Maintenance not effective
- Witney, Osney, Wallingford site visits

- **WTC**

- Emergency Planning

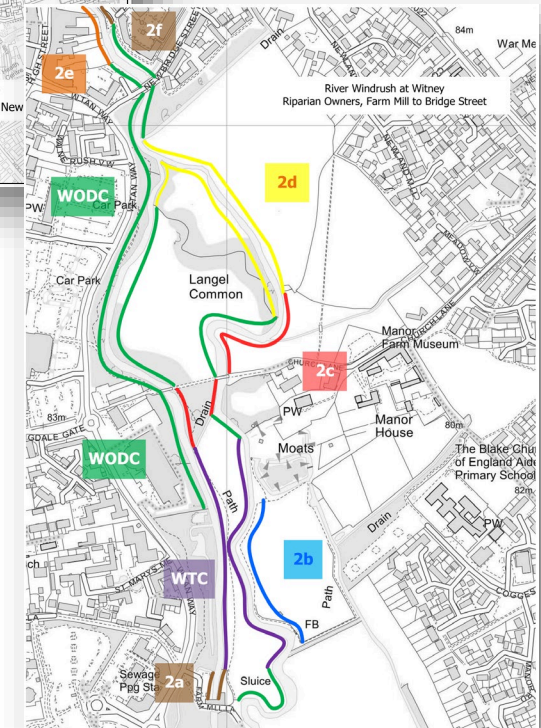
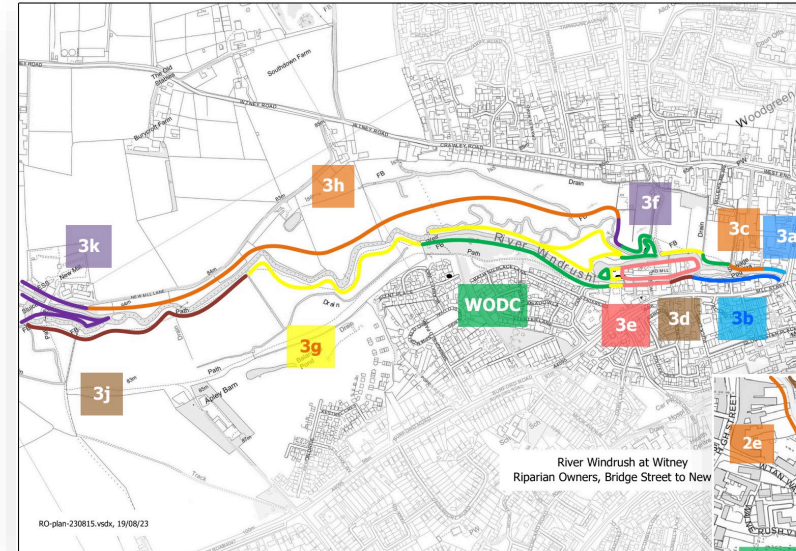


# Community Engagement



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- **North Witney Action Group (NWAG)**
- **Delly End Solar Farm**
- **Other Planning Applications**
- **Emergency Planning**
- **Pilot Flood Warden Scheme**
- **Riparian Owner Responsibilities**







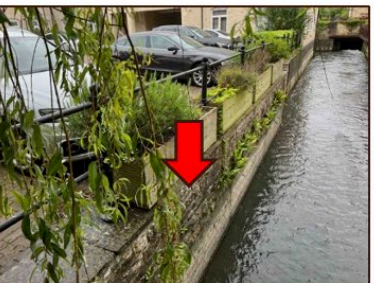
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# Witney River Sensors Project

- Increase knowledge of the Windrush in Witney
  - Understand flood water flows
  - Business Case Approved
  - Funding Agreement
  - Insurances, Contracts, Permissions, Installation
  - Publicly accessible, benefitting schools, research
  - 5 Year project
- What is it?
  - 2 Base Stations – receive readings and upload to IOT Platform
  - 7 Sensors – easy to add more
  - Backup to EA Gauge at Witney + physical gauge boards
  - Impact of existing structures
  - Additional sensors can measure pH Level, Traffic, Footfall...



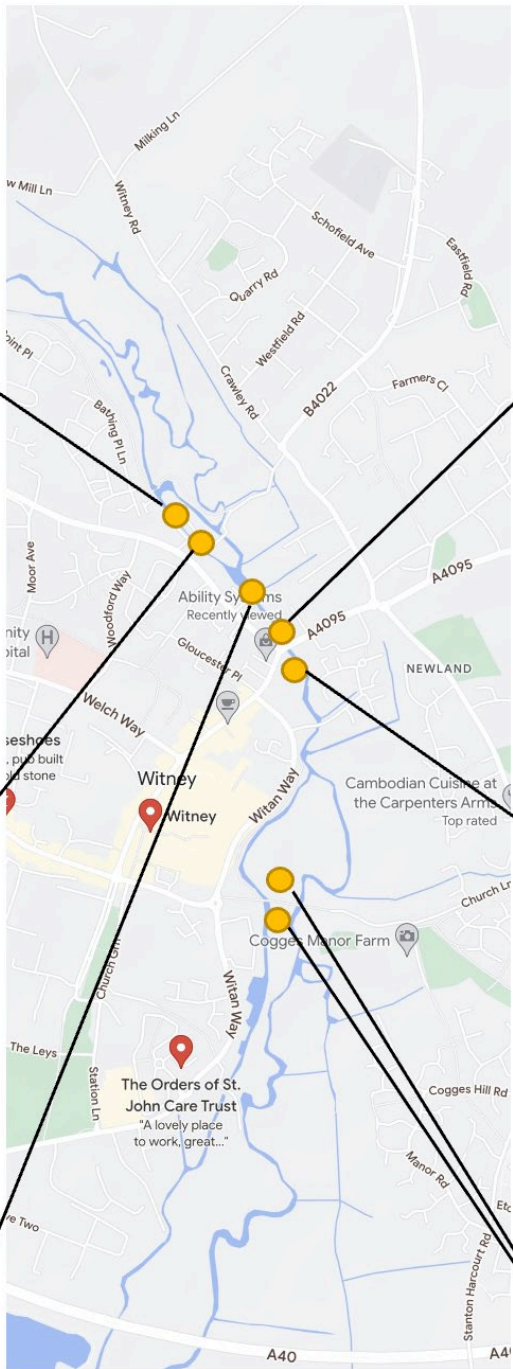
**Woodford Mill – Head**  
**(1 new board, 1 sensor)**  
 • on wall of flats near mill race near the entry point to the mill inlet



**Woodford Mill – Tail**  
**(1 new board, 1 sensor)**  
 • on right bank wall of mill race at edge of car park facing house No.36



**Riverside Gardens**  
**(1 sensor)**  
 • on left bank above existing EA gauge board, facing the EA River Monitoring Station



**Riverside House**  
**(1 extended board, 1 sensor)**  
 • against right bank on Riverside House Garden frontage using existing gauge board



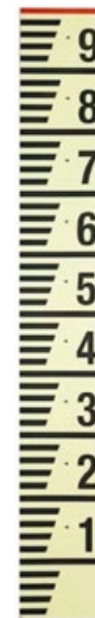
**Bridge Street tail**  
**(1 new board, 1 sensor)**  
 • against right bank on drainpipe mounted on wall of Finders Keepers building



**Langel Common head and tail**  
**(2 sensors)**  
 • upstream and downstream of footpath fixed to light post and nearest tree



**River Level Sensor**

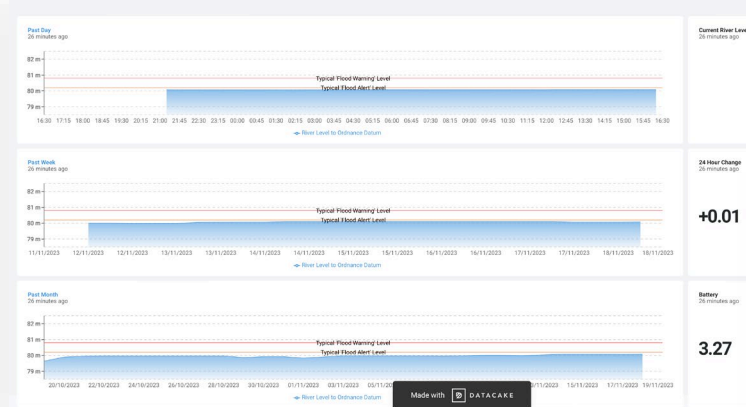


**Gauge Board**



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**Windrush - Riverside House**



**Online Monitoring**



# Pilot Flood Warden Scheme - OCC



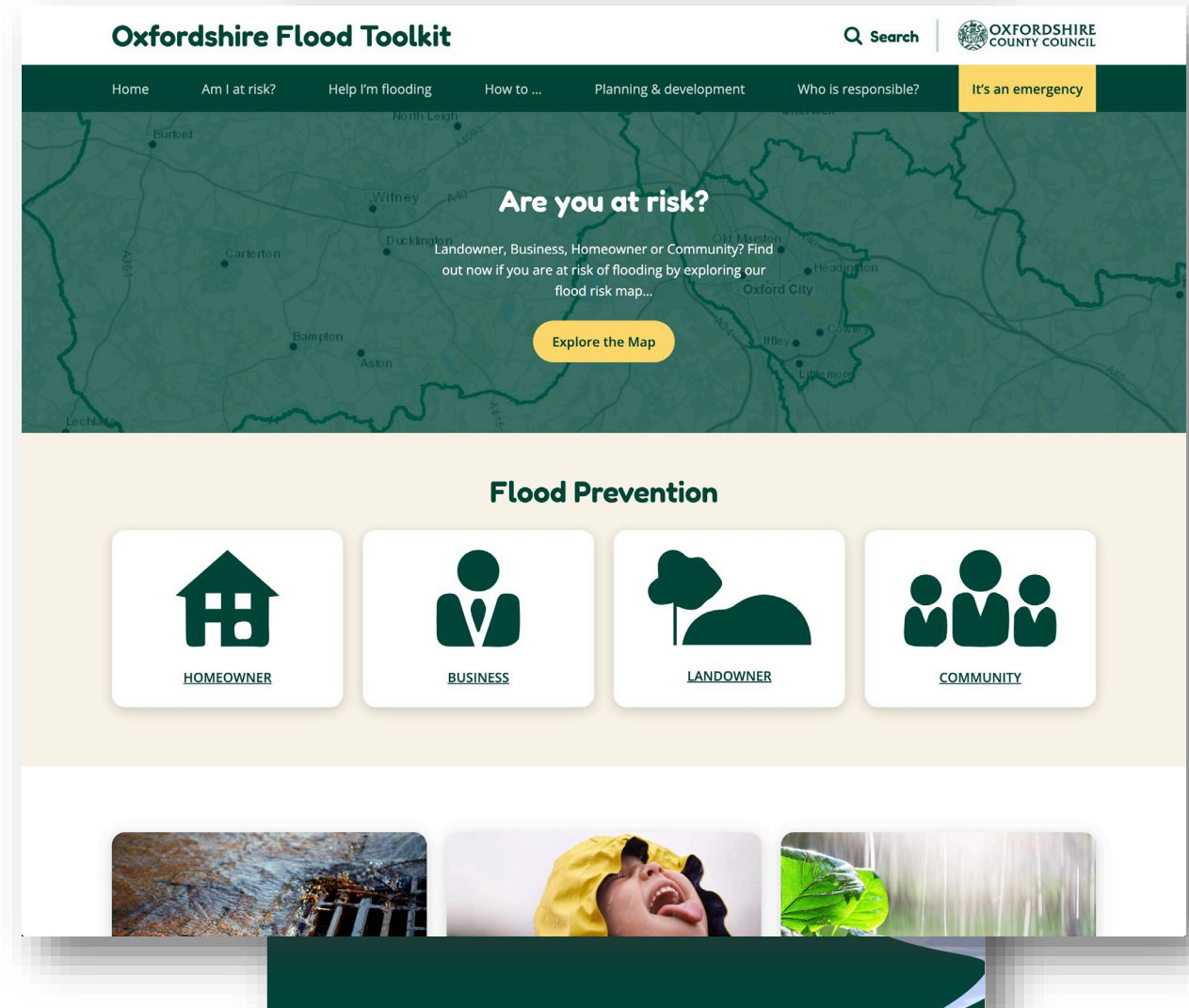
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- **3 Wardens Signed up for Witney**

- Flood Warden Handbook
- Volunteer Assessment/Risk Management
- Insurance Cover
- High Visibility Jacket
- OCC Training and online resources

Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit

[www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com)



# Practical Community Flood Plans






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## Community Flood Plan






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Location: Witney Central  
Area: Riverside Gardens

Trigger 1		
 FLOOD ALERT	 Met Office Yellow Weather Warning	 Community telemetry, e.g river level sensor
<b>What to do at this stage</b>		
<p>Flooding is Possible Stay vigilant and make early preparations for a potential flood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the situation through forecasts, local radio stations and monitoring stations.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Send a communication out that a flood alert/Met Office Yellow Warning has been issued.</li></ul>		
<b>Resident Community flood group Actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the situation through forecasts, local radio stations and monitoring stations.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Check that any community level defences are ready to go and available to deploy if required.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact all flood wardens and the flood group to be on standby.</li></ul>		

Trigger 2		
 FLOOD WARNING	 Met Office Amber Weather Warning	 Community telemetry, e.g river level sensor
<b>What to do at this stage</b>		
<p>Flooding is expected Immediate action is required to protect yourself, and your property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to monitor the situation.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Warn and inform the community that flooding is expected and to deploy any PFR.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Activate community flood plan.</li></ul>		
<b>Resident Community flood group Actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact the community to notify them that a warning has been issued.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Deploy flood wardens and community flood defences.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Wardens should help the vulnerable to deploy their PFR and prepare for a flood.</li></ul>		

Trigger 3		
 SEVERE FLOOD WARNING	 Met Office Red Weather Warning	 Community telemetry, e.g river level sensor
<b>What to do at this stage</b>		
<p>Severe flooding is expected and is likely to cause significant risk to life and destruction of property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Send out a communication that evacuations are taking place and provide the address of the evacuation centre.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare to evacuate and cooperate with the emergency services</li></ul>		
<b>Resident Community flood group Actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure residents are safe.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Help vulnerable residents to evacuate.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete evacuation checklist and give this to the emergency services.</li></ul>		

This resource has been produced by Witney Flood Group in partnership with various government agencies.  
For more information contact: [witneffloodgroup@gmail.com](mailto:witneffloodgroup@gmail.com)

To sign up for flood warnings visit:  
<https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

Last Reviewed: September 2023  
For more information visit x

## Community Flood Plan



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Location: Witney Central  
Area: Riverside Gardens

Address of Evacuation Centre			
Address			
Flood Warden Name	Email Address, Contact Number	Address	Area they are Responsible For
Name	Email Address, Contact Number	Address	Area Name

Street Name/Area	Where to Evacuate	Contact Details for Evacuation Centre	Facilities Available
Name	Location	Contact Details	What is available

Useful Contact Details	
Environment Agency Floodline	0345 988 1188
Electricity South West	0800 195 4141
Electricity Helpline	105
National Grid	0800 111 999
United Utilities (sewer flooding)	0345 672 3723
Local Council	1
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	2
Insurance Company	3
Local radio station	4
Evacuation centre	5
Gauge Map monitoring station	

Equipment List		
Equipment	Location	Where to install

Map of Evacuation Centre

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Triggers include EA, Met Office and River Level Sensors

Where to go, who to call must be organised

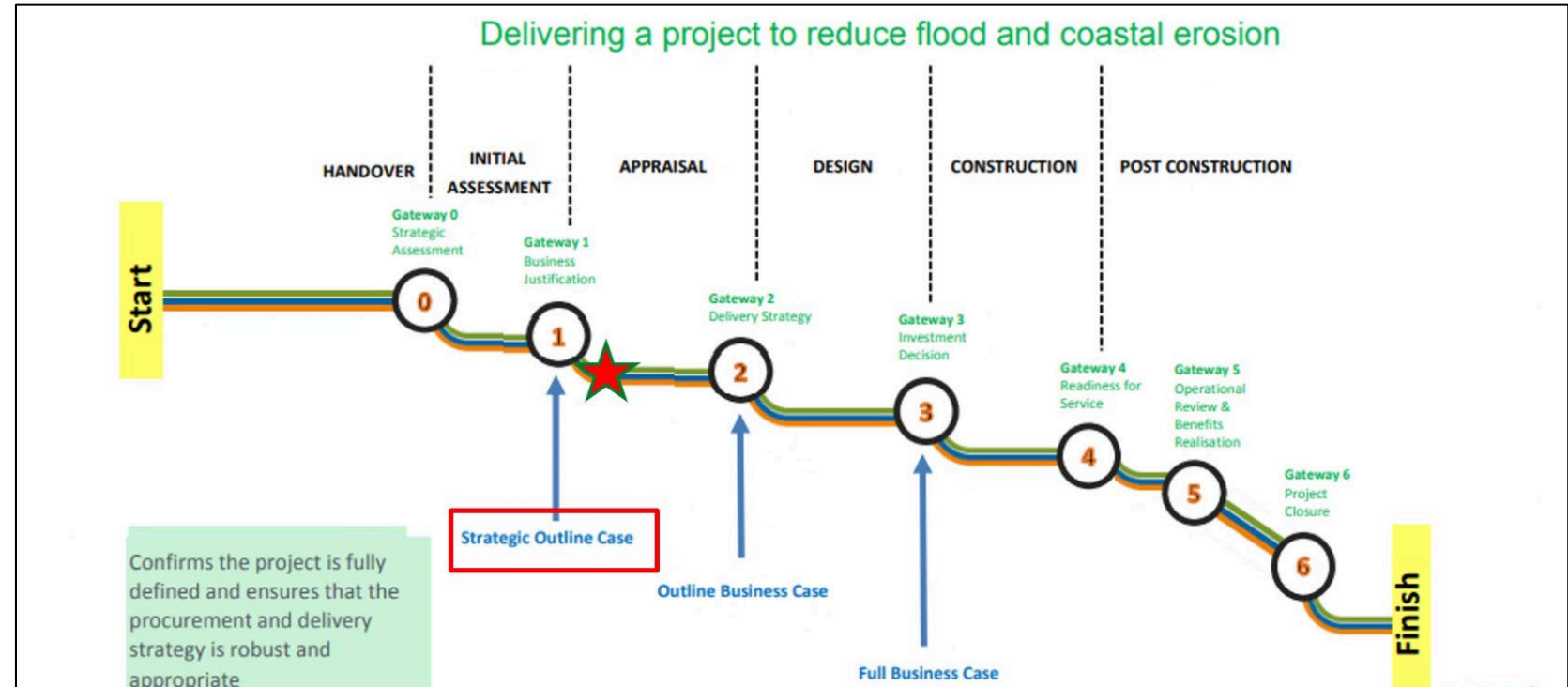




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# Witney Flood Alleviation Scheme

- Justification
- Scope
- Consultants Engaged
- Viability Timescale
- Still at Stages 1 of 6



# Section 19 Flood Report for 2020 Floods

## Short Term Recommendations



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Recommendations	Lead Stakeholders	Consulting stakeholders
Communicate the explanation for the <u>previous problems with the flood warning system</u> and explore what further improvements and enhancements could be made.	EA	WODC, LLFA and residents.
<u>Update the 2014 model</u> with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney	EA	WODC, LLFA, WFMG
<u>Increased EA / Riparian maintenance</u> to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits and encouragement to ensure riparian owners carry out their duties.	EA	Landowners, WFMG
<u>Investigate if the river could be modified</u> to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	EA	Landowners, LLFA and WODC.
<u>Look at improving flows through Langel Common</u> footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events	EA	LLFA, Landowners, WODC
<u>Install Gauge boards</u> from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a <u>Flood Warden network</u> with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events.	EA	WFMG, LLFA
<u>Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity</u> upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA	Landowners, LLFA, WODC



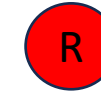
Actioned however EA strikes have meant reliance on automated flood alerting



Delays in flood modelling exercise, awaiting more funding



No sign of increased maintenance. EA letters to Riparian Owners guided by WFG



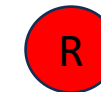
No action to date, reliant on EA study (delayed)



No action to date, reliant on EA study (delayed)



WFG Sensors Project will install these shortly, Flood Wardens recruited, need more



No action to date, reliant on EA study (delayed)

# Dredging



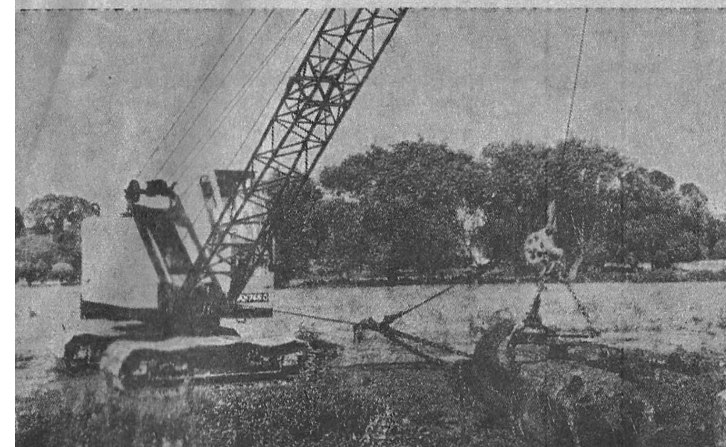
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- Why is it not done?
  - Birds and bees, not people
  - EA do not dredge rivers
  - Localised dredging ineffective



- Last time dredged? Aug 1965

## Dredging on Langel Common



Witney Gazette - August 20, 1965





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# Looking Forward

- Short Term
  - Stop new development until model updated
  - Flood Model drives Business Case
    - Current cost benefit ratio of 1.12 - borderline
    - Further spend on model undermines cost benefit
    - £5m+ for storage ponds
    - EA fund 12%, 88% from Public/Private
  - Proper Maintenance, funded by Riparian Owners
- Long Term
  - Consortium to fund an Alleviation Scheme
    - Cannot reverse legacy decisions
    - Levy on developers





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# Reminder – Who is at Risk of Flooding

- **Retirement Homes, Sheltered Housing e.g. Riverside Gardens**
- **Numerous elderly homeowners in private properties**
- **Council Housing at The Old Courthouse, Bridge Street**
- **Vulnerable special needs families**
- **Businesses at risk of serious disruption**
- **Inability to access Witney – schools, shopping, work, pass through**



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# How Can You help?

- **Get involved!**
- **How can you support our Charity to achieve more?**
  - **Public/Private Donations**
  - **Marketing Support**
  - **Improved Website**
  - **Crowd Funding**



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# Questions