

Who is responsible for local water management?

Protect your home from flooding (in advance, such as by buying sandbags or floodgates)

What are the different types of flooding?

Surface water (pluvial) flooding:

This is when there is so much rainwater that it overwhelms existing drainage systems. It's more prevalent in towns and villages than in the countryside, because concrete and tarmac prevents rainwater from soaking into the ground. Surface water flooding can trigger sewer flooding, where sewage escapes from manhole covers, drains or even backs up into toilets, baths and sinks. This can be caused by pipe blockages or by the sewer being too small to deal with the heavy flow.

The type of flooding experienced in South Cambridgeshire in recent months will have been a combination of surface water and groundwater flooding. This followed the third largest rainfall event through October to January since records began in 1850.



River and coastal (fluvial) flooding:

This is when rivers and streams overflow and burst their banks due to being unable to carry away the floodwaters from intense rainfall via the usual drainage channels. Nearby low-lying properties and land are then vulnerable to flooding. Coastal flooding is caused by high tides and/ or severe weather breaching sea defences and flooding inland.

Groundwater flooding: This is different to surface water flooding because it is caused by rainwater filling up underlying aquifers to the point of overflowing, usually in winter. This then causes groundwater flooding from springs and winterbournes (streams which are dry in summer) to inundate roads and overwhelm drainage systems.

What are watercourses?

A watercourse is any river, stream, brook, ditch, drain, culvert, pipe or any other passage through which water flows. It could be pipes under the ground, or natural routes. It does not include sewers.

Watercourses drain the land, prevent flooding and help support flora and fauna, taking water run-off away from buildings and roads, fields and parks. This may be culverted (piped) in built-up areas, and these will often be empty in the summer months but much fuller in heavy rain.

Main river or ordinary watercourse?

Main rivers are usually a larger stream or river. Locally important smaller watercourses can also be designated as main rivers. The Environment Agency has authority, powers, rights and responsibilities for managing main rivers in England and Wales. A flood map detailing their locations can be found at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

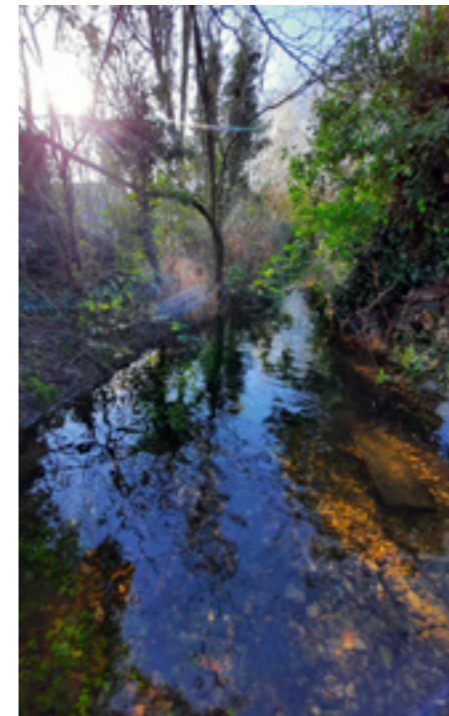
Ordinary watercourses are any other river, stream, ditch or culvert not defined as a main river. The responsibility for maintaining ordinary watercourses lies with anyone who owns land or property adjacent to the watercourse. This is known as Riparian Ownership.



The Environment Agency is able to predict some time in advance the likelihood of river or groundwater flooding – and you can find out if you are at risk at any given time by calling Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or visiting the Environment Agency's website at: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood You can also sign up for alerts based on your address.

Could you be a Riparian Owner, and not know it?

If there is a watercourse on, next to or under a property you own, then you could be a Riparian Owner. The deeds for your property or land may tell you if this is the case. However, even if your deeds do not say you are responsible for an adjacent watercourse, the law will assume you are. Waiver of responsibility only applies where a title deed states specifically that you are not responsible. This means you are responsible for its maintenance to ensure it flows freely without obstruction, pollution or diversion, and you should also maintain your side of the riverbank. If you are a tenant, responsibilities usually sit with the owner; but it



is worth checking your tenancy agreement. Find out more at: www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse#find-out-if-you-own-a-watercourse

What to report to who

Overflowing water pipes, sewers and manhole covers: Anglian Water covers most of the county for sewage and water supply, so check their website for information on reporting overflowing pipes, sewers and manhole covers:

www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/sewage-flooding/ Cambridge Water supplies water to some of the district, so it may be worth checking their website too: www.cambridge-water.co.uk/household/my-water-supply/flooding

Flooding from surface water, groundwater or ordinary watercourses: Visit our website for information about how to:

- protect your home from flooding (in advance, such as by buying sandbags or floodgates);
- act early if flooding occurs – move your car to higher ground, tune into local news for updates, turn off mains power and water, put sandbags in toilet bowls, pack essential items like medicine, and empty freezers and refrigerators if you can, leaving doors open;
- and call the emergency services if there is an imminent risk to property or people.

Find out more at: www.scambs.gov.uk/flooding

Flooded roads and pavements:

Cambridgeshire County Council is the authority to report flooded roads and pavements to, and you can also report issues such as external flooding to gardens or paths, or where you have already experienced flooding within the living space of your home (not outbuildings). Find out more at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water

Emergency Services: The Police can help with the evacuation of people from their homes where necessary. They also co-ordinate emergency services in a major flood incident. Contact 999 only in an emergency.

Fire and Rescue: Fire and Rescue may pump out flood water. Contact your relevant fire station for details. There may be a charge for assisting the public with personnel and/or equipment where a need is identified. Contact 999 only in an emergency.

Cambridgeshire Highways: Cambridgeshire Highways organises road closures and diversions due to flooding. They also place flood warning signs on roads and clear blockages on highways drainage systems. You can contact 0345 045 5212 or the Police out-of-hours.