

Belsize

Flood Resilience Project

Newsletter No. 1 | November 2013

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter from the Belsize Flood Resilience Project team, previously known as the Southampton Pathfinder Project. Here you will find a summary of important news from behind the scenes, upcoming events and key project milestones to help you stay informed.

Project news and updates

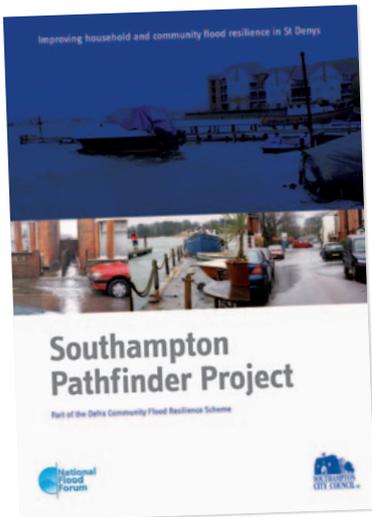
August saw the start of a phase of community engagement work. We hope you all received the introductory leaflet we put together to give you a summary of what the Belsize Flood Resilience Project will involve. Your property is one of 39 properties in the project area.

By now you should be aware of the project, previously called the Southampton Pathfinder Project, however if you don't remember seeing the leaflet, or if you have any questions about the project, please get in touch with Alec Summersgill, your Community Flood Resilience Officer, who will

be able to help you (contact details are at the back of this newsletter).

Drop-in information evening

On 26 September, we invited you to an informal drop-in information evening at the Junction Inn. Here you had a chance to find out more about the project, ask any questions and collect a flood information and advice pack containing lots of useful leaflets from both the National Flood Forum and Environment Agency. It was great to see so many of you and we look forward to seeing you again.



Project name change

Back in August, we invited residents to submit ideas for a new project name that reflected the aims of the project and the local area.

Several ideas were put forward and a vote at the Residents Working Group revealed a clear favourite; the Belsize Flood Resilience Project! Some of you who have lived in the area for a number of years may be familiar with the name Belsize - the boatyard which once occupied the land where the Quay 2000 development now stands.

Research suggests that the word 'Belsize' is derived from 'bel assis', French for 'well situated' - a fitting name for the project, as many of you agreed; St Denys is an area with fantastic access to the river and city centre.



Understanding flood risk - appointment of URS

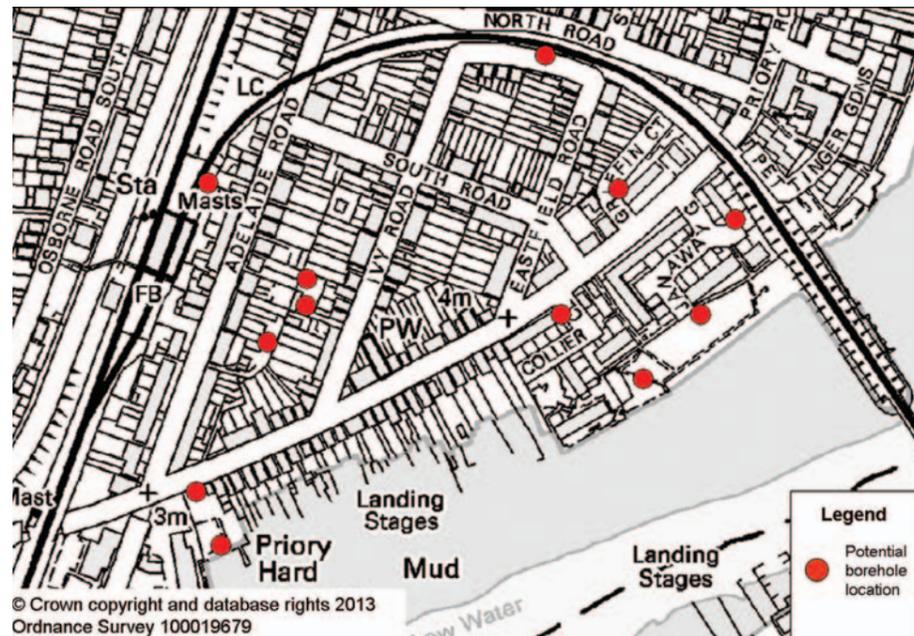
Southampton City Council is keen to improve its understanding of flood risk and how flood sources interact in the area surrounding Priory Hard.

To help with this, a company called URS has been appointed to carry out several investigations of flood sources including surface water, tidal and groundwater, in order to produce a detailed and user-friendly guide to flood risk.

Between now and February 2014, you may see representatives from URS in the area using various pieces of equipment as they conduct their investigations. The proposed sites for monitoring groundwater are shown on the map opposite.

Disruption during the installation of the loggers is expected to be minimal, however please be aware the process involves drilling boreholes five metres deep, therefore residents close to the sites may experience some noise, although this is not expected to last any longer than four hours.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



Map of the proposed sites for monitoring groundwater

Updates from the Residents Working Group meeting

Residents are the key drivers of the project, as nobody knows the area better than those who live there! To reflect this, the Residents Working Group (RWG) has been set up so that ideas from the community are fed into discussions about the project, helping to ensure that it is guided by you. Meetings take place on a quarterly basis in the evening, at a venue near you, and are open to all residents. Here is a summary of the meetings so far:

Meeting 1: Wednesday 28 August

- Number of attendees = 7
- The project and purpose of the RWG was introduced.
- Residents were asked to share their experiences of flooding and talk about any flood-related issues, including the blocking of the highway gully by leaves from trees near the community centre, which can lead to an accumulation of surface water during heavy rain.
- Residents were invited to put ideas forward for a new project name.

Meeting 2: Wednesday 30 October

- Number of attendees = 7
- The new project name was discussed and decided.
- The group's terms of reference were finalised.
- Discussion included whether or not to involve an independent insurance broker for advice on obtaining insurance in flood risk areas. Residents voted that this was a good idea.
- The group discussed the usefulness of flood warnings. It was decided that a pack containing a 2014 tide table and simple supporting guide to forecasting flood risk will be put together and distributed to all 39 properties.

Community news

The flood of 3 November 2013

At approximately 10pm on 3 November, Priory Road suffered a tidal flood event lasting around one hour. Tide levels were recorded to have reached 5.53 metres Chart Datum (CD) at Dock Head. The predicted tide level was 4.8m CD which indicates a storm surge of 0.7m.

A resident's perspective

By Gavin Millar, a local resident

"There are many reasons why Katherine and I enjoy living in St Denys: the river and the views, the strong community, two very good pubs, the convenience of a railway station and the centre of Southampton being just ten minutes away by bicycle.

"One downside, particularly for those living at the southern end of Priory Road and Adelaide Road, is the risk of tidal flooding. However, we intend to stay here for a long time and are looking forward to the added security of the central Government-funded property level protection (PLP) measures due to be installed next year.

"Last Sunday night's flood occurred when a tidal surge of 0.7 metres (due to low atmospheric pressure and wind)

combined with a 4.8 metre extra high tide. This resulted in a water level of around 5.5 metres for a short time.

"That said, most people didn't notice the 1-metre tidal surge during the big October storm just one week earlier, because the combination of the 3.9-metre tide height and the surge led to a water level of 'only' 4.9 metres. However, had this storm occurred just one week later and coincided with any of the recent 4.8-metre high tides, we would have seen a water level of around 5.8 metres or more.

"This would have been at least 0.3 metres (or a foot) more than last weekend's flood water level and many houses in Priory Road and Adelaide Road would have been flooded. Although this scenario is unlikely to occur in the next 12 months, it could still happen over the years to come. This is why we need PLP and community level flood protection.

"The National Flood Forum Blue Pages Directory is a good source of information on flood protection products (www.bluepages.org.uk) and Google searches will find further alternatives. I was glad to have our temporary air brick covers in place last Sunday."



Dates for your diary

December 2013

The project will take a brief pause over the Christmas period, from Friday 20 December to Monday 6 January. If you'd like to get in touch with us during this time, please send us an email, or leave us a voicemail message.

January 2014

We are looking to hold an event to give you the chance to get some advice on obtaining household insurance for your property which lies in a flood risk area. Come and talk to the National Flood Forum and an independent insurance broker about any concerns you may have about insurance. Details are yet to be confirmed – we'll keep you posted!

February 2014

The next Residents Working Group Meeting will be held in February. The date of this meeting will be confirmed nearer the time.

March 2014

Work to understand various flood risk interactions will be completed in February 2014. Soon after, we will share our findings with you at an event where you will be able to see the flood risk modelling and animations produced, and share your thoughts with the project team. Please look out for our next newsletter with more news and events.

Coastal Communities Adapting to Change (CCATCH the Solent)

On Saturday 19 October the Solent Forum held a community event to celebrate living by the waterside and to showcase the project outcomes. Approximately 60 people from the Upper West Itchen and St Denys area dodged the rain and made it down to Priory Hard to view the outcomes and talk to the National Flood Forum about issues such as insurance and protecting their homes from flooding. Attendees were then able to view property level protection (PLP) measures in place at the demonstration home in Priory Road.



How you can prepare for flood risk

The next couple of months will bring a number of high spring tides which could result in more flooding if they coincide with low pressure and bad weather.



It is therefore important to remain alert and be prepared. Along with next month's newsletter, we will be issuing an advice leaflet detailing the types of products available to you which can help provide temporary protection for your property. Several residents have expressed an interest in setting up a local flood warning network to help make sure everyone is aware and prepared for a flood event.

If you are interested in being involved in this, please let Alec know and he will put you in touch with the group. Please also get in touch with Alec if you would like to find out about having property level protection (PLP) measures installed for free, as part of the project next year.

We want to hear from you!

Do you have a comment or question about the Belsize Flood Resilience Project, or perhaps an experience, story, sketch or photo of the area that you would like to share with others? If so, we would like to hear from you! Get in touch with us and you may see your article featured in next month's newsletter!



Find out more



Community website

Don't forget to visit your new community website featuring lots of information on tidal patterns, flood risk and living by the River Itchen: www.itchentides.org.uk



Contact us

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Working in partnership as part of the Defra
Community Flood Resilience Scheme



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