

Brockenhurst is one of the two priority areas within the Lymington Catchment Plan, with approximately 880 homes at risk of surface water flooding. This risk is increasing as rainfall becomes more frequent and intense. As a community, there are three key ways we can reduce the impact of flooding: **prevention, preparedness, and response.**

1. Prevention

Taking simple steps now can significantly reduce flood risk:

- Ensure drains, ditches, and soakaways on your property are clear and functioning properly.
- Collect rainwater in water butts where possible.
- Minimise hard surfaces such as concrete or paving. Where replacing patios or driveways, consider permeable materials (e.g. gravel or permeable paving) to reduce surface water run-off.
- If your property borders a watercourse or drainage ditch, you have a **riparian responsibility** to keep it clear and flowing.
- When maintaining ditches, be mindful of wildlife (particularly during bird nesting season) and protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Disturbance should be kept to a minimum, with any cleared material left on the bank.
- Support local volunteer initiatives to clear ditches and drainage routes.
- Report blocked or damaged culverts (often located alongside roads) to Forestry England (info@forestryengland.uk).
- Work is ongoing with relevant authorities to explore upstream water management and local mitigation measures to reduce flooding “hotspots”.

2. Preparedness

Being prepared will help you respond quickly if flooding occurs:

- Consider joining the “Your Brockenhurst” WhatsApp community for updates during periods of heavy rainfall.
- Stay in contact with neighbours, particularly those who may be more vulnerable.
- If your property is at risk:
 - Keep sandbags or flood protection materials available.
 - Move valuable items upstairs or off the floor if water levels begin to rise.
 - Prepare a “grab bag” with essential items in case evacuation is required.

3. Response

During periods of heavy rainfall or flooding:

- Monitor weather forecasts and official flood warnings. There are three levels:
 - **Flood Alert** – flooding is possible
 - **Flood Warning** – flooding is expected
 - **Severe Flood Warning** – danger to life
- Only travel if safe and necessary to do so.
- Do not enter floodwater. Never drive, cycle, or walk through flooded roads or paths, as depths and hazards may not be visible.
- Follow all signage and pay attention to depth gauges where present.
- Advise others not to travel into the village if conditions are unsafe.

If your property is at imminent risk, or you are instructed to evacuate, act immediately and move to a safe location using a safe route, taking only essential items.

By working together as a community, we can reduce the risks and impacts of flooding in Brockenhurst.