

## Parish Briefing – Storm Ciaren

Weds 1 & Thurs 2 November

### Severe weather update – key points

Somerset Council colleagues are busy preparing for possible disruption to transport, potential high winds and flash flooding events overnight on Wednesday and into Thursday, as Storm Ciaren pushes across our region.

Our teams are also on standby for any clear-up duties and assistance to vulnerable people in our communities.

The timing of rainfall, high tides and the already-saturated farmland, means there is a risk of flooding on the Somerset Levels.

Whilst the strongest winds are forecast outside of Somerset at present, we know this can change and are alert to numerous hazards – from major power outages, to flying firewood from community bonfires.

Our highways teams, Customer Contact Centre, communications colleagues and CCU staff are ready and prepared to respond and recover.

Daily tactical meetings are being held for service representatives to monitor impacts and co-ordinate service responses. We met yesterday evening (Tuesday) and will continue to hold tactical meetings all week.

A Local Resilience Forum pre-event assessment call is scheduled for this morning (Wednesday) to obtain the latest forecasts and impact assessments.

Communications colleagues have already begun building public awareness of the risks through social media. Our first post was issued at 3pm on Tuesday.

Updating members and parishes will be comms lead, Ally Laing.  
[ally.laing@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ally.laing@somerset.gov.uk)

## General information for sharing

### What to do

Anyone who experiences property flooding can report it online at: [FORT - Home \(geowessex.com\)](https://www.geowessex.com) or email [flooding@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@somerset.gov.uk)

If you are aware of anyone who needs support, please advise them to call 0300 123 2224 and choose option 1 during office hours.

Visits to impacted communities will take place as required, and we will provide further updates as and when we get them.

### What can I do to prepare for flooding?

Thinking ahead and preparing for what the weather may bring can make a real difference to homes, businesses and communities.

One of the first things to check is whether a property is at [risk of flooding](#).

Somerset Council recommends taking precautionary measures and purchasing sandbags in case of flooding emergencies. If sandbags are not available, you can use:

- rolled-up mats or carpets
- bags of garden compost
- pillowcases filled with soil (don't overfill them)
- timber boards (possibly screwed to door frames, sealed with mastic)

### Key impacts on roads

*\*\*\* Updates expected this morning and throughout the storm period. Ally Laing will be keeping parishes up to date throughout \*\*\**

### Flooding and roads – key information

Heavy rain and flooding present a danger to drivers – road users are urged **NOT** to attempt to drive across flooded roads as it is not possible to estimate the depth of the water reliably.

It's vital to prepare for wet conditions. Motorists are urged to proceed with extreme caution. If caught in flood conditions there is information and advice here: [Adverse weather conditions \(somersetroadsafety.org\)](#)

For drain and gully problems, or any issue on the highway report it easily and quickly here - [Report a problem on the road \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#).

## What to do during a flood

There is information on what to do during a flood on the [Somerset Prepared website](#). In an immediate flood emergency or where there is a risk to life, follow the advice of the emergency services.

## What to do after a flood

Following a flood there will be hazards revealed as the water clears. Consider the following when recovering from the impacts of an incident.

- Assume floodwater has been contaminated with sewage and avoid contact wherever possible. For further health advice when dealing with flood affected areas visit [Public Health England](#)
- It's important to stop harmful germs that might be present in floodwater from spreading to food. For advice on cleaning preparation areas after a flood visit the [Food Standards Agency](#)
- Flooding presents a number of hazards to utilities in the home. Follow [electric](#) safety advice before switching back on.
- Contact your insurer if you haven't already and let them know the situation. They will advise of the next steps to take in restoring homes and belongings.
- Reporting when a property has flooded helps the Council investigate why the flood has occurred and helps us look for possible methods to mitigate the risk of it happening again in the future.
- Use the [SWIM](#) website to update flood records/record recent flooding.

## Protect yourself from future flooding

It is advisable to plan how to respond to a flood. Information and tools are available to help you [plan ahead](#).

Download the ['Prepare. Act. Survive.' flood plan](#) to help reduce the impact of flooding. For information on flood warnings visit the Government's [flood warnings](#) webpages.

## Looking after yourself and mental health

We know that heavy rainfall may trigger feelings of anxiety, fear or worry, particularly for those who have been previously affected by flooding. Here are some things you can do to help reduce any feelings of anxiety caused by heavy rainfall and the activation of local flood defences:

- Talk to somebody about how you are feeling, if you don't feel able to talk to friends or family you can call Mindline - Somerset's emotional support and mental health helpline which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 01823 276 892 (local) 0800 138 1692 (freephone).
- Try and do activities that help you to feel less stressed like exercising, reading, listening to music, or meditating.
- Help neighbours and others in your community, look out for each other!
- Follow your normal routine as much as possible.
- Visit the [Every Mind Matters](#) website where you can find lots of tips and exercises to help manage anxiety.

Stay up to date on weather information and warnings. If you're aware of the latest information, you may gain a sense of control over the situation. [Check for flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**ENDS**