



Happy New Year to all Cockermouth Residents. Its been over a year since 'The Flood' however Cockermouth Flood Action Group remain committed to the town in order to bring about a significant reduction in flood risk, ensure the community is prepared if further emergency events were to occur and to influence central and local government and relevant agencies on issues such as insurance.

The purpose of this newsletter is to update the residents of Cockermouth on the Gote Road defences and also further plans for defences. It is also to inform residents regarding the Flood Warden Scheme, Emergency Home Action Plans, emergency flood kits and the Northern Flood Action Group Conference.

Gote Road Defences

Gote road had experienced three floods in a five year period and was the only area in Cockermouth that did not have flood defences. Because of this CFAG's members agreed that all efforts should be made to gain defences for this area of Cockermouth. Following many meetings with the Environment Agency, Allerdale County Council and Cumbria County Council over a 9 month period the building of Gote Road Defences commenced. This is an amazing achievement as it can take 10 to fifteen years for the process of planning and funding of flood defences. Gote Road floods from three sources: river, ground and surface water. The earth embankment will protect from the river, a French drain that runs the length of the defence will help to lower the ground water. The highways drains have been surveyed and

found to be blocked, broken or inadequate. Cumbria County Council has applied for monies to replace these drains and we remain hopeful that this money will be given. The linear defence has been completed and the pumping system should be completed by spring. The defences will protect against a 2005 and 2008 flood but not a 2009 one. In order for the defences to be built CFAG were asked to raise money. We would like to thank Churches Together, Cumbria Community Foundation, The Rotary and The Round Table for their generous donations.

Plans for improvement or new defences south of the river.

The Environment Agency during 2010 carried out a survey of Cockermouth to establish if the town meets the criteria of a 1 in 100 protection. This means a 1% risk of a flood in any one year. The survey has revealed that some areas of the town do not have this level of protection. Plans for improvement of existing flood defences and building of new ones have been drawn up. The Environment Agency have applied for funding and begun the initial consultation with those who will be affected by the defences. If the funding bid is successful they hope to begin work in 2012. Representatives from the Environment Agency will be contacting residents who will be directly affected to discuss the plans over the coming months, they will also hold sessions where the general public can view the plans. CFAG will assist with this process. Natural England are continuing to look into the possibility of a relief channel on Broomlands.

Preparedness for flooding or other emergency events.

CFAG are fully aware and understand that residents wish to move on and try to forget the events of 2009. However many people were unprepared for an emergency

because of this CFAG have created a Flood Warden Scheme and a Home Emergency Action Plan.

Flood Warden Scheme

The town has been divided into zones, each zone has two wardens. The warden's role will be to identify who lives in each zone, who would need help in an emergency event and to work with the emergency services during an event. A telephone triage scheme will operate so that during periods of heavy rainfall the wardens can not only advise residents to take action but to provide reassurance that flooding may not occur. Over the coming months the Flood Wardens will be making themselves known to you and **with your permission**, gather data that will help all agencies to assist you in the most effective way. The Flood Wardens will be undertaking training with the Fire and Rescue services and the Environment Agency. Each Flood Warden will have an identification badge.

Household Emergency Action Plan

CFAG have created a Home Emergency Action Plan. The plan will enable you to record telephone numbers that might be needed during an emergency event. It also enables you to record how you as a family will contact each other and which neighbours may need assistance. It gives advice on what to do in an event. The plan also advises you to create a list of all your contents now and to remember to update this list on a yearly basis or as you replace them. Remember to make a record of model and serial numbers. An insurance claim can be a difficult process so having a prepared contents list should shorten this and also ensure that your level of cover is adequate. Making a list after an event can be a very upsetting experience. If you did not collect this plan at the Flood Fair, the Flood Wardens will give you one when they visit.

Emergency Flood Kit

Cumbria Community Foundation has purchased emergency kits for each household that was flooded. If you did not collect yours from the Flood Fair the Flood Wardens will assist with the delivery to your home. The kit consists of a large bag that contains items such as compact wind up radio and torch, emergency mobile phone charger, waterproof document holder, basic first aid kit, toiletries and other items that will be useful in an emergency event. The bag is large enough to add additional personal items such as clothing. CFAG would like to thank the CCF for these bags.

Northern Flood Action Group Conference

The issue of flood insurance is a huge concern. Some householders are being asked for large premiums with excesses of 10 to 20,000 pounds. New occupiers are finding it impossible to get insurance. This situation looks set to get worse after 2013 when the agreement on flood insurance between the government and insurance companies comes to an end. Northern Flood Action Groups are to join forces in order to lobby government and the insurance companies to bring about continued affordable insurance. To enable this to happen, a Northern Flood Action Group Conference will take place in May at the University of Cumbria. Other issues to be discussed will be the recovery of communities post-flood. We believe that standards are needed to ensure the recovery is timely without the complications many of us have faced.

Website

Up to date Information regarding our activities can be found on our website. Information during periods of heavy rainfall will be posted onto the website which may help to relieve anxiety.

www.ckermouthfloodactiongroup.org.uk