

13.01.23

Somerset Levels and Moors January 2023

Background:

The Somerset Levels & Moors are designed to store flood water when the rivers flowing through them overtop. The recent heavy rain has caused spillways (specifically designed low points in the riverbanks) on the Rivers Tone and Parrett to flow and there is now water stored on the moors.

Across the whole of Somerset, there are eight flood alerts in force and the following flood warnings:

- Curry Moor and Hay Moor
- A361 East Lyng to Burrowbridge
- River Brue and Glastonbury Millstream from Lovington to Highbridge; low lying properties
- Washford River; riverside properties from Kingsbridge to Lower Roadwater

Current situation:

Following rainfall over the past 24 hours, levels in the Parrett and Tone have now peaked and are currently stable. However, spillways at Hook Bridge (Tone), and Beazleys and Allermoor (Parrett) are all still running. The associated pumping stations at Currymoor and upstream of Langport are all switched off, and Monks Leaze Clyse is closed, while the spillways run. When they stop and river levels recede, we will resume pumping.

Athelney spillway is running, with floodwater entering Northmoor and Saltmoor. The pumping stations for these moors are operational. As of this morning (Friday 13 January), Somerset County Council Highways have [taken the decision to close the A361](#). Environment Agency staff are in contact with community flood wardens, as well as residents in isolated low-lying properties that could be impacted.

Pre-agreed operational trigger levels for the deployment of additional temporary pumps have been met for Northmoor and Saltmoor. Over the weekend, there will be a lot of activity at Northmoor pumping station while equipment is brought to site. On Monday we plan to install the crane, providing wind speeds are low enough to do this safely. We are also preparing the ground to allow us to install pumps at Currymoor and Dunball.

Upstream of Langport there is water stored on the moors and storage volumes remain high. All pumping stations are off and will not operate again until river levels allow us to resume.

The majority of rivers in the Axe/Brue catchment have peaked and are stable. There is some localised flooding of minor roads and land, but property flooding is not expected in this area at this time.

customer service line **03706 506 506**

incident hotline **0800 80 70 60**

floodline **03459 88 11 88**

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We are monitoring the situation and following our operational procedures. Our teams are out checking our flood defences and clearing debris screens and other assets to ensure correct operation. We are also liaising closely with partners including Somerset County Council, Avon & Somerset Police and other emergency services to ensure that local residents are informed and supported.

Outlook:

A yellow weather warning comes into force at 10pm tonight as another band of rainfall is expected. Anticipated rainfall totals range from 16mm (average) to 32mm (max). Catchments across the area are saturated and likely to respond quickly to this rainfall.

The remainder of the weekend and beginning of next week are currently forecast to be more settled. However, early indications suggest that the weather becomes more unsettled from the middle of next week. Pumping will resume as soon as river levels have receded enough, but it is unclear at this point when that will be.

Our [trigger points plan](#) sets out when we deploy mobile pumps. The Somerset Levels and Moors are designed to store floodwater. However, the £80 million of investment since 2014 in flood risk interventions is helping us manage the flooding better. It allows us to take pre-emptive action to delay the onset of flooding and to evacuate the water more effectively. Together this enables communities to be more resilient and to recover more rapidly from flooding.

In the meantime, people are urged to not enter floodwater on foot or in a vehicle. As well as containing sharp objects, sewage and chemicals, just 30cm of flowing water is enough to move your car. Prepare for flooding in advance and stay up-to-date on weather information and warnings: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding>

We know that heavy rainfall may trigger feelings of anxiety, fear or worry, particularly for those who have been previously affected by flooding. Mindline is 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).

What to do during a flood

There is information to help you on what to do during a flood on the [Somerset Prepared website](#). The key point is to always stay safe, in an immediate flood emergency or where there is a risk to life, follow the advice of the emergency services.