

Somerset Levels and Moors – 3 November 2023

Current situation

Storm Ciarán brought significant impacts to Wessex earlier in the week, particularly in Dorset and South Somerset. We have been working closely with the emergency services and professional partners over the past few days, and our operations teams have been on the ground throughout. We have seen significant impacts along the Dorset coast, and with the ground saturated, river catchments are responding to rainfall extremely quickly.

Most river levels across Wessex are now falling, but some rivers remain high while water moves down through the catchments. At the top end of the Axe/Brue catchment, river levels are low, but further down where there is tidal influence, levels remain high. As is normal, some pumping stations will not run until river levels drop.

Levels are also high towards the lower end of the Parrett / Tone catchment. Pumping stations are running whenever conditions allow, but as is normal, some of them are offline while river levels remain high. Hookbridge spillway is currently running, and Currymoor can only operate once this stops. We will resume pumping as soon as river levels have dropped enough.

Currymoor has filled significantly overnight, and Somerset Council Highways have today taken the decision to close Cutts Road and New Road, with Langport Road having been closed earlier this week. For up-to-date information please see the [Somerset Council website](#). At 12:58 today, due to rising levels in Currymoor we issued a Flood Warning for [Curry Moor and Stan Moor](#). Rainfall over the weekend may trigger other Flood Alerts or Warnings in Wessex.

What happens next

As we reported in our [last briefing](#), we have done a great deal of work to prepare for this winter. We have also made some changes to the trigger levels that determine when we initiate the deployment of the high-volume pumps. We have now met these trigger points for Currymoor, Saltmoor and Northmoor, so we have initiated mobilisation of temporary pumps. We are also looking at the timing and need of pumps at Dunball. We are acting early, in case the unsettled weather continues.

The priority order of pump deployment will be Currymoor, followed by Saltmoor, then Northmoor. This order of pump deployment will maximise our ability to remove water from the moors. The additional pumps can only be used when there is sufficient water at the pumping locations and enough room in the main channels to receive the flood water. Currently, levels are within the capacity of the permanent pumps at both Saltmoor and Northmoor.

Our high-volume pumps are national resources, stored at our depot in Bradney near Bridgwater. Some aspects of pump deployment also require additional equipment from external suppliers. We are now putting into action everything needed for this complex operation, including sourcing and moving equipment, and applying for any permits required, for example for road closures.

With the agreement of partners, we are operating Monksleaze Clyce outside of normal procedures and have opened the gate whilst Allermoor spillway is still running. We did this in the January 2023 event and found it was beneficial to managing flows and removing floodwaters as fast as possible, with minimal risk.

We appreciate that the wet weather can cause significant anxiety for those who have been affected by flooding in the past. Please be assured that we are carrying out these actions to err on the side of caution and to ensure that we are in the best position possible if the unsettled weather continues.

We plan to send out a further briefing next week to keep Somerset Levels and Moors residents and our partners informed.

Public engagement events

As we reported in the last briefing, we are planning two events in December for Somerset Levels & Moors residents. These will be held at:

Burrowbridge Coronation Hall – Tuesday 5th December 2023 from 5pm to 7pm

Moorland Village Hall – Thursday 7th December 2023 from 5pm to 7pm

Outlook

The forecast for the weekend is unsettled, with a band of rain arriving into the Southwest in the early hours of Saturday morning, which will be heavy at times. This will be followed by further blustery showers throughout the afternoon and into Sunday. A Met Office yellow weather warning remains in force for Saturday due to the potential for disruption where heavy rain falls on saturated catchments. Throughout the day on Saturday, rain accumulations are expected to be between 15 and 25mm for most parts, but locally this could be 30-35mm across parts of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, South Somerset and Wiltshire, depending on where showers develop.

The longer-term forecast remains mixed with showers and clearer spells, followed by further organised bands of rain due into the Southwest on Wednesday.

Flooding advice and information

Our advice to the public is to stay safe and not enter floodwater – just 30 cm of fast flowing water can move a car, and just 15 cm of fast flowing water could be enough to knock you off your feet.

- Call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for updates on flooding, to sign up for flood warnings, or to report flooding.
- Go to the [Gov.uk website](#) or search 'know my flood risk' to sign up for Environment Agency flood warnings, receive information on the risk in your area and what to do in a flood.
- Sign up for flood warnings at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings
- Visit the Environment Agency website www.gov.uk/environment-agency which contains information on current river levels and flooding
- Follow us on social media: www.facebook.com/environmentagencywessex
www.twitter.com/EnvAgencySW

Or visit: www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk

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>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

What to do during a flood

Get information on what to do during a flood from:

www.gov.uk/help-during-flood

<http://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding>

www.somersetroversauthority.org.uk/useful-info

Remember: Always stay safe. In an immediate flood emergency or where there is a risk to life, follow the advice of the emergency services.

For all enquiries, or if you would like to be added to the distribution list for Somerset Levels and Moors updates, please email WessexEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk