

The Community Flood Plan for the Parish of Sturminster Marshall

Version updated August 2026



Sign up for flood alerts: www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

Also, to keep up with weather reports:

Public.gov.delivery.com/accounts/UKMETOFFICE/subscriber/new

Distribution List

Flood Wardens

Clerk to Sturminster Marshall Parish Council

Environment Agency Blandford

Dorset Council Emergency Planning Department

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide in the event of flooding in the Parish. It has been created following advice and support from the Environment Agency and is of relevance to the Flood Warden Scheme which has been set up to help and support vulnerable communities.

The report provides a flood wardens guide, lists of useful contact details and will document how residents and flood wardens can prepare, before, during and after a flood event.

Why the parish floods

Sturminster Marshall Parish, particularly the village itself, is vulnerable to flooding due to its location and underlying geology. The village sits on the floor of a broad flat-bottomed valley of the River Stour where it meets the intermittent N. Winterborne- a chalk stream. Much of the floor is composed of river terraces of sands and gravels deposited by the shifting River Stour. These lie on tertiary sands and clays that in turn, are on top of chalk bedrock. Whilst the chalk is a valuable aquifer, its structure is complex, and the sands and gravels are relatively impermeable, and as a result, groundwater levels rise to the surface after prolonged winter precipitation. This is a particular problem in areas adjacent to the N. Winterborne where the water rises as natural springs as can be noted by the place names – Dorset Springs and Springfield Farm.

In summary, the parish experiences:

Fluvial Flooding- flooding caused by the river.

Groundwater flooding- flooding caused when the water table reaches the surface and the ground water stores are full.

Surface water flooding- mainly on roads where the drainage system cannot absorb heavy precipitation and so run off is delayed.

Where the flooding happens

The areas of the parish which experience flooding are those of the **Middle Stour from Sturminster Newton to Sturminster Marshall (111WAFSTOM)** which are in Flood Zone 3 on the Dorset Explorer map. Notably these are the areas around White Mill, Mill Lane to Church Farm entrance, Back Lane, Kings Street, Millmoor Farm and Millmoor House, Front Lane, High Street, Market Lane, Church Street, Newton Road and the main A350 Blandford Road near the Golden Fox public house.

The areas outside the village perimeter that experience flooding are Straight Mile and Newton Farm, Mapperton and Combe Almer.

In the past the village was vulnerable to fluvial flooding predominantly and to protect properties against this, the Environment Agency constructed an earthen bund with weirs and gates on the river to manage the flow and to protect properties in the eastern end of the village – the older part. In recent years groundwater flooding has increasingly become an issue, affecting land and properties along Newton Road, A350, Mapperton, Straight Mile and Combe Almer. **(111FAGWDGW)**

Surface water flooding occurs when the drainage system cannot absorb heavy precipitation and is particularly a problem at the junction of Church Street and the High Street, but it can be a problem outside the primary school at Station Road and on A31 Dorchester Road, near Vines Close Farm shop.

In the winter of 2026, all three types of flooding occurred at the same time. *See Flood Report 2026*

The properties that were affected in 2026 were:

Name of property	Road	Nature of flooding	Length of time affected by flooding event
Cottmans's House	Newton Road	Ground floor and drive	Over a week
Cottman's Cottage	Newton Road	Ground floor and loss of power.	Evacuated
Stourfield	King street	Ground floor	
Maggs Cottage	Newton Road	Pumps in use	
Charborough View	Blandford Road		
Bramley Cottage	Bramley Cottage		Evacuated
Newton Cottage	Newton Road	5cm water throughout ground floor. Pumps in use	Evacuated
Rose Lodge	Newton road	Like above.	Evacuated
New Inn Cottage	Newton Road	Ground floor. Ground water and also overflow from A350	One room affected for over a week
Combe Farm	Combe Almer	Farmhouse flooded	
Mapperton Farm	Mapperton	Ground floor. Pumps in use	

The roads/areas affected in 2026 were:

Road/areas	Nature of flooding	Extent of flooding and consequences
White Mill Bridge	Fluvial	Both sides of the bridge were impassable and the road closed
Mill Lane to Church farm entrance	Fluvial/ground/surface	Impassable to all vehicles, road closed
Church Street/ High Street	Surface	Largely impassable
Back Lane, Kings Street	Fluvial/ground	Passable with care
Front Lane Market Place	Groundwater	Passable with care. Water mainly in the greens
Balls Lane	Groundwater encroachment from Newton Road	Passable with care

Newton Road from A350 to the junction of Kings Street and Churchill Close	Groundwater	Impassable for over a week. Gardens and lower floor of houses inundated
Millmoor House and farm	Fluvial and groundwater	Millmoor House and farm only accessible by 4 wheel drive vehicles
Straight Mile and Newton Farm	Groundwater and overflow from the N Winterborne	Impassable for over a week
A350 at junction of Newton Road and Maggs Bridge	Groundwater flowing down Straight Mile and N Winterborne overflowing onto the road	Traffic control needed for 3 days
A31 at Vines Close	Surface	Traffic control needed for 1 day
Mapperton	Groundwater	House needed to be pumped
Combe Almer	Groundwater and surface water flowing down the valley	
Barton's Ground	Groundwater	Open ground
Maypole Green, Stocks Green	Groundwater	Open ground
Arch ground and the field next to it	Ground water from springs	Open ground
Dorset Springs		

Role of the Flood Warden

Wardens should:

Be knowledgeable of the layout and watercourses of the local area and areas vulnerable to flooding and monitor the watercourses.

Ensure that culverts and ditches are kept clear and report any blockages to the clerk to the Parish Council

Sign up to the Environment Agency's Flood Line Warning Service

Encourage residents to sign up to the Flood line Warning Service

Encourage residents to report incidents of flooding to Dorset Council

Be on hand to give advice to residents to encourage resilience and maintain a visible presence with a high vis jacket if possible and torch if at night. Also carry a mobile phone.

Advise residents on the use of sandbags and how to access material to fill them

Keep residents up to date with the Flood Warden Scheme through literature, web links and social media

Put up signs when flooding occurs

Check on vulnerable residents

If flooding becomes severe prepare to help people move to the Memorial Hall

Provide information/local knowledge on the flooding to the Environment Agency.

Sturminster Marshall Flood Wardens

Name	Area of responsibility	Contact
Helen Fookes	Co-ordinator and Parish Council representative	The floodwardens can be emailed on floodwarden@sturminstermarshall-pc.gov.uk or by phone on 07469780548
Adrian Holden	Market Place. Sandbag deposit	
Robert Stephenson	Balls Lane and village ditches	
Jackie Trenchard	Front Lane	
Terry Pickford	Back Lane, Kings Street, church Street	
Gary Wathen	White Mill Bridge	
Cath Parslow	Mill Lane to Church Farm	
Hilary Palmer	Station Road, Dorset Springs,A31	
Tim Weaver	Millmoor Farm and House, Eastern end of Newton Road	
Bev Wingate	Newton Road, A350, Maggs Bridge, Straight Mile, Newton Farm	
	Mapperton and Combe Almer	

There are three levels of action that can take place during a flood event:

Flood Alert

Flood Warning

Severe Flood warning

Flood Alert

Sturminster Marshall is covered by two Flood Alert Areas:

111WAFSTOM – Middle Stour and Tributaries

111FAGWDGW- Groundwater flooding in the East Dorset Area

When the Environment Agency issues a Flood Alert, it means flooding is possible, within two hours or two days.

Residents should be prepared to act on their personal flood plan. They should have a flood kit of essential items and be monitoring water levels on the Environment Agency website.

The **Parish clerk** should post the Flood Alert on Facebook, the website and the parish noticeboard.

The **Flood Wardens** should monitor groundwater levels at Delcombe Wood borehole and Maggs Bridge. Also observe river water levels at White Mill. Information about these levels is available online.

The flood wardens should liaise with owners of properties that could be affected to ensure precautions are in place.

The flood wardens should keep the parish clerk updated through the flood warden coordinator.

Flood Warning

Sturminster Marshall is covered by three Flood Warning Areas

111FWFSTOM710 Middle Stour from Sturminster Newton to Sturminster Marshall

111FWFSTOL800 Lower Stour from Sturminster Marshall to Christchurch

111FWFSTOM719 Middle Stour at Sturminster Marshall

When a Flood Warning Alert is issued it means flooding is imminent and action is required.

Residents be prepared to move family pets and valuable to a safe place, turn off gas electricity and water if it safe to do so. They should put flood protection equipment in place. Please note that sandbags cannot protect against groundwater flooding

The **Parish clerk** posts the alert on Facebook and the website and liaises with Dorset Highways if roads are flooded and with Wessex Water if there is foul water flooding.

The **Flood Wardens** monitor water levels at White Mill, along Mill Lane, and the height of the N. Winterborne. They look for evidence of groundwater rising particularly along Newton Road and the Straight mile where there are properties at risk

They put out flood warning signs where appropriate and make sandbags available at Adrian's house. Sand will be available in the Memorial Hall car park.

They inform vulnerable residents of the Flood Warning and be prepared to assist with preparations to cope with the onset of flooding.

The Police/Dorset Highways need to arrange road closures if needed but in the interim, road closed signs can be put in place by the wardens, but there must be no barriers to prevent movement through the area as this is not a legal activity.

They report the flooding to the Environment Agency and encourage residents to individually inform outside agencies as well

They notify Dorset Highways of their actions

The Parish Council Emergency Committee will be convened and ensure there are sandbags and filling material available for distribution. They provide feedback to Dorset Council and the Environment Agency and Wessex Water. They contact the Memorial Hall in preparation of evacuation of vulnerable people from the flooded area.

Severe Flood Warning

This is issued when there is a significant risk of danger to life caused by flooding

Residents remain in a safe place and cooperate with the emergency services.

Flood Wardens and the Parish Council Emergency Committee will assist the emergency services where it is necessary with evacuation and will provide support to DC staff when looking after people.

Once the outside agencies announce it is safe to return, residents may go back to their properties. They should also contact their insurance companies as soon as possible.

Flood Response

The level of response to flooding will depend on what is being affected. There are five levels of response:

Priority	Flooding affected	Response
1	People	Action to protect life
2	Houses	Action to protect life and property
3	Roads	Action to protect life and property
4	Commercial property	Possible action to protect property
5	Gardens/Agricultural land	No action

Priority will be given to the old and infirm. The classification of the road will affect its priority and will the nature of the commercial property. For example, priority measures will be taken to avoid environmental pollution from stored chemicals.

It must be emphasised that residents need to develop resilience if their property is at risk and take measure to mitigate that risk. There is advice available from the Environment Agency who also run workshops to help increase awareness of what can be done. The councils, both parish and municipal are limited in what assistance they can provide.

It is important that ditches are maintained to ensure flow of water and to facilitate run off. Ditches are the responsibility of the riparian owner who needs to see they are always clear.

Outside Agencies

The Environment Agency has responsibility for maintaining natural watercourses and responding to pollution incidents.

Dorset Council has responsibility for managing roads and highways to maintain safe conditions on the roads. They clear blockages in highway drainage systems and clear blocked gullies and road channels.

Wessex Water has responsibility for maintaining the water supply and managing foul water flooding. They are responsible for flooding by groundwater and small brooks. They have the capacity to undertake emergency over pumping where necessary. They will provide safe drinking water and portable toilets when needed.

SSE has responsibility for maintaining electricity and gas supplies.

Openreach/BT has responsibility for Wifi

Dorset fire Service assist with rescue and be on hand if needed.

The Parish Council are responsible for disseminating information in line with the Environment Agencies Flood Line Service. They provide advice on where to access sandbags if needed and liaise with the flood wardens.

Useful numbers

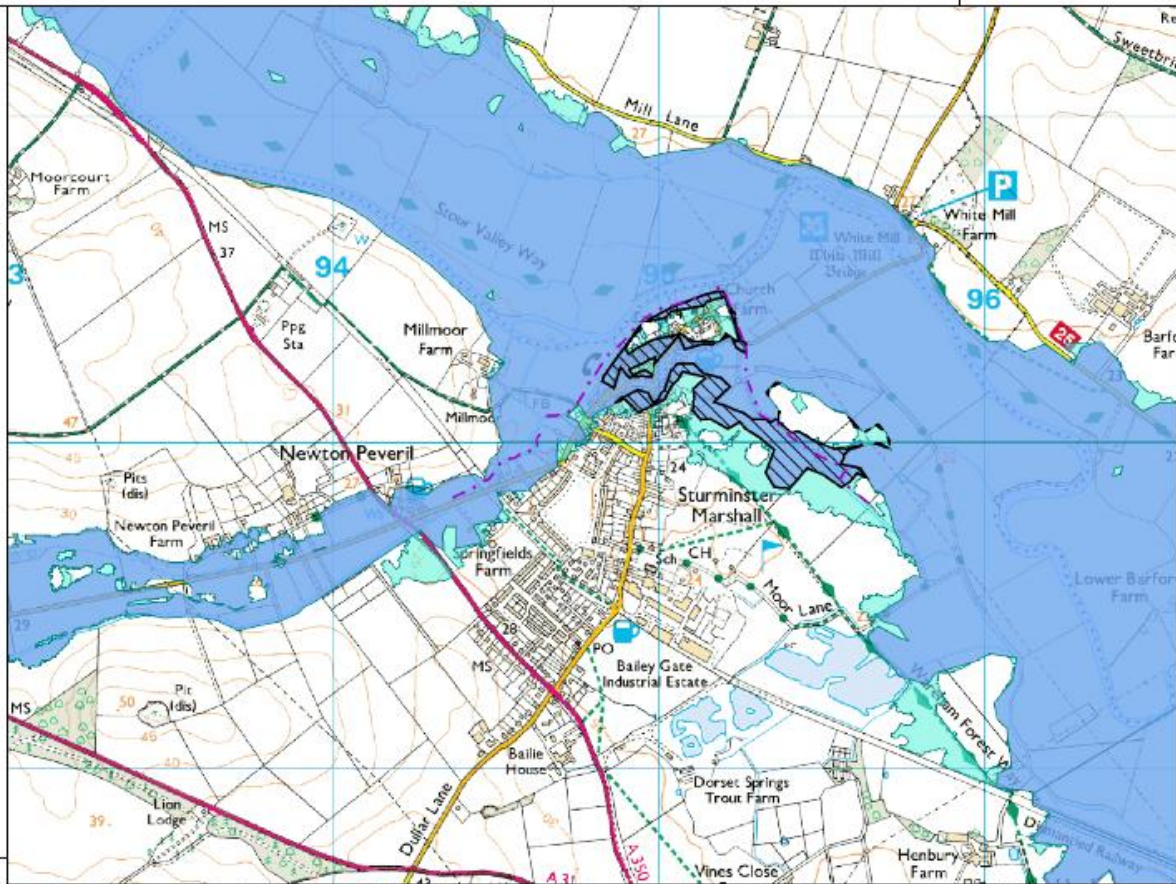
Organisation	Number	E mail
Flood Line	0345 988 1188	www.gov.uk/flood
Environment Agency	0800 80 70 60	wessexenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Dorset Council	01305 221 000	
Wessex Water	0345 600 4600	www.wessexwater.co.uk
Scottish and Southern Electricity and Gas	0800 111 999	105 for powercut
Openreach/BT	0800 800 150	
Memorial Hall	01258 858447	
Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue	0172 2269 1000	
Dorset Police	01202 222222	101 if not an emergency
Parish Clerk	07569780548	parishclerk@sturminstermarshall-pc.gov.uk

Sturminster Marshall Flood Map



Legend

- Flood Map - Defences
- Areas Benefiting from Flood Defences
- Flood Map - Flood Storage Areas
- Flood Map - Flood Zone 3
- Flood Map - Flood Zone 2



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