

AUTUMN LEAVES: Blocked drains and flooding



Autumn leaves blocking drains can be a major flood risk!

As we enter the autumn months, it is important to be aware that there is an increased risk of surface water drains becoming blocked, increasing the likelihood of surface water or pluvial flooding.

If residents and business owners are vigilant and regularly clear leaves from outside their properties, they could reduce the likelihood of flooding occurring in their local area.



With climate change becoming more and more apparent, extreme weather events are likely to lead to drainage systems becoming overwhelmed and surface water flash flooding becoming more common.



Surface water flooding is often amplified by the increase in impermeable surfaces from urban developments and infrastructure in towns and cities. These surfaces increase surface water runoff at times of heavy rainfall, contributing to flood risk.



Our drainage systems are designed to quickly transport the runoff to nearby rivers and streams. But if they become blocked with leaves it can lead to a localised flash flood instead.

It is the responsibility of your highways authority to keep road gullies clear and free from blockages. Your highways authority will either be your district council (providing it is a unitary authority), or the County Council.



While drainage departments often clear drains and gullies, in reality, a cleared drain could be blocked with leaves again in a matter of hours. With Climate Change becoming more and more apparent, extreme weather events and flash flooding will become more common and are likely to lead to the overwhelming of drainage systems.



Therefore, if we all spent some time clearing leaves from our drains during the autumn months, this will be of huge benefit to your local area and will help to reduce the risk of flooding.