

CASE STUDY: LANCASHIRE - SUNDERLAND POINT, LANCASTER

OVERVIEW

Sunderland, commonly known as Sunderland Point, is a small village among the marshes, on a windswept peninsula between the mouth of the River Lune and Morcambe Bay.

It is home to approximately 70 residents in about 35 properties. The only access road is cut off by tidal water twice a day, for up to 4 and a half hours a day.

All villagers are aware of the risk of flooding and have worked together to ensure that adequate defences are in place, and that everyone is aware of any flood warning or high tides.



Images provided by the Environment Agency

KEY OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

A DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) grant funded a community led property level protection scheme for those deemed to be at high risk, including flood gates or storm boards for doorways which slot into permanent fixings.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Community Emergency Plan has been created in partnership with residents, emergency services, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Coastguard, Lancaster City Council and the Environment Agency.

CHALLENGES

Due to the only access road being cut off twice a day, a high level off-road emergency route through farmland was identified for use in some emergencies.



Image provided by the Environment Agency

BENEFITS

In the most recent serious flood event in December 2013, whilst other areas and property were flooded locally, no properties in the village were flooded. The installation of the property level protection proved successful, although some minor damage did occur.

Residents monitor the tide table and Environment Agency and Met office guidance and are aware of the combination of factors which make their properties at risk.

If there is a flood alert or flood warning, residents prepare by mobilising their property defences; inserting storm boards, closing flood gates, covering air bricks and removing anything at risk from the outside of their properties, including moving cars to higher ground.

They ensure all neighbours are prepared and aware of any alert or warning and help each other out to ensure every property has its protection measures in place. The community response is well rehearsed, one property has storm boards mounted and labelled on a garden wall, which can be deployed within minutes.

Many residents have flood kits which they have put together including first aid kit, phone charger, radio and a torch/lamp. Individual properties have their own flood plans which they follow and this has improved their resilience to future flooding events.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Monitoring is very important; get to know what the forecast means for your location and record regularly.
- Don't be afraid of the fact that you flood; the residents in Sunderland Point are aware of the risk and are prepared accordingly.
- Have an agreed plan of how to respond to forecasts efficiently and to evacuate if necessary to an agreed safe and accessible location.



Images provided by the Environment Agency

SOURCE

Environment Agency - enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk