

CASE STUDY: THORNTON FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Thornton Flood Action Group (FLAG) was initially formed from members of Thornton Action Group (TAG) when they were contacted by Wyre Council who were aiming to start flood groups across the Wyre area. Two members of TAG already attended Wyre Flood Forum. Thornton FLAG currently has 8 flood wardens living in diverse areas of Thornton.

Getting Started

The first task was to complete the Thornton Flood Risk Summary Sheet which was done in association with a Wyre Council Officer. They then found out more about the area, such as the location of dykes and culverts, where the water came from and how it flowed through Thornton, which was helped by walking around the area and talking to local residents about historical flood events.

They worked with the Environment Agency who provided local flood maps, and with Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council to find out who was responsible for maintaining the dykes and culverts.

The whole process was a steep learning curve for the group and it has taken a few years to gain much of the knowledge they now have.

How the Group Works

The group meet to discuss issues, share information via email, and investigate issues by visiting problem areas. They see their role as a partnership with the agencies and residents, and have had regular meetings and site visits which different agencies have attended to discuss problems.

During heavy rainfall, group members are out and about checking levels in the dykes and will contact the emergency engineer with concerns if necessary.

They have a Facebook Page (Thornton Flood Action Group) where they post helpful information. The general public send queries via Facebook which the FLAG either answer or pass on to Wyre Council for inclusion in the Wyre Flood Forum. The Forum has helped the group to gain extra knowledge, share their experiences and form relationships with other groups.

They have found that they work well in an informal way, and haven't adopted a constitution or bank account which means there is no pressure on group members.



Five of the team outside an Environment Agency Incident Response Vehicle.

Challenges

- Conflict with various agencies over watercourse maintenance and differences in opinion over what needed to be done.
- Flooding in November 2017 severely affected local residents.
- Coronavirus has meant they can't have meetings as usual, and the group are looking forward to being able to meet up again and continue their work.

Successes

- Two drop-in sessions at Thornton Library, supported by Wyre Council, Newground and Floodsafe Projects, for residents to learn about the area's flood risk.
- Formed good working relationships with all of the agencies in the area.
- Highlighted issues with the Stanah Pumping Station which removes excess water during high tides and heavy rainfall.
- Helped encourage construction of a drain in a new residential development to divert rainfall to the river rather than the surface water drainage system.
- The area is now in a much improved condition than before the group started.