

## CASE STUDY: WHALLEY EARLY FLOOD WARNING TRIAL HAILED A SUCCESS

Flood Resilience Lead Director of Whalley & Billington Flood Action Group, Gillian Darbyshire, recently participated in the trial of a prototype Early Flood Warning system installed on the Whalley Culvert River, crossing beneath King Street, alongside Brookside Close.

The new Early Warning system is highly sensitive to changes in river levels, sending data every 30 minutes during peak times, complimenting the Environment Agency alerts, which are currently given every 3 hours. As we all know, every extra minute of forewarning is vital. The sooner you know about the changing water levels, the quicker you can act to protect your property and its contents.

Important aspects of this new system are its accuracy and high sample rates, and that it provides data in real-time, providing property owners the peace of mind of knowing exactly when they need to take those all-important preventative actions.

Gillian said: “As the Whalley Culvert has previously flooded up to five times a year, the only way to stop it is by monitoring and clearing it. Previously, we’ve had a camera on it but, as this doesn’t give us an alert, you have to be watching it all the time for it to be of any use to us. This new technology and early warning system will be a game changer in our flood management toolkit.”

Gillian continued: “The new alert system went off on Boxing Day evening at around 11pm (2020). As many people know, water levels tend to rise later on at night, after a lot of rain has fallen. The new system alerted our flood wardens early on, which enabled them to get to the Culvert and clear it before it flooded the village.”

The trials are being conducted by flood specialists and UK Government Framework Contractors, Watertight International and Previsico – global flood forecasting experts. Watertight’s Operations Director, Mark Arrowsmith, said: “These trials have worked fantastically well and will offer a real lifeline to all the residents and business owners of Whalley, once a final product is available”.

Whalley Flood Warden, Andy Davis, said: “The higher frequencies of these alert warnings are perfect. It gave me enough time to convince myself to go out in the rain, even with a belly full of Christmas pud, and check. Within 25 minutes of the warning, I was there, leaving my cold beer behind, with about 300mm still to go before the Culvert over topped.”

Although the final version of this new early warning system is still a few months away, the plans are to make it available to community groups, residents and business owners on a subscription type basis.

To find out more details about this flood telemetry system and how it could benefit your community, contact Watertight International via their website at [www.watertightint.com](http://www.watertightint.com).

**By: Carl Jarvis - Watertight International**

**Date: 23-03-2021**

