

The Old Court House, Cockermouth (also known as the Honest Lawyer building)

Update: 27 October 2023

Installation of Stop Logs

We are currently using sandbags to block flood water from flowing on to Main Street at the Old Courthouse in Cockermouth. We are aiming to replace the sandbags with stop logs and our contractors will be on site next week to start work on this. Stop logs are aluminium bars that slot into frames to block flood water and can be removed when not needed.

We have spoken to the specific property owners affected and have their agreement to install the stop logs. We are not anticipating the stop logs will have any impact on access for the wider community.

We are closely monitoring weather forecasts and will use the stop logs and issue flood warnings as needed.

We continue to be in contact with Cumberland Council about their plans to stabilise the building. This will help us to minimise the impact of any potential changes to future flood risk.

Further Information

If you have any further questions about flood risk at Cockermouth, please contact the Environment Agency at:

Inforequests.cmlnc@environment-agency.gov.uk

*The previous community updates are copied below, as you may wish to refer to them again.

Update: 20 October 2023

Temporary Change to the Flood Warning Threshold

In response to the heightened concerns around any potential impacts of flooding from the partial collapse of the Old Courthouse building, we have temporarily lowered our flood warning threshold for the following flood warning area - Rivers Cocker and Derwent at Cockermouth, Bridge Street, Crown Street, High Sand Lane and Main Street.

Our aim in doing this, is to allow local residents additional lead time in advance of a flood event. In particular, we are aware that some vulnerable residents may require more notice to take any necessary action.



Those registered to receive the flood warning do not need to take any action – they will continue to receive the flood warning as per their Flood Warning System registration. We have simply lowered the threshold on the River Cocker at the South Street Footbridge gauge which determines if and when the warning would be issued.

Please be reassured that we have put in procedures for monitoring Cockermouth closely so that we can organise any operational response at the earliest opportunity.

Further Information

If you have any further questions about flood risk at Cockermouth, please contact the Environment Agency at:

Inforequests.cmblnrc@environment-agency.gov.uk

Update: 18 October 2023

Partial Collapse of the Honest Lawyer Building

The Honest Lawyer Building along the River Cocker in Cockermouth partially collapsed on 8 October 2023.

We know the community will be concerned about the impact of the Honest Lawyer building collapse on flood risk to Cockermouth. We would like to re-assure you that we have extra staff at this location assessing any impact on flood risk and making plans to manage any additional risk if needed.

We are the lead authority for managing flood risk from the Rivers Derwent and Cocker in Cockermouth. Cumberland Council is the lead authority for the stability of the building and for any health and safety issues there may be due to the building's partial collapse. We have been talking to Cumberland Council about the impact of the collapsed building on flood risk to Cockermouth. We have also discussed the impact of any further collapse with them.

Rainfall and Flood Risk in Cockermouth

We are monitoring the weather forecast closely. Rain is expected in Cumbria on Thursday and Friday this week. Before this rainfall, we will be testing the use of sandbags to block any possible routes where we consider flood water could flow into the town at the Honest Lawyer location. This will help us understand where we need to build sandbag walls in advance of the rain currently forecast for later this week and in the future as needed. The sandbag walls will be taken down when they are no longer needed, but the sandbags will remain on site for any future use.

Over the next couple of months, we are planning to use stoplogs instead of sandbags if they are needed. Stoplogs are aluminium bars that slot into a frame to stop the flow of flood water. They are removed afterwards. We have spoken to property owners and landowners who will be affected by the sandbag walls and stoplogs.

We will continue to work with Cumberland Council as they put in place plans to manage the stability of the building. We will re-evaluate our plans to manage flood risk as needed.



We are not currently planning to remove the rubble in the river from the Honest Lawyer building, having carefully assessed its impact on flood risk. We will re-assess this if the building collapses further. We are developing plans to remove the rubble if our assessment of its impact on flood risk changes.

In the longer term, we are reviewing the structural integrity of the flood risk management scheme in Cockermouth and repairing it where necessary. We are also considering the current standard of protection that the scheme offers and are looking at potential improvements, both in the town and the wider catchment.

Further Information

If you have any further questions about flood risk at Cockermouth, please contact the Environment Agency at:

Inforequests.cmbinc@environment-agency.gov.uk

