

Impact Of Flooding on Residents of Willoughby

Willoughby is regularly subject to minor flooding, generally limited to the area at the lower end of Main Street at the junction with Lower Street and Moor Lane. Serious flooding rarely happens and, when it does, the cause is attributable to ingress of canal water from the Oxford Canal. The most serious flooding recorded resulted from the catastrophic failure of the canal in 1947, causing it to empty through the village. This caused flooding of properties in Main Street and Lower Street. The worst that can be expected is a depth of water of the order of 600mm on the roadway in the lower regions of Main Street. Such an incident, although unpleasant, will not result in a raging torrent in the village. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that any significant flooding will result in swiftly moving water along the line of the village stream itself. More than 50% of flood related deaths in this country are due to someone driving or walking into floodwater.

- 150mm (6 inches) of fast-moving water can knock adults off their feet and sweep them away, potentially into deeper water.
- 300mm (12 inches) of moving water can float a small car.
- 450- 600mm (18-24 inches) of moving water can carry away larger vehicles including vans and SUVs.

If you come to an area that is covered by water, you may not know its depth or condition of the road or ground underneath. This is especially true in darkness. Be safe – any time you are fronted with a flooded area with which you are unfamiliar - **don't drown**.

One of the problems created by flooding in Willoughby is access to the village. Flooding, as a result of prolonged rainfall covering a wide local area, results in roads into the village becoming impassable. When this happens during the day this can create a problem for many residents returning from work etc. Residents who are out of the village will need to know what routes into the village are still passable. For instance the Leam Bridge at Sawbridge quickly becomes impassable for vehicles returning from the West as does the A45 at the old station bridge, if the canal tops its banks. The crossroads at the bottom of Longdown Lane has been known to be a problem in some circumstances.

Cars entering the village may have to be parked up in safe places when normal access to properties is not possible due to floodwater. (This may affect most properties in Main Street below the village car park.)

Flooding in the village creates an inconvenience to most residents, there being few properties that are at risk of flooding under the most severe conditions. Those that are affected will not be subject to life threatening situations whilst remaining in their homes and will only need to evacuate, if power is unavailable for a significant time or conditions are unpleasant.

(Electrical note:- Distribution boards are generally high enough to be unaffected by floodwater and circuits, which have individually tripped or caused a total board trip, due to part of that circuit being affected by moisture, should be left isolated. This will normally allow lights to be used together with any socket outlets on unaffected circuits. Any electrical appliance which has been in water must be unplugged, whilst the power is isolated, and not used again until it has been PAT tested.