

Following the attendance of Cllrs Price and Couchman at flood events by the Environment Agency, the attendance of Colin Hall at our meeting in June 2019, and the subsequent receipt of a Draft Flood Plan for Prudhoe at our Ordinary Meeting in October, the Council agreed to go back to the Environment Agency with questions.

These related to the recruitment of Flood Wardens and the storage and allocation of sand bags. The Council hoped to clarify their expected role in any aspect of the Prudhoe Flood Plan.

In response Colin Hall, Community Engagement Officer for the Environment Agency advised that although they have recruited two flood wardens they would require more.

“We have managed to secure two flood wardens for the community, but will require more. As stated at the meeting I attended I am more than happy to attend public events, talk to community/church groups and post articles in local magazines, etc, to try and recruit new wardens for the area. The hardest role to recruit for is that of the Lead Warden and Admin (responsible for updating the plan), these are appointed from your own community. once these are in place, we usually start to gather momentum. If the Town Council can help in anyway with letting me know of any events, contacts for groups or local publications it just gets the process running a lot faster. The biggest thing to tell people is that this is not a hugely intrusive role and other than a few meetings a year, the only time they will be required is in a flooding event.”

With reference to the storage and allocation of sandbags, Colin responded that this was entirely at the Council's or Community's discretion.

“I mentioned sandbags as the majority of communities use sandbags as a means to help alleviate flooding. The reason I highlighted it is because if the community wants to use sandbags then this would be something the Town Council/Community Groups would have to finance. It is entirely up to yourselves, as a community as to whether you do this.”

Following the response from Colin, the Clerk wrote back asking for information relating to the requirements and role of a Flood Warden and the roles within, and suggesting that Scouts, Guides and Cadets were directly targeted for volunteers.

The role of a Flood Warden was provided as well as sand bag information ‘How to use them properly’. Colin suggested that the commitment is not hugely intensive; two meetings/year once the plan is established and then active in the event of a flood. In Morpeth, the Lead Warden is a Town Councillor who is the main point of contact for NCC/EA and also calls registered wardens to activate them when needed.

Colin has offered to come back to the Council and speak to anyone interested.

I have attached some information on the role of a flood warden and forms for volunteers to complete. The main thing to tell people is that it's not a hugely intensive role, a couple of meetings a year once the plan and group is established as the main bulk of the role is when a flood event occurs. The role of a lead warden could easily be taken by someone from the town council, as in Morpeth, and would involve acting as the main point of contact for the EA and NCC and then calling round the registered wardens to activate them when needed. I am more than happy to speak to the TC and anyone interested again and to continue to do so until you feel confident.

I have also, attached information on sandbags that you can share with the TC and can again answer any questions raised.

I think the areas you have given me for possibly recruiting new wardens are brilliant.