

Community Flood Briefing note for Bradford on Avon

October 2026

Bradford on Avon is a historic market town in Wiltshire that has a long history of flooding.

This briefing summarises the current situation in Bradford on Avon, and what is being proposed to improve community resilience to flooding.

Improving Resilience to the impacts of flooding

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

The Environment Agency currently have an opportunity to progress a Property Flood Resilience project for eligible residential homes in Bradford on Avon. This is looking to start survey work in 2027.

The existing project funding arrangements do not currently extend to commercial properties. We recognise the importance of supporting local businesses and are assessing whether the new flood funding arrangements could offer an alternative funding route. This may require the development of a new or revised project, and at present we cannot provide certainty regarding funding or delivery timescales.

Our priority is to retain the ability to begin supporting residents from 2027, while taking all reasonable steps to determine whether support for businesses can be secured through a different funding route.

Community bridge



Bradford on Avon Town Council is exploring proposals for a new pedestrian bridge and has asked whether flood-risk funding could contribute towards its delivery.

We are supportive of exploring whether flood-risk funding could contribute to the pedestrian bridge and have identified local levy as a potential route. However, this would require a successful funding bid through Wiltshire Council, and at this stage there is no certainty that any funding will be available.

General Enquiries
Telephone: 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Other issues relating to flood risk in the community

Road Closure procedure



During severe flooding, many roads across Wiltshire can be affected at the same time. Resources may be stretched, so it may not be possible to assess or formally close every flooded road immediately.

Formal Road closures must be made through the appropriate legal powers. Wiltshire Council, as Highway Authority, and the police have roles in managing road closures.

Report a problem with flooding or drainage - Wiltshire Council
Tel: 0300 4560100 or report online at my.wiltshire.gov.uk/road-drains-manhole

Communities should report dangerous conditions but should not attempt to create or enforce their own road closures.

Most importantly, a road that is not formally closed should not be assumed to be safe. Never drive or walk through floodwater where it may be unsafe.

Maintenance of the River

We annually maintain the riverbanks before periods of higher river flows. This work has been carried out for many years, and we will continue to support it and seek funding to keep it a priority.



We have been approached by the Town Council to see if we can support the community in doing some limited maintenance. This will need to be explored in more detail to ensure that any proposed work can be done safely and is not detrimental to the other wildlife interests in this area.

Please note that whilst it is understandable to look at silt around a bridge and think that removing it would create more space for flood water. It is important to understand that during a significant flood on the Bristol Avon, the main issue is the large volume of water flowing through the river from the wider catchment and removing relatively small amounts of silt around a bridge would create a very limited amount of extra space, which would quickly be filled as river levels rise.

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Desilting can sometimes be useful where deposits are causing a specific problem, such as affecting a structure or significantly obstructing the flow of water. From our understanding desilting around the town bridge will not notably reduce flood levels or prevent properties from flooding during a major event where the old bridge arches are the main constraint.

Some residents have suggested 'dredging' the river to reduce flood risk. However, in Bradford on Avon the riverbed is largely made up of hard natural material rather than accumulated sediment. Deepening the channel would therefore require removing part of the riverbed itself. While this might lower water levels in one location, it could also allow water to flow downstream more quickly, potentially increasing flood risk elsewhere. It could also affect local groundwater levels and create wider environmental impacts. For these reasons, dredging is not considered a simple or low-risk solution to flooding in this area.

Flood Preparedness

Flooding is a natural occurrence, and we cannot eliminate the risk of flooding. Our National Flood Risk Strategy calls for the nation to embrace a broad range of resilience actions and measures increasing flood awareness and preparedness which enables communities to minimise impacts and recover more quickly from flood events. In all locations we would initially advise individuals and communities to:

Check your current and long-term flood risk here:

Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk);

We recommend residents and businesses look at the advice on preparing for flooding at:

Prepare for flooding: Protect yourself from future flooding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Be Flood Ready (www.befloodready.uk)

Please sign up to receive any flood alerts and flood warnings for your local area here:

Check for flooding in England - GOV.UK (check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk)

Visit the Met Office (website or download their App) **for local forecasts and weather warnings:**
www.metoffice.gov.uk

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