

Flooding: Information for Cley Residents

Cley has suffered sea flooding in the past, perhaps most memorably in 1953 when the English east and Dutch north coasts were badly flooded by a North Sea surge and lives were lost, although not in Cley. All low-lying areas of the village were flooded, and rowing boats were used on the High Street. The likelihood of surge conditions arising in the future is perhaps increasing, given the predicted effects of climate change, but the chance of this leading to widespread flooding in Cley, with risk to life, is much less than in 1953 for a number of reasons, outlined below:

1 Defences.

The main part of the village now benefits from a flood defence based on earth banks and a gate which allows the river flow to be closed off if flooding is threatened. This was effective in the event of December 2013 even though the water level reached was slightly higher than that in 1953. The risk of flooding in this part of the village is low other than in truly exceptional weather and tide conditions.

East Cley (Coast Road, east of Cley Old Hall) is outside the main flood defence and is therefore under threat of flooding from water overtopping the shingle ridge and covering the marshes. All the properties likely to be at risk have now been equipped with commercially produced board systems which, if fitted, should prevent flooding of the properties. Residents might however be inconvenienced by loss of access by car along the A149.

2 Advance Notice.

The systems in place at the Environment Agency, incorporating the expertise of meteorologists and oceanographers, provide warning of impending threats well in advance. These forecasts give remarkably accurate predictions of expected water levels; these allow actions to be taken at village level which are appropriate to the threat.

3 Wardens.

Cley has an established and tested team of flood wardens to help villagers react to the threat of flooding. All properties in the parts of the village at risk have wardens allocated to them. In an emergency the Wardens act in consultation with the Senior Flood Wardens who, in turn, are in contact with the North Norfolk District Council and the Emergency Services via a central command post set up for the purpose. This allows advice on any action by residents to be related to the threat to particular properties, taking into account truly local circumstances. The EA automated phone message cannot take account of detailed geography in a village and may cause unnecessary alarm to some of those receiving the calls.

The Senior Flood Wardens have made strenuous efforts to make residents aware of these arrangements by letter to each property at risk. If however there are still matters of concern, they are willing to discuss them with residents, but preferably at a time 'out of season' and not when the automated phone message from the EA has just been received.

In summary, arrangements are in place at District and, more particularly, at village level to communicate with Cley residents before and during a flooding threat. Those residents judged to be at risk in an emergency will be contacted by Flood Wardens by telephone or in person and appropriate advice given.

If you need to hear from us, you will hear from us.

Roger Brownsword (tel: 740862)

On behalf of the Senior Flood Wardens, Cley