Pevensey Bay Flood Prevention & Preparedness Project

Evaluation Summary Report

Project Background

The first phase of this project was the pilot scheme undertaken in Hellingly during September 2014. Full details of the project's origin and methodology can be found in the Hellingly Evaluation report.

For the second phase of the project, the three communities at the highest risk of flooding or the effects of flooding in the Wealden district were targeted; these being Forest Row, Uckfield and Pevensey Bay. Uckfield was the first of these three projects to be undertaken in December 2014, full details of which can be found in the Uckfield evaluation report. Pevensey Bay was the next to take place.

Project Objectives

- Raise awareness amongst Pevensey Bay residents potentially at risk about flood prevention and preparedness.

Project Activities

- Make contact with people living in properties that are identified as at the most risk of flooding or the effects of flooding situated within the Sea Front Flood Warning Area in sectors Coastal C, Coastal D and Coastal E as identified in the Sussex Resilience Forum's 2011 Uckfield Flood Plan.

Project in Operation

The methodology has stayed largely the same as in the previous two locations, with the purpose of the visits being to offer advice and guidance about flood risk and deliver the key resources (leaflets and fridge magnets). Wealden District Council (WDC) and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's (ESFRS) Volunteer Service organised by 3VA worked successfully in partnership again on this project.

The Pevensey Bay Flood Plan was used to identify the properties at most risk. According to the plan the area at most risk is the Coastal strip – the Wealden sectors of which are Cc (Coastal C), Dc (Coastal D) and Ec (Coastal E). The Flood Plan maps illustrate the area 'at most risk' within these sectors as the 'Pevensey Sea

Front Flood Warning Area' – there are 278 residential properties within this area in sectors Cc, Dc and Ec.

- Sector Cc – 184 residential properties.
- Sector Dc – 77 residential properties.
- Sector Ec – 17 residential properties.

The visits took place in three phases, and were arranged subject to volunteer availability.

1. The first visits took place on 06/02/15. A total of six volunteers participated and delivered the resources to a total of 116 properties. Two WDC officers attended to supply resources, give a briefing and answer questions.
2. On the 14/04/15, four volunteers participated and delivered the resources to a total of 58 properties. One WDC officer attended to supply resources, give a briefing and answer questions.
3. The last 104 visits were undertaken by one pair of volunteers who had attended the previous phases, and were happy to finish the visits independently, so a briefing from WDC was deemed unnecessary. The volunteers undertook the visits on the 28/04/15 and 12/05/15.

Where residents were out, a pack was posted through the door comprising of an information letter, a leaflet and a fridge magnet. After each successful visit (when a resident was available to talk), an evaluation form was completed by the volunteer.

During property visits residents were made aware of their own responsibilities and encouraged to call the most relevant number on the fridge magnet supplied in the event of flooding. Residents were encouraged to register for the Floodline Warnings Direct Service, and to look online for flood prevention products or contact the National Flood Forum for further advice.

As a supplement to the project, one WDC officer also attended the Pevensey Coast Defence Limited (PCDL) Annual Flood Forum on 08/04/15. This was an opportunity to promote the project, distribute additional resources to interested residents and network with Emergency Planning Officers form neighbouring authorities.

This report summarises the results of the collated data.

- All 278 residential addresses received the key resources.
- Of the intended 278 door-to-door visits, residents were available to talk in 25% of cases (70).
- 57% (40) were already prepared for flooding, and 39% (27) felt confident following the visit.
- 96% (67) found the visit useful.
- In a serious flood event, 56% (39) would stay with friends/family, 36% (25) would make use of the Emergency Rest Centre provided by the Council, and just 9% (6) would still remain in their property.
- 20% (14) had experienced flooding.
- 46% (32) were already registered for the EA Floodline Warnings Direct Service, 40% (28) were not registered previous to the visit, but said they would register now, and just 14% (10) were not signed up, and were not interested in doing so.

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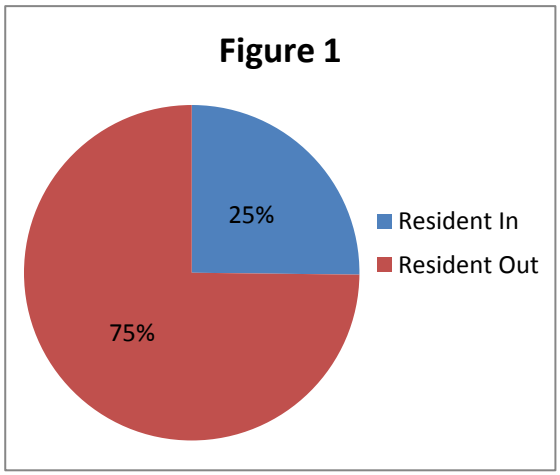
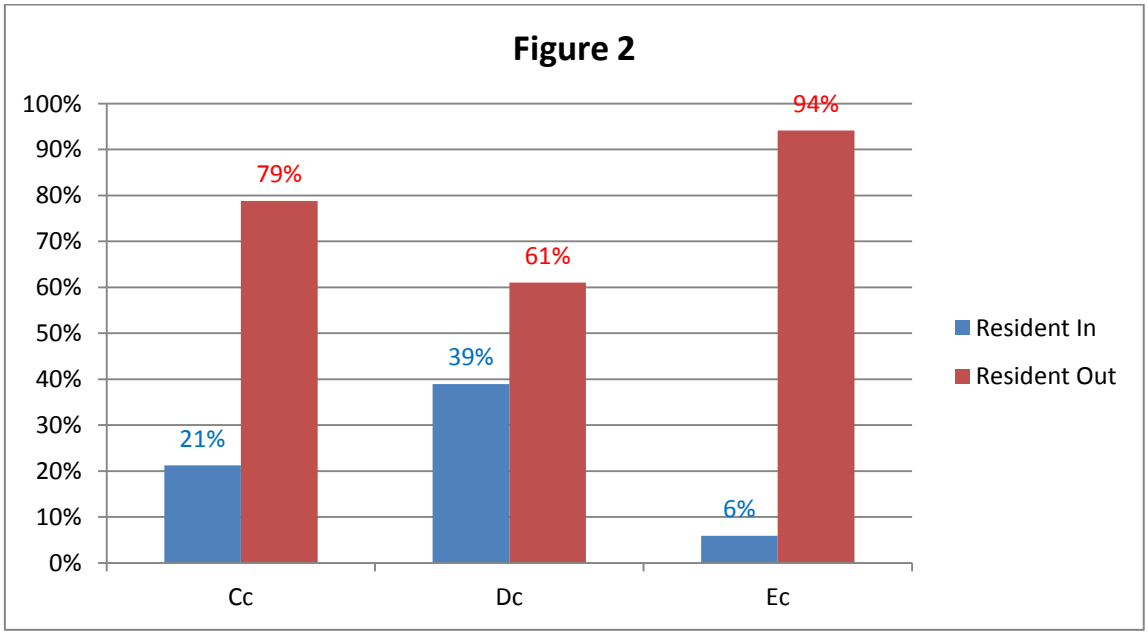
Pevensey Bay Flood Prevention & Preparedness Project Evaluation Form Results

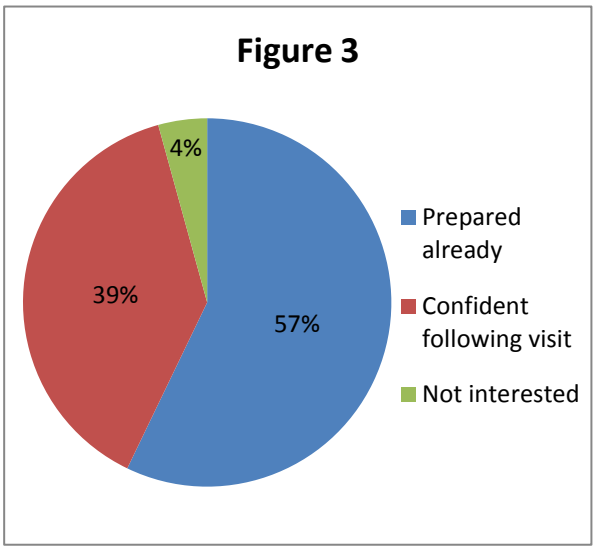
Of the total 278 residential properties to visit, 25% (70) of residents were in and available to talk.



As Figure 2 shows, the number of people who were in varied between the three sectors quite dramatically; whilst the vast majority of residents in Sector Ec were out (94%), 'in-rates' did rise as high as 39% (30) in Sector Dc. As mentioned earlier, visits were made on multiple days and it is noteworthy that the weather did vary and volunteers reported a positive correlation between good weather and a higher engagement rate.

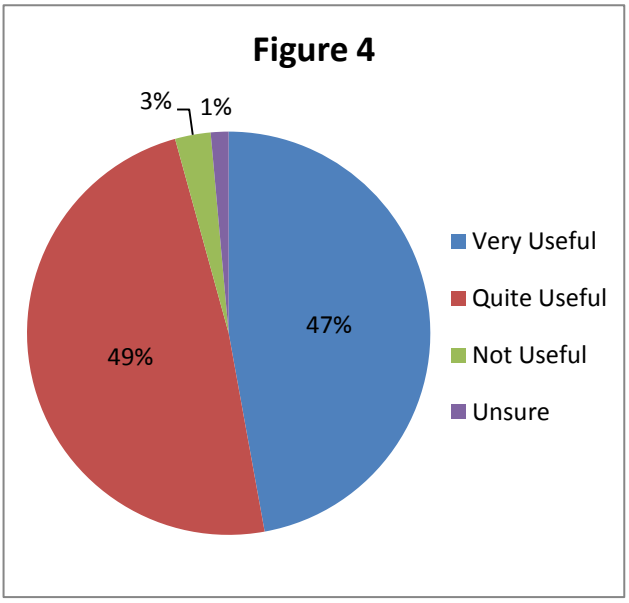


Following each visit, volunteers noted whether (in their opinion) the resident was prepared for flooding already, unprepared prior to the visit but more confident following the visit, or unprepared and not interested. Figure 3 shows the results.



A 57% majority of residents (40) were already prepared for flooding; this was expected due to the area's relative vulnerability to flooding. A significant 39% (27) of residents were judged to be unprepared prior to the visit but more confident following it – a clear success for the project. Just 4% (3) of residents were deemed to be unprepared and not interested.

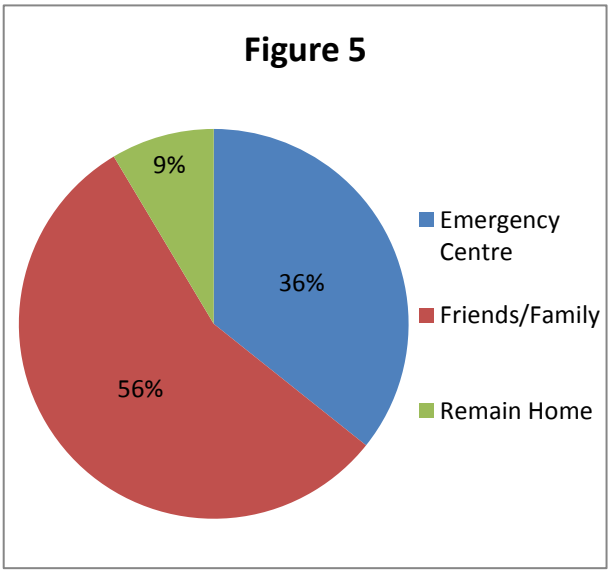
Volunteers asked residents about whether they found the visits valuable, and Figure 4 shows the overall results.



Another clear success for the project - a combined majority of 96% (67) found the visits useful – 47% (33) very useful and 49% (34) quite useful. Just 3% (2) didn't find the visit useful at all; possibly because they felt they were already aware of the situation and were prepared.

Residents were asked where they would go if there was a serious flood event and they were required to evacuate; would they make use of the Council provided Emergency Centre, stay with friends or family, or remain at their property despite the advice?

A majority of (56%) residents (39) said they would stay with friends or family. More than in Uckfield, 36% (25) said they would make use of the Council Emergency Centre, and just 9% (6) would remain at home.



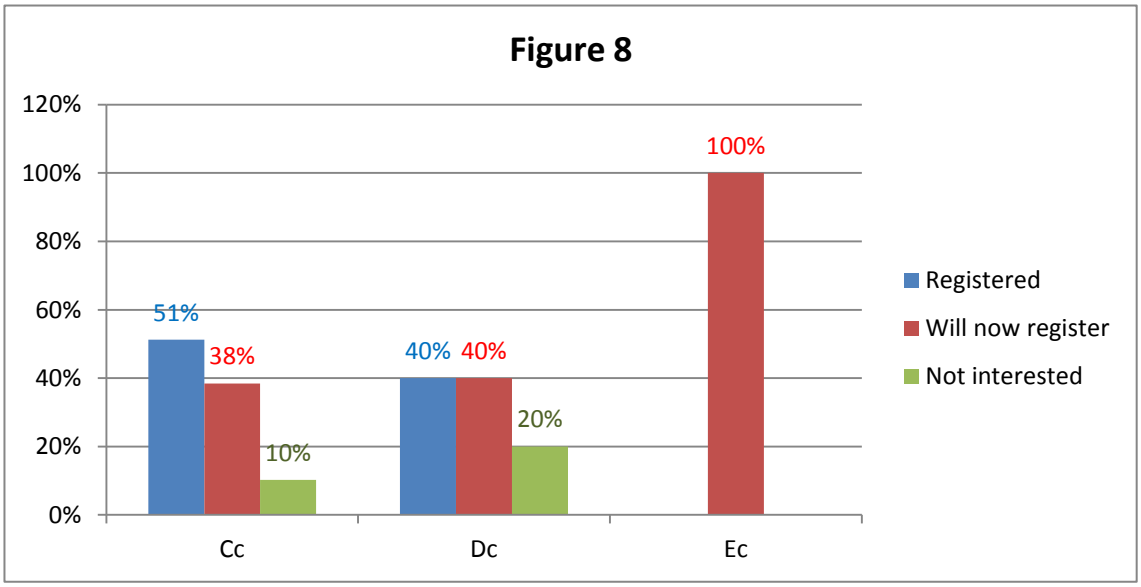
Residents were asked whether flooding had occurred at the address since they had moved in. Table 2 shows the results of this. It is worth noting that residents gave brief detail of the flooding when answering 'yes' and there were no cases of severe damage to property.

Table 2

	Sector Cc	Sector Dc	Sector Ec	Total
Residents In	39	30	1	70
Experienced Flooding	11	3	0	14
	28%	10%	0%	20%

Of the 70 residents who were in and available to talk, 46% (32) were already registered for the EA Floodline Warnings Direct Service. Positively, 40% (28) were not registered but said they would sign up following the visit, and just 14% (10) were not interested.

Figure 6 shows the same data but by sector. As shown, Cc and Dc have very similar distributions with very few residents uninterested, and roughly even numbers of residents registered prior and residents that will now register. The 100% of residents claiming they will now sign up in sector Ec should be discounted as there was only one resident in and available to talk out of the 17 properties.



As in the previous projects, residents were asked if they would like to receive a free home safety visit – 11% (8) said they would – details of which have been passed on to ESFRS.

14 residents also chose to give us their email address so that we can contact them in the future about flood related topics.

Project Conclusion

The objective of this project was to raise awareness about flood prevention and preparedness with residents living in properties at the most risk in Pevensey Bay, and this has been achieved. All 278 properties identified to be most at risk received the key resources.

The resident engagement rate was 25%, compared to 26% in Hellingly and 40% in Uckfield. The Uckfield project involved far fewer properties though – 108 compared to 278 in Pevensey Bay – so this comparison should not be given too much weight. As could be expected in a seaside location like Pevensey Bay, it was noted by the volunteers that there was a significantly higher engagement rate when the weather was exceptionally good on 14/04/15. When the weather was not quite as good (06/02/15), volunteers found that many of the 'holiday homes' along Coast Road were vacant. Nevertheless, all properties received the relevant resources whether a resident was in or not.

Whilst the Uckfield project found that evening visits (after 4.30pm) are the most effective in terms of finding people to be in, all visits in Pevensey Bay were made during the day (between 10am and 4pm). This was mainly due to the reliance on volunteer availability. WDC and ESFRS once again greatly appreciate all the effort made by the numerous volunteers that were involved in this project – it could not happen without them.

Some volunteers have now worked willingly on all three projects (Hellingly, Uckfield and Pevensey Bay), proving it is worthwhile not only for residents receiving the advice, but for volunteer staff too.

A third community in Wealden was identified for the project. WDC has contacted the Forest Row Parish Council and participated in a community event organised by the local Flood Committee offering advice and assistance in running a similar project in their area, but this has not been taken up to date.

A short overview report will be produced by WDC bringing together the findings of the projects in all three locations.