

## Somerset Levels and Moors – 18 January 2023

### Background:

The Somerset Levels & Moors are designed to store flood water when the rivers flowing through them over top. The recent heavy rain has caused spillways (specifically designed low points in the riverbanks) on the Rivers Tone and Parrett to flow and water is stored on the moors.

Across Somerset, the following flood [alerts](#) and [warnings](#) are in place including:

- **Salt Moor and North Moor including Moorland**
- **Curry Moor and Hay Moor**
- **A361 East Lyng to Burrowbridge**
- **Washford River; riverside properties from Kingsbridge to Lower Roadwater**

### Current situation:

**The situation on the Somerset Levels and Moors is constantly evolving. This outlines the most current information at the time of writing (Wednesday 4pm).**

After meeting with our partners, we have declared a major incident this morning, due to the scale of the operations being carried out and the multi-agency response required to combat the situation. This will focus attention and resources on alleviating the impacts of the flooding, and can be scaled up or down as required.

Our staff are working through the night both out in the field and in incident rooms to coordinate and maximise our pumping capacity and operational response.

Today we are seeing an improved situation as river levels have continued to recede overnight and we are starting to see the benefits of the pumps that have been switched on. Overnight we have also diverted more water from the River Parrett down the Sowey (also known as the Parrett flood relief channel), through the enhanced operation of our structures.

We have been fortunate that the weather has been more settled. Curry Moor is still full and the spillways into Saltmoor and Northmoor are still running but at a reduced rate. Levels on Saltmoor and Northmoor are stable.

We have a visual presence on site at Northmoor with our Incident Command Unit with staff available to answer questions and support communities.

## **Northmoor Pumping Station**

There are 7 additional temporary pumps operating at Northmoor and there will be a further 3 switched on within the next 24 hours. Field teams have been working through the night. In total the additional pumps at Northmoor will add a further 10m<sup>3</sup> of capacity. At Park Brook, Elson's Clyce, we installed 2 pumps overnight and these are now removing flood water from Northmoor.

## **Saltmoor Pumping Station**

We have an additional 7 pumps running at Saltmoor and a further 3 in position ready to be used if and when there is enough water at the pumping station.

## **Dunball**

The installation of pumps at Dunball continues. One pump is already operational with a second pump being switched on later today. This will allow us to direct even more water down the River Soway and into King's Sedgemoor Drain. This will further help to reduce levels in the River Parrett and Tone. Minimising levels in the Tone is important because it reduces the amount of flood water that enters Curry Moor, Saltmoor and Northmoor.

## **Currymoor and Haymoor Pumping Stations**

Levels in the Tone have receded enough overnight to gradually turn on the first pumps at Currymoor. These are being monitored carefully to ensure they are not causing spillways to run upstream. As levels allow, we will switch on more. Currymoor is still full but levels on the moor are very gradually reducing.

## **Langport and West Sedgemoor**

Upstream of Langport, there is water stored on the moors and storage volumes remain high. As of this morning we have been able to switch on the pumping stations at Westover and Huish Episcopi. This will help to reduce flood risk to communities in this area.

When river levels reduce enough, we will balance which pumping stations we operate to minimise risk to people or property. At the moment there is still too much water in the rivers to operate all the pumping stations at the same time. This includes West Sedgemoor, where we have responded to a number of questions this afternoon.

## **Weather Outlook:**

The outlook is currently more settled, and the forecast is dry for the next 3-5 days. This is an improving picture however river levels remain high.

## **Forward look:**

- Settled low rainfall forecast for the remaining of the week, with confidence reducing toward the end of the week.

- There is still a potential risk of flooding to a small number of isolated properties, however with levels gradually reducing this is an improving outlook.
- The pumps are starting to remove water at a higher rate than it is entering the moors.

### **Additional Information and advice:**

We continue to have staff working 24/7 both in incident rooms and out on site and will continue to keep you updated.

Prepare for flooding in advance and stay up-to-date on weather information and warnings: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding>

Follow us on social media:

[\(1\) Environment Agency - Wessex | Bridgwater | Facebook](#)  
[Environment AgencySW \(@EnvAgencySW\) / Twitter](#)

Or visit:

[Home - Somerset Rivers Authority](#)

We know that heavy rainfall may trigger feelings of anxiety, fear or worry, particularly for those who have been previously affected by flooding. Mindline is Somerset's emotional support and mental health helpline which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 01823 276 892 (local) 0800 138 1692 (freephone).

### **What to do during a flood**

Information to help you on what to do during a flood is on the [Somerset Prepared website](#). Remember: Always stay safe. In an immediate flood emergency or where there is a risk to life, follow the advice of the emergency services.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for Somerset Levels and Moors updates, please email [aceo.wessex@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:aceo.wessex@environment-agency.gov.uk)