

Sewer flooding in Wraysbury

January 2014



Understanding what's happened

On 13 January, our pumping station was inundated with river water. Despite both ours and the kind efforts of some local residents, the water came over the sandbank wall, affecting the sites electronics and subsequently blowing the mechanisms which operate the pumping stations. We haven't seen something like this happen since the terrible floods of 2003.

To add to this, we now have an added problem of groundwater, which is rising as river levels subside. Besides having to pump groundwater out of the station itself, the increased flows are bringing silt and other particles down through the network of sewer pipes creating blockages and more problems for our pumps.

What we're doing

While we're making good progress, please be aware things aren't 100 per cent fixed. The individual pumps that are dotted around the network are still suffering from rising groundwater levels. We are working as fast as we can but we are at the mercy of the weather and rising groundwater levels, which continue to pose a real challenge for us.

Our tanker has been working hard to help pump excess sewage and protect homes from being flooded with wastewater, pumping out 4,000 gallons every 45 minutes. It's currently on standby should we need it again.

We're doing our best to dry out the station using heaters powered by generators so we can get the site running again, however this is a slow process and have to be sure the site is safe and dry before we can attempt to start the electrics.

We've installed new pumps where we can, collecting parts from across the country to avoid delays from deliveries and teams are working hard in these difficult circumstances. These new pumps are now working. We currently also have engineers in and around the area checking and cleaning the 90 valves on this part of our network, looking out for blockages caused by the recent floods.

How you can stay safe

We're doing what we can to recover from this difficult circumstance.

If you're unable to use your toilet because the sewers are full or you're suffering from sewers backing up inside your home, please let us know.

Please keep an eye on your local weather forecasts. Any rainfall is also very likely to have a fast impact on the local rivers.

With groundwater levels remaining high, levels in our sewers will quickly rise with even a smallest amount of rainfall. This could also result in further flooding as the water can back up into other nearby sewers systems too.

You can keep up to date with the latest Floodline alerts through the Environment Agency's website www.environment-agency.gov.uk. This also has a live map showing where flood warnings have been issued.

Please stay safe during this difficult weather.

Who to contact for help

Roadside gullies: If roadside gullies are blocked and water cannot enter them, contact your local council.

River flooding: Contact the Environment Agency on their 24-hour Floodline 0845 9881 188. If your property is flooded by river water, contact your home insurers as soon as possible.

Sewer flooding: If it's an urgent sewer-related matter, call our 24-hour customer service team on 0845 9200 800.