Somerset Coastal Change Pathfinder Project

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Background to Somerset Pathfinder
Somerset Pathfinder

- Led by Somerset County Council on behalf of partner organisations
Porlock Weir

Steart

Brean and Berrow
Pathfinder in Practice:
Porlock Weir, Steart, Brean and Berrow
Challenges for adaptation: Porlock Weir

• Located within Exmoor National Park
• Designated as a Built Conservation Area
• Part of Porlock Manor Estate
What we did: Porlock Weir

The future for Porlock Weir
Four years ago the North Somerset and Devon Shoreline Management Plan was updated.

This set out how the coast including Porlock Weir was to be managed over the next 150 years. The adopted policy for Porlock Weir is No Active Intervention, which means that no government money from either the Environment Agency or Local Authorities will be invested in flood defences for this section of the coast. As a result, defending Porlock Weir from coastal flooding is up to private landowners and local residents.

John Bathurst from the Environment Agency added “Just because there will be no capital investment in defences does not mean that nothing can be done to help Porlock Weir during times of flooding. For example, an Emergency Action Plan, like the one devised by residents with Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council for Porlock village, can vastly reduce the damage and disruption caused by a flood. We also offer a flood warning service called ‘Floodline’ that residents in flood-prone areas can sign up to.

Porlock Weir is quite unusual in being almost entirely owned by Porlock Manor Estates, with the properties in the village being rented to local residents, traders and tourists.

In response to this, the current landowners, Mark Bidmead of Porlock Manor Estates said “This is a big blow to the tourist trade and to the local economy and we are trying to assess what the worst will be. We are likely to open a site to the public on the estuary where it will open again on the river on the Somerset coast. The damage will be in the area we have already taken steps to make buildings more flood resilient by changing to foam and electrical fittings in particular. The estate has met at its living accommodation on the first floor and this is almost back to normal shortly.”

There will be many people thinking about adapting in the future to deal with increasing risk. Everyone we spoke to is determined to make sure Porlock Weir returns to its position as one of the most beautiful places to live and to visit in the West Country.

Miller’s at the Anchor
Portland Weir Restaurant

Porlock Weir hit by massive storm on Wednesday night

Reporters at the Coast

The week of storms that brings thousands of tonnes of debris to Porlock Weir each year turned into a scene of devastation on Wednesday night. A strong storm coincided with high tides and caused severe damage to trees, fences and houses.

From our Science Correspondent

The storm on Wednesday night that caused such devastation to Porlock Weir and many communities on the Somerset coast followed a pattern which had become more frequent in recent years. A combination of high pressure systems moving into the area from the south, which moved into the south west up the Bristol Channel. The pressure system over Porlock on the 26th February is shown above.

The pressure systems are moving across Europe to the north and reached the coast on the afternoon of the 26th. The storm, which caused widespread destruction, was not unexpected, with predictions of high tides and increasing storm surges. The combination of storms and high tides is expected to cause more damage, with some areas around the coast experiencing the effects of the storms.

While there were some casualties, the storm did cause widespread damage. It was particularly severe on the coast, where many properties were affected. In some areas, the damage was so severe that people were forced to evacuate their homes. In other areas, the damage was less severe, but still significant.

The storm highlighted the need for better flood defences and increased investment in coastal management. It also underlined the importance of being prepared for severe weather events, and the need for better planning and preparedness.

The aftermath of the storm is expected to be a long one, as the damage is assessed and repairs are carried out. However, despite the damage, the people of Porlock Weir are determined to rebuild and recover from the storm.
Working with the community

- Three drop-in sessions
- Produced an Adaptation Action Plan
- Specific actions identified by the community
- Flood Action Group
- Flood Resilience Kit
Challenges for adaptation: Steart

- Fragile sea defences and sea level rise
- Properties at Steart village and Stockland Bristol will become increasingly at risk of flooding.
What we did: Steart

• Full time Communications Officer
• Community sub-group
• Education programme with Otterhampton Primary School
Challenges for adaptation: Brean & Berrow

- Located within extensive flood plain
- Narrow service roads, many summer visitors
- Dune management undermined
What we did: Brean and Berrow

• Dune monitoring

• Funding sand fencing/dune restoration

• National Trust Coastal Change at Brean Down café

• Visit to other dune restoration project
Working with the community:
1. Encouraging involvement
Welcome to Somerset Coastal Change Pathfinder

The Somerset Coastal Change Pathfinder is a community-led project to help areas most affected by rising sea levels.

The project aims to raise awareness of key issues around coastal change, and to give advice on how you can adapt to the changing environment.

Most of all we want to hear from you about your experiences of coastal change and answer any questions you may have.

A series of consultation events are being held in and around the key areas of Porlock Weir, Brent and Brean and Barrow and you are invited to give your input at these events and on this website.

Explore & contribute to the history of coastal change in Somerset from the Ice Age to the present day.

Discover how the coastline we know today has changed dramatically over the centuries, and continues to change.

Somerset Coastal Change on Facebook
Social Media

- Training on Facebook, flickr, Twitter
- Somerset Coast on Twitter 300+ followers
- Porlock Visitor Centre now on Twitter
- Berrow Conservation Group started their own blog [www.berrowconservationgroup.wordpress.com](http://www.berrowconservationgroup.wordpress.com)
- Otterhampton Primary School video - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm3ShveVMR4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm3ShveVMR4)
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