



Somerset Village Agents

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) would like to thank the Freemasons for their amazing generosity during the flooding crisis. Your donations mean we have been able to provide detailed and ongoing support in the flood affected areas through the Village Agent project, funded by Somerset Community Foundation.

The scale and duration of the flooding during the winter of 2013/14 was unprecedented and communities needed urgent support. CCS was able to give some of this much needed support through their Somerset Village Agent project. During the flooding our Village Agents knew where vulnerable people were living and were therefore able to help get people to places of safety. We were also able to help those who wanted to stay in their homes do so, as safely as possible – ensuring they had sources of heat, food and the ability to cook safely in their homes. We also made sure that people were still seen by their carers, and electricity was not cut off where people desperately needed it.



After the waters eventually subsided, and the clean up started, we were able to help straight away, processing grant forms, getting money quickly to those who needed it most. We also supported a Community Hub and Coffee Mornings, where people could come for tea, coffee, advice, warmth and to meet their neighbours who had all been spread far and wide. We gave them some respite from the world of loss adjusters, insurers and building contractors. Between 150-200 households were directly flooded, with many more being affected by the floods. During the flooding and its aftermath, we worked with 384 households, and dealt with over 557 issues.

Our village agents have dealt with an enormous range of issues, from reasonably straight forward requests, like signposting people to help with animal welfare or helping families with young children replace mouldy mattresses, to more complex and ongoing help; such as co-ordinating numerous funders to enable properties to be rebuilt and making sure people are getting the emotional support to deal with the huge impact of being flooded.

It is now the media have turned off their cameras and the communities are no longer in the public eye that this ongoing emotional support becomes so important. The impact of being flooded goes on long after the waters have subsided. Some people are still not back in their homes, others are struggling in homes that don't feel like theirs anymore, having lost so many of their personal belongings. The infrastructure of communities has been pulled apart and this will take time to replace and rebuild. Your generously donated money is still being used today to fund a Health and Wellbeing worker, able to work 1:1 with clients and also with groups to provide support needed now, as well as to try to move towards resilience in the future.

Thank you again, and for the support of the Somerset Community Foundation - we couldn't have done it without you.