

Case Study for HydroSacks and HydroSnakes

Flood protection in Fife - case study 1

Fife Council has invested in over 6,000 new flood protection sacks to help communities that have been affected by flooding. HydroSacks and HydroSnakes are some of the many ways the council is helping families to protect themselves and their properties in the event of an emergency.



Resident laying down sandbags to keep out the water

- **Author:** David Robertson

In a 2009 report Fife's executive committee outlined additional flood protection and mitigation measures that the council is making to deal with the increasing number of flooding incidents. This pro-active and innovative approach to dealing with flooding will place Fife Council as one of the leading Scottish councils.

£200,000 of existing capital funding over the next two years will be allocated to fund the provision of 'PODS'. These are green 'look-a-like' grit bins which can be locked and deployed in areas known by Fife Council and the Scottish Flood Forum as having a high risk to flooding.

The 2009 study and recent events have already identified priority areas for deployment of PODS and Hydrosacks. Keys are issued to specific residents whose properties may be at risk, they can then access the drainage POD kits and Hydrosacks should the need arise.

Hydrosacks will be stored inactivated at the flood-risk locations, making them much lighter and easier to carry than sandbags. When heavy rain is forecast, they can be 'inflated' with water to form an effective flood barrier. They can absorb up to 20 litres of water in under three minutes, and keep their weight for up to three months.

The sacks are eco-friendly and don't absorb sewage or other toxins in flood water, so when the flood recedes they can be cut open, drain the contents into the soil and recycle the sacks.

Councillor Pat Callaghan, executive member for Transportation & Environment said:

'We have really improved our existing levels of preparedness and we have stringent policies in place for regular watercourse and known 'at risk' flooding locations inspections.

In addition we have significant emergency supply provisions such as 6000 plus Hydrosacks – at any time in Fife and will continue to improve communications and incident management.

We will continue to work closely with the area committees to identify medium term priorities and with The Scottish Flood Forum to maintain an 'at risk' register and manage the deployment of the PODS and flood protection to the most 'at risk' locations throughout Fife.

It's hoped that the flood protection sacks will make a big difference to communities at risk because not only will they protect property by forming a barrier, they also absorb water and will prevent it leaking past the front door.'

Councillor Pat Callaghan, continues to say:

'In the last year, I've witnessed a number of communities in Fife being devastated by flooding. It can happen very suddenly, so as a Council we want to do everything we can to help people take preventative measures now. These new flood protection sacks are far more effective in preventing flood damage than traditional sandbags, and by storing them in the communities that have been affected by flooding before; we're in the best possible position to prevent flood damage.'