



Flood Forum Manifesto published - Politicians to be quizzed at Conference on 25th February

The National Flood Forum has published a Manifesto, setting down what it wants to see from the next Government, the Environment Agency and Local Authorities. They plan to launch it at their Conference on 25th February in Birmingham.

Mary Dhonau, Chief Executive of the NFF said “This Manifesto states what we as the National Flood Forum believe – and flood victims and groups are telling us – should be the urgent priorities over the next four years for national and local government and the Environment Agency.

With a General Election on the horizon, flood victims are entitled to know what each of the political parties will do to tackle flooding if elected to office. The answers may well affect how they vote!”

Mary added “We will have representatives of the three main political parties at our conference **Huw Irranca Davies** - Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Marine and Natural Environment), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, **Anne McIntosh** - Shadow Environment Minister Conservative party and **Martin Horwood** Shadow Minister, Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Liberal Democrat Party. We plan to ask them to tell us what their Party will do about these priorities to address flooding if they are elected to office. We will also ask Lord Chris Smith, Chairman of the EA, to give us his views on what we are seeking from the EA.”

“We now have 175 delegates booked to attend the Conference, many from local Flood Groups. I’m sure they will be very interested to hear what the politicians have to say!”

The Manifesto issues for government include

- Early implementation of the Floods and Water Management Bill
 - all sections commenced within 2010-11
- A comprehensive Flooding Bill within two years
 - taking forward the issues dropped from the draft Bill, particularly measures to address flooding resulting from neighbouring land
- Give the EA a Duty to address flooding, not simply a power
 - so that people don’t come behind wildlife in importance
- Putting continuing care for Flood Victims at the centre of flood recovery
 - giving long-term support after the flood, for as long as it is needed
- A One-Stop Shop and community support centre in emergencies

- with one body taking responsibility for information
- Clarify lines of responsibility
 - so flood victims know who will give them answers
- Commitment to real-terms increases in capital funding going forward
 - with additional funding for surface water flooding
- Continued grants for property based flood measures
 - Where defences are not cost-effective or applicable
- A Public Commission to investigate the Flood Insurance industry
 - and make recommendations to end current anomalies and inconsistencies

The Manifesto issues for the Environment Agency include

- Work with communities and put them at the heart of every flood scheme
 - adopting best practice in community engagement
- Put consideration of people before concern for wildlife
 - planning ahead so that wildlife surveys don't disrupt flood schemes
- Clear, accessible and accurate flood warnings
 - linked to communities and local property floor levels
- Develop a National Specification for Flood Wardens
 - and make it part of the National Strategy
- Consistent Mapping of Flood Risk across the country
 - with maps freely available via the internet
- Publication of all flood data and predictive maps
 - including areas at risk of surface water flooding
- Scrutiny of Local Flood Risk Management (FRM) arrangements
 - through the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC)
- Flood victim representation on RFCCs and on the EA Board
 - so that members hear it as flooded communities see it

The Manifesto issues for Local Authorities include

- No more permissions for building on flood plains
- A firm commitment to take on Local FRM responsibilities
 - and to allocate the resources needed
- Consistency of response across the Country
 - no "postcode lottery" for how flood victims are treated
- Transparent identification of funds for flooding
 - not diverting it to other uses
- Flood victim representation on Local Flood Committees
 - so councillors hear it as flooded communities see it
- Promoting and supporting local flood wardens
 - to gather information and support the community before and during a flood

The Manifesto is available on the Flood Forum website www.floodforum.org.uk in short and long forms. The short form sets out why the Flood Forum has published a Manifesto and bullet-points the key issues. The long form expands on each of these and gives more information on what we want to see as the priorities to tackle flooding.

ENDS

Note to Editors

For further information on the Manifesto, contact Charles Tucker, NFF Vice Chairman, on charles.tucker@floodforum.org.uk or phone 01386 462441

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The Conference will be held at the Lakeside Centre, Aston University, Birmingham

Press attendance welcomed

Interviews with Mary Dhonau must be arranged in advance.

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