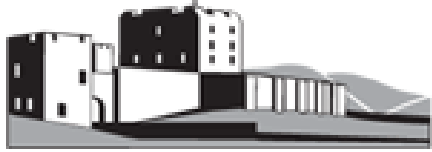


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 Floodguards®

Protection for Private Properties via a 100% Grant

Year:	2005
Area to benefit:	Low Crosby, Warwick Bridge, Stockdalewath
Protection offered for:	77 properties
Protection accepted for:	72 properties (94%)
Contract value:	£287,065
Median value per property	£3,987
Source of funding:	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and Carlisle City Council
Extent of protection:	Doors, windows and airbricks

What was exceptional about this scheme?

This was the first major scheme to provide private property-owners with 100% grants in order to have flood protection products installed



Saturday 8th January 2005 will never be forgotten in Carlisle with approximately 2,000 properties being inundated with flood water, many residents displaced from their homes and businesses unable to operate.

The floods were caused by over a month's worth of rain falling in 24 hours onto already saturated ground, combining with a high tide in the Solway where the Eden, Caldew and Petterill rivers carry waters from across the North Lakes and northern Pennines. All of these rivers passing through Carlisle meant the city's flood defences could not contain the volume of water generated and the areas south of the Eden such as Warwick Road, Denton Holme and Rickergate were particularly badly affected.

Carlisle's flood defences are made up of raised embankments along the Eden, Caldew and Petteril rivers. They were improved following floods in 1968 and had been effective, but they fell woefully short on 8th January when the maximum water level at 2.45pm was three foot higher than the man-made barriers. The Environment Agency (EA) believed the existing defences were good enough to withstand all but the most severe floods, perhaps one every 70 years.

Immediately after the flood, pronouncements were made by Government that it was committed to providing the best possible flood defences and that these had already been under consideration. Miles of flood walls and embankments already existed due to previous floods including the major flood of 1968, and a similar response of raising the embankments was promised by the EA.

Funding of £1.5 million became available to the Council from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to cover some flood recovery expenses, and of this £180,000 was earmarked for a pilot scheme for flood resistance products. With a balance of £120,000 agreed by the Council members, it launched into a scheme to provide the first and most critical element of flood resistance for individual homes – flood barriers for doors, windows and airbricks.

In September 2005, the Council invited tenders from the manufacturers of flood protection barriers which have been suitably certified by British Standards Institution Kitemark PAS 1188:1 (2003). As the works involved providing flood protection products for privately-owned housing, it was imperative that the selected solution would inspire a reasonable degree of confidence from homeowners, accompanied by the fact that the products could be easily deployed. These were essential requirements in the tender, however an additional desirable requirement was that the scheme and products selected in terms of quality assurance, effectiveness and value for money would be beneficial to people in terms of negotiating renewed insurance. After careful consideration it was decided that the FGSL tender provided the best value.

Work to install flood protection products to homes in the rural areas of Crosby, Warwick Bridge and Stockdalewath commenced in November 2005. The owners of 77 homes expressed initial interest to the Council by responding to request in a Council mail-shot, and were visited by a representative of FGSL to explain how the system works and discuss the implications to the property. Some properties made the installation of guards less than straightforward; however the surveyors and installers drew on their experience and ingenuity and found solutions to every situation.

A small number of property-owners had initial reservations, however these were overcome once they saw the products installed onto neighbouring properties. In some cases there was extra work that was required by the homeowners that was over and above that specified in the contract with the Council. These included bespoke colour back-frames, additional Floodguards to protect alleyways or channelling into the stone walls to make the back frames as unobtrusive as possible. Where this happened, the householder made a direct payment to the company for the additional works, with the Council being notified of the arrangement. The main brief was to protect doors and other building apertures from water ingress to a height of 900mm from exterior ground level from flooding, excluding detached garages and outbuildings.

Overall, residents were eager to accept protection especially after a minor flood incident in October 2006. Of those that declined, all reported they had only had minimal amounts of flood water inside the property; indeed the owners of two of the properties claimed they did not have water above floor level.

Soon after the first properties were completed, the Council started to receive positive feedback from residents delighted with the scheme and with the work of the company. An example is a letter from David Sowden a resident of Low Crosby who said:

'The contractors who carried out the work on our property were very conscientious and thoughtful when preparing and doing the work, and are a credit to the firm who employed them.....It is quoted in your catalogue, it is peace of mind and they look the part'

Allan Dickson, the Council's project manager also made regular inspections to the properties, talking with residents before, during and after completion of the work. There was only one minor complaint detected which occurred when some dust entered a property via the gap between door and doorframe; this was resolved with an apology and a box of chocolates. Otherwise a typical comment to Allan was "all of the lads have been great - very tidy, polite, good tradesmen and cleared up as they went - no problems at all"

