

Flood Bulletin – Marshall Place, Perth

The Council is producing bulletins aimed at keeping local communities informed of the developments and recovery work in progress following the recent flooding in their area.

This bulletin has been prepared specifically for residents on Marshall Place, Scott Street, Nelson Street and Princes Street.

We are sorry about the flooding that you have experienced.

We have been receiving a high volume of calls and e-mails from throughout Perth and Kinross following the flooding of 12 August. Unfortunately, it's not possible for us to respond to them all at once. This bulletin is intended to answer some of your questions.

Community Meetings

The Council and Scottish Water will also be holding meetings with affected residents. This is complicated by the on-going coronavirus pandemic and so these meetings may be held online. We will advise you of the details shortly.

The Scottish Flood Forum

The Scottish Flood Forum is an independent organisation which supports individuals and communities at risk from flooding. If you have not already done so, we would advise you to contact the Forum – their contact details are at the end of this bulletin. The Forum will be in Perth City Centre on Wednesday 26 August (10am-4pm); Friday 28 August and at weekly intervals thereafter.

Flooding in Marshall Place and the Surrounding Area

Flood Gates

As you will be aware, the South Inch in Perth performs a role as a flood storage reservoir in times of flood and this forms part of the Perth Flood Scheme. The Council's Roads Maintenance Partnership maintain and operate the Scheme. Residents have shown considerable concern about the failure of the Council to close one of the flood gates on the South Inch. Further details on the background to this are given below.

The Met Office issued a yellow weather warning for 11/12 August 2020 which was a fairly general one for heavy thundery rain affecting much of Scotland. Weather conditions were warm and sunny during the day with the South Inch park children's play area being busy. As school children were due to return to school the following day, the flood gates in the South Inch park were not closed in order to allow pedestrians to use the park footways.

The first Craigie Burn telemetry (water level monitor) alarms were received around 23:30hrs on 11 August instructing the trash screens on the Craigie Burn at Queens Avenue and Perth Prison to be cleaned. The Council's Roads Maintenance Partnership standby officer cleaned both screens a number of times between 23:30hrs and 01:15hrs and the water level in the Craigie Burn appeared to have stabilised.

Following this, around 02:30hrs on 12 August a number of telemetry alarms were received for the Craigie Burn. When the crew mustered on site at the South Inch Park, they were unable to close the flood gates at the Craigie Burn footbridge and the railway bridge arches due to the flow of water that had overtopped the Craigie Burn. The flood gate beside the South Inch pavilion was closed around 03:45hrs but the gate at the children's play park was not closed at that time due to operator error. This gate was subsequently closed around 10:00hrs on 12 August, however by that time the flow of water from the South Inch park reservoir had been flowing through the children's play park area and onto Marshall Place for some hours.

Officers kept in touch with Scottish Water's officers during the flood event to check on how pumping stations were operating and apart from a couple of relatively short power outages the pumps were working efficiently.

Once the Council was aware of the flooding increasing in depth at Marshall Place, it deployed a six-inch pump to site. This lowered the water level once the children's play area flood gate had been closed.

The Council would like to apologise to residents unreservedly for not closing the flood gate at the children's play park.

Existing Flood Risk to Marshall Place and the Surrounding Area

The exact flood mechanism at Marshall Place is still under investigation, although the issue with the flood gate clearly contributed.

The flooding experienced on 12 August was mainly due to surface water flooding (also known as pluvial flooding). The significant amount of rain that fell in a short space of time also generated a response in the Craigie Burn which filled up the flood storage reservoir on the South Inch. While the Perth Flood Scheme is in place, this Scheme was primarily designed to address river (or fluvial) flooding in the area. IN addition, the flood scheme also includes a number of high capacity pumps, located at the South Inch Pumping Station which serve the dual purposes of emptying the South Inch flood storage area into the River Tay and servicing the wider sewer network in Perth.

The rapid surface water flooding observed in such intense storm events is very difficult to predict in terms of location and impact. It is also very difficult to defend properties against this form of flooding as we have seen across the country.

SEPA have published online indicative surface water flood maps which can be viewed at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/flood-maps/. The flood map for this area indicated that for a high probability (1 in 10 year) rainfall event, there is little flood risk in the area. However, for the medium probability (1 in 200) rainfall event, there does appear to be a surface water flood risk in the area. Given the low-lying nature of the basement properties on Marshall Place, this would indicate an existing background flood risk.

In urban areas, the causes of flooding are complex because of the interactions between rivers, surface water drainage and combined sewer systems and tidal waters. The Council and Scottish Water have been carrying out an integrated catchment study for Perth to assess these interactions. This study has also indicated a surface water flood risk in the Marshall Place area.

We will provide further information on this on-going work in another bulletin.

Next Steps

The flooding situation was reported to the Council's Environment and Infrastructure Committee on 19 August and as a result the Council will be looking at what action needs to be taken to address future flood risk.

The Council has commissioned a report on the response to the flood situation on 12 August 2020. Once the report is received, we will look at how best we engage with local communities including Perth South. The report is to go to Mark Butterworth, the Head of Environmental and Consumer Services in the first instance.

In the meantime, Perth & Kinross Council continues to work in partnership with a number of agencies including Scottish Water, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Scottish Flood Forum to assist with the recovery work. The Council and its partnership agencies are committed to providing ongoing support to those who need it as the recovery work continues.

The Council and Scottish Water will advise you of the details of forthcoming meetings with residents shortly.

Further bulletins will follow.

Further Information and Advice

In the meantime, please see the attached general Flood Bulletin and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). We hope that this may help to answer some of your questions.

Please also refer to the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts and our online news articles:

www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21798/Scottish-Flood-Forum-in-Perth-today

www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21794/12-August-2020-Storm-Flood-Risk-Management-Update
www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21793/Council-offers-support-to-flooded-residents

Further information and advice on flooding can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/> and <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/frmplans>.

Contact Details

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| Perth and Kinross Council: | Tel 01738 475000 (8.45am – 5pm) Tel 01738 476476 (out of hours emergencies) E-mail flood@pkc.gov.uk |
| Scottish Water: | Tel 0800 077 8778 (customer helpline) |
| Scottish Flood Forum: | Tel 01698 839021 |
| SEPA Floodline | Tel 0345 988 1188 |

26 August 2020