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# AFTER THE FLOODS

## Communicating Climate Change Around Extreme Weather



Flooded Oxford residents asking "Can we talk about climate change now?" in a Climate Outreach event



George Marshall

## Communicating flood risks in a changing climate

9 principles for promoting  
public engagement



# Why Climate Communication & Extreme Weather Events?

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Social and practical  
resilience

A pressing need and a lack  
of research

Very little practical guidance



Unprecedented flooding this year ruined lives for hundreds in Devon. As the clear up operation continues many are asking questions about the future:

**Will flooding get worse?**

**Is the weather changing?**

**How is climate change connected?**

**How can we be prepared for future floods?**

Join others from your community in discussing these issues. Learn how climate change is involved and how to talk to others about the risks to our communities.



# Communicating flood risks in a changing climate

9 principles for promoting  
public engagement



CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYDD

E · S · R · C  
ECONOMIC  
& SOCIAL  
RESEARCH  
COUNCIL

1. Climate scientists can quantify the role of human influence in individual flooding events; specifically whether they are made more or less likely in a changing climate.



## 2. There is growing evidence that flooding and climate change are linked in the public mind

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

# THE TIMES

Max 13C min -1C Tuesday December 8 2015 | thetimes.co.uk | No 71775 Only 80p to print members £1.20

Is he worth it? The 25 most stylish gifts for men Times2

## Floods caused by global warming, says minister

● Families face eight months away from home ● Cameron: storm defences were not good enough

**David Brown**  
Chief News Correspondent  
Oliver Moody, Francis Elliott

Ministers announced a full review of Britain's storm defences yesterday as they blamed global warming for the floods that have devastated Cumbria.

Lia Truss, the environment secretary, told MPs that Storm Desmond was consistent with climate change and the government's predictions for future flooding would now have to be updated.

Last night, however, an Oxford academic said that the government had been warned five years ago of the risk of higher rainfall in the area possibly created by climate change.

There was also criticism of the government for cutting spending on flood defences by 44 per cent in the past year, with Labour accusing David Cameron of breaking promises to protect homes.

The criticism came as:

- More than half the 5,000 properties flooded over the weekend were still under water last night, with families facing the prospect of eight months away from their homes.
- Farmers ignored police health and safety warnings as they cleared a river of debris to stop its banks bursting and to prevent further damage.
- The body of a man swept away by a swollen river was recovered by police.
- About 40 schools remained closed and hospitals cancelled routine appointments.
- Households in flood-hit areas face further rises in insurance bills, while industry experts warned that clean-up costs could reach £100 million.

Storm Desmond set a new record for rainfall in a 48-hour period, with 15.9in in 28 hours at Thirlmere, Cumbria. The previous record was 13.6in, in November 2009. Water levels in Carlisle reached about 20in above the level seen



Rescue efforts in Carlisle yesterday as more than half the 5,000 homes flooded by Storm Desmond remained under water

## Brown takes top job as economic adviser

Sam Coates Deputy Political Editor  
Robert Miller

Gordon Brown is to take his first major corporate role since leaving parliament by joining one of the world's largest investment businesses.

The former prime minister is to join Pimco, a California-based asset management company, as a wealth creation adviser. Andrew Balls, the brother of Mr Brown's former aide and minister, Ed Balls, is Pimco's chief investment officer for global fixed income. The company is now part of Germany's giant insurer, Allianz.

Mr Brown is joining the Pimco's new Global Advisory Board, a role that will reunite him with many figures he knew as chancellor and prime minister.

The board will be chaired by Ben Bernanke, the former chairman of the US Federal Reserve, and will include Jean-Claude Trichet, ex-president of the European Central Bank. It will meet several times a year at Pimco's Newport Beach office as well as its other offices around the world and will advise senior figures on "the economic outlook and its implications for markets over the next three to five years".

As chancellor for ten years and prime minister for three, Mr Brown oversaw strong growth for a decade before the 2007 financial collapse required several British banks to be saved at a cost of hundreds of billions of pounds. He will also be remembered for his 1999 decision to sell half of Britain's gold reserves shortly before the price of gold soared.

Pimco, by contrast, insists on its website that gold is an important commodity as part of an economic portfolio. "We see gold as a compelling inflation hedge and store of value," it says. The company said last night. "Together, the board members will contribute their economic, geopolitical, and market expertise and insights to the firm's investment process."

Mr Brown's office said he would not

‘64% of respondents agree that the floods were caused in part by climate change’

3. Conversations about climate change should ideally begin before (not during) flood events when communities are under pressure





4. Communication and engagement around flood events must be carried out sensitively, or they will backfire



5. Trusted 'peer' messengers and personal stories are vital for achieving public engagement



## 6. Flooding and climate impacts cannot be separated from the wider social context that determines communities' ability to cope with stress and trauma

Why are some people more vulnerable to climate change than others, where are they and what can be done?

We'd like to know what you think of this website – how easy is it to use and how much does it help?  
Please complete our short questionnaire

Climate Just

**Key questions** ?

- Who is vulnerable?
- Which places are disadvantaged?
- What actions support resilience?
- Map tool: see how your area is affected
- Why does climate justice matter?
- Which households emit the most carbon?
- What can be done to tackle fuel poverty?
- Who needs to do what?

### Welcome to the Climate Just web tool

Climate change has the potential to increase inequalities and disadvantage in the UK. Local authorities and other organisations working on climate change, or working with vulnerable communities, have a key role to play in responding to this challenge. This website has been developed to provide evidence to support local action.

- It highlights which people and places are likely to be most vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather, including flooding and extreme heat, and the areas which might be most affected.
- It also examines fuel poverty and inequities in energy policy and how these can be tackled locally.

Exposure to climate hazard  
+ social vulnerability  
= climate disadvantage

## 7. Communities that have been affected multiple times offer powerful opportunities for learning (but also have a right to forget)

### Postal Survey

**20% response rate and 14.3% usable response rate = 200 responses**

- **Farm/farmer characteristics**
- **Perception towards risk** (from animal disease, market volatility, crop disease, extreme weather)
- **Experience of flood risk** – type, impacts/losses, specific to 2007/2012 events
- **Perception of flood risk** – personal and to business (and of cause of flooding)
- **Flood risk response** – type of response
- **Attitude towards climate change risk** – perception (cause, impact), concern
- **Response towards climate change risk** – mitigation and adaptation activities

8. It is important to strike the right balance between the 'local' and 'global' aspect of flooding (as a climate impact)



equator agency @equatoragency · Jan 12

#Twitter10k, #DrummondPuddleWatch & more - we look back at the first week of 2016 on social [bit.ly/1ONHcym](http://bit.ly/1ONHcym)



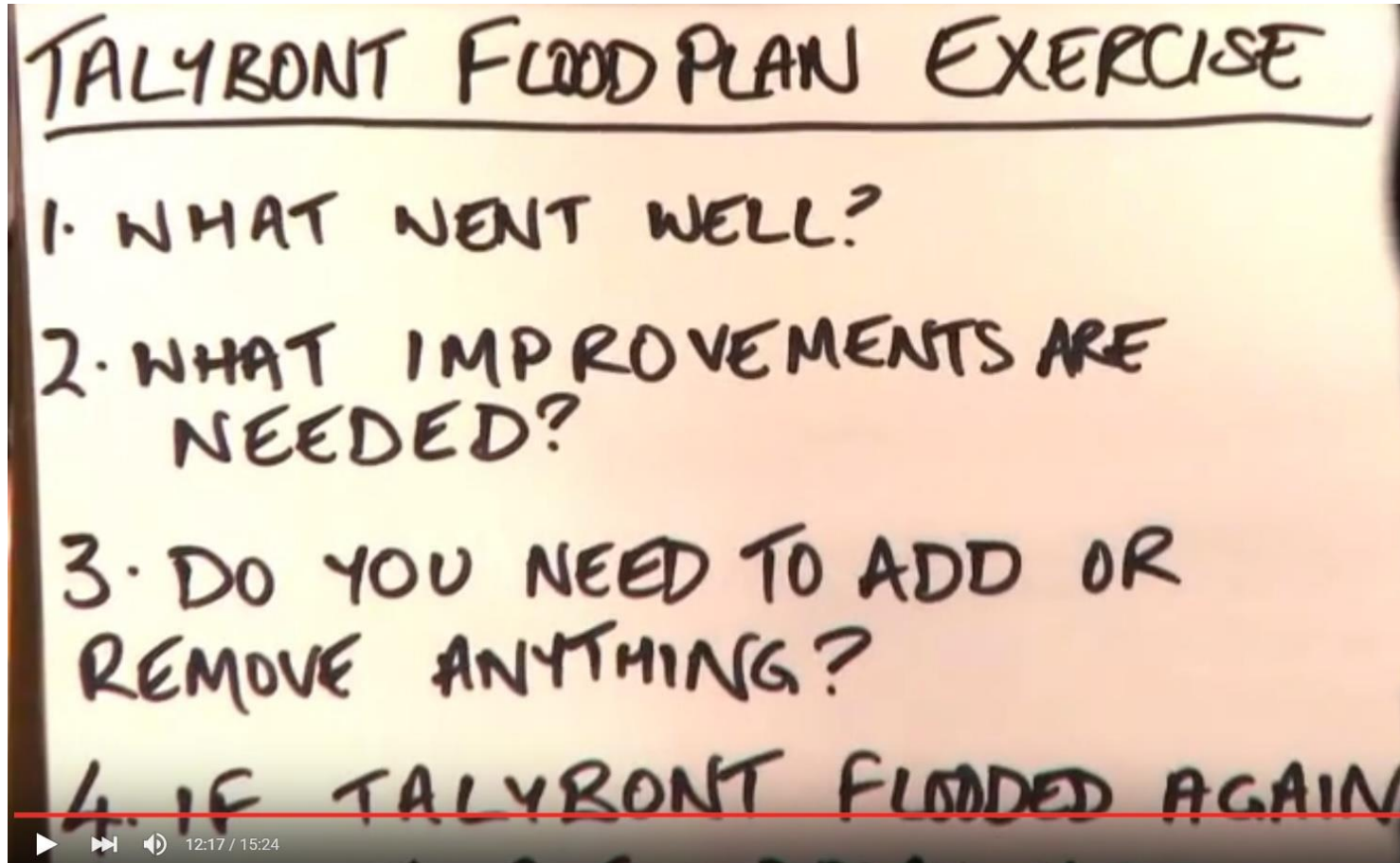
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9. Communications should empower people to respond and adapt to future flood risks - focusing on preparedness and support rather than 'getting back to normal'





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