

Mousehole School marks flood protection upgrade

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The Environment Agency has replaced a culvert and added a playground to Mousehole School in Cornwall.

The ribbon has been cut at Mousehole School in Cornwall to celebrate new and improved flood protection for the school and wider community.

The event on Monday 23 February brought together representatives from the Environment Agency, Kier Infrastructure, and Philip Rees, Chair of the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee along with residents and the school committee.

After speeches and a ribbon-cutting ceremony, pupils enjoyed exploring the newly installed playground including a bespoke Mousehole cave and ship with a cat at the bow.

Bigger drainage means smaller flood risk

Everyone involved in the scheme to cut flood risk at Mousehole School came for the ribbon cutting ceremony

Mousehole is particularly vulnerable to flash flooding due to its steep valley location and two watercourses – the Paul Stream and Tumble Tyn – which flow through the village before discharging into the harbour. The existing culvert systems restricted flows and were frequently overwhelmed during heavy rainfall, creating significant flood risk.

The project involved replacing the existing culvert under the school playground with an oversized design that provides additional storage capacity during periods of heavy rainfall.

The new infrastructure includes enhanced channel drainage to capture overland flow and maximise the capacity of the Paul Stream.

Due to the flooding impact on the school, the project was partially funded by the Department for Education. The project also improved the school's playground.

Next step: flood doors for flood risk properties

Pupils enjoying the new playground that came with the culvert replacement

This work forms part of the Environment Agency's comprehensive approach to improving flood resilience in Mousehole, which includes working with local landowners and farmers to slow flood flows into the village, and providing property flood resilience such as flood doors to properties that remain at flood risk, which will be our next phase of work.

While flood risk cannot be eliminated due to downstream restrictions, the new infrastructure will significantly reduce how often flooding occurs. The design involves minimal above-ground changes whilst delivering enhanced protection for both the school and the wider community.

‘Important step in protecting historic coastal community’

It wouldn't be a party without cake, with staff from the Environment Agency and Kier eager to tuck in to

Ben Johnstone, Environment Agency area flood and coastal risk manager for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, said:

It's wonderful to celebrate this milestone with the Mousehole community. This project demonstrates what can be achieved when we work together to tackle flood risk.

The new culvert will provide vital additional capacity during heavy rainfall, helping to protect both the school and the village. We're committed to continuing our work with local partners to improve flood resilience across Mousehole.

Philip Rees, Chair of the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, said:

Today marks an important step forward in protecting this historic coastal community. Mousehole faces unique flood challenges, and this project shows how targeted investment can make a real difference.

I'm proud that the regional flood and coastal committee has supported this work, and I look forward to seeing the benefits it brings to local families and businesses.

Hoardings - large, temporary boards left over from construction - were painted by pupils and added to the playground as decoration

Philip Ramsay, operations director at Kier Infrastructure, said:

Collaboration has been critical to the project's success and we're proud to have been part of improving flood protection for current and future generations. Last term the children painted creative hoardings inspired by the scheme and now their art is decorating the school grounds.

An extra thanks to everyone who helped at the recent volunteer day painting, planting and enhancing outside areas to support pupils' play and wellbeing.

Sarah Trow, Headteacher at Mousehole Primary School, said:

Our school has experienced the disruption that flooding can cause. During the construction works the children adapted brilliantly and enjoyed the breadth of engaging learning opportunities the Environment Agency and Kier arranged.

The children are thrilled with the transformation, and it was brilliant to see pupils who joined the school in September exploring the playground for the first time.

With the recent storms we've noticed the positive difference the work has had and as a

school community we feel reassured knowing it will help protect us and the community in the future.

Background

- More about flood resilience in Mousehole.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mousehole-school-marks-flood-protection-upgrade>