

Background and Context

During the afternoon of Monday 16 August 2004, heavy rainfall in north Cornwall caused a flash flood in the village of Boscastle on the north Cornwall coast, within North Cornwall District Council's area of responsibility.

The first rainfall was recorded above Boscastle, at about 12.30pm, with heavy rainfall over a concentrated area.

It is estimated that over 1,400 million litres of rain fell in just two hours.

The River Valency, which runs through the centre of the small village, quickly became a torrent and overflowed. An estimated three metre depth of water poured through the village, washing away cars, trapping residents and tourists and leading to a major rescue operation.

How the Topic was Handled

During the recovery phase, the provision of information to the local community appeared to work very well, underpinned by the Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council who provided twice-daily public briefings in a local hall in Boscastle. This continued until the village was 'passed back' to the community on Day 11, marked by the removal of police cordons.

The early set up of the Boscastle Regeneration Steering Group (1st meeting 24/9/04) stated its aim to "... oversee and implement a regeneration plan for the village in conjunction with the local community". Tasked with considering both short and longer term issues, such as business support, marketing / promotion of tourism, location and design of the new car park, flood alleviation, sewage treatment etc. it is still meeting today and influencing Boscastle's future.

Lessons Identified

Some sensed an 'information gap' when the twice-daily public briefings ended. A lesson to emerge is the need to ensure other measures are put in place to keep the community informed of developments when such regular emergency service briefings terminate.

Contacts for Further Information

[Boscastle Regeneration Steering Group](#)

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