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# Case Study: Crosby-on-Eden Parish Hall Flood recovery

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**Crosby-on-Eden is a small village by the River Eden in Stanwix Rural parish, to the north east of Carlisle. It has a parish hall, pub, primary school, nursery and church. In December 2015 Storm Desmond flooded most of the village, leaving up to two and a half feet of flood water to slowly drain away from local homes and businesses.**

## Background

Like many properties in the village, Crosby-on-Eden Parish Hall was left in urgent need of refurbishment following the flood water brought by Storm Desmond.

The hall committee had been carrying out a programme of refurbishment which they'd started 5 years previously. Unfortunately, however, the improvements were ruined by flood water and work had to begin again.

## The Project

Hours before the hall was flooded on the Saturday, in order to minimise damage, people from the community moved equipment onto the stage and kitchen appliances onto high shelves. Once the water was in the building, it continued to rise and was still pouring in on the Monday.

On the following Wednesday committee members assessed the damage to see what could be kept. A storage container was ordered to hold what could be salvaged while the hall started its restoration. A local builder came with industrial dryers to reduce the chance of secondary mould.

On further investigation, dry rot was found in the stage. Under the flooring was warm, wet and rotten - the joists and floor needed to be replaced.

Whilst the hall was insured the discovery of dry rot meant not all the necessary refurbishment work would be covered. This was a major set back, particularly as the work not covered by insurance would need to be completed first.



*Crosby-on-Eden Parish Hall in flood water*

## What has been achieved?

The newly refurbished hall was up and running within 10 months and the building has been future proofed to protect from any future flooding. New insulated wooden flooring sits on brackets to stop water transfer from the walls, and a plastic sheet over the joists also prevent water transfer. New air bricks were fitted and pointed to avoid water seeping in. The stage has been replaced with a collapsible version to keep the walls sealed and prevent dry rot reoccurring and a new boiler was fitted which is more powerful and economical.

The storage container next to the hall is now used for permanent storage enabling space in the hall to be converted into a multi-purpose meeting room for groups such as the Women's Institute and Craft Club.

In the main hall activities such as Judo and Yoga are popular and bookings for kids parties and funeral teas. The hall hosted a fashion show to raise funds for a living willow seat outside the hall, which will help with drainage as the roots absorb water.



*Work to replace the wooden flooring*



*Refurbished hall with new temporary stage...*

Cumbria County Council provided a grant for internal and external damp proofing and Cumbria Community Foundation funded the removal of the old stage and for the new collapsible stage to be fitted. The district Rotary Club paid for the new flooring and joints, and Homebase helped the hall with new kitchen cupboards. All this enabled the hall to be back up and running as quickly as possible.

## The Learning

Don't assume you're fully insured. Check your policy in detail and know what to do if you need to make a claim.

With 75% of homes in the village flooded it was a difficult time financially and emotionally; it was understandable that people's priorities were elsewhere. However, people still came to help with the hall, many who had been involved with previous refurbishment, and the community effort was extremely important in the hours leading up to and after the flood.

Good support and a small team of people keen to get on with the job is crucial. A group of 10 people have fuelled the hall's recovery; each person had a defined job and more than one role. Communication is key and the small team reported back regularly so everyone was up to date with the project.

When it comes to grants, get to know what is out there and how you can use them to meet your needs. Depending on the nature of what's happened e.g. extensive flooding, new grant funds may be set up to help groups to recover. Get as much advice as possible.

Having local trades people working on the hall was a great help. It's easier to build relationships and helps with communication when people are close by.

Keep a paper trail of all conversations and documents; don't do everything over the phone. Keep all documentation, invoices, photos etc as evidence so you can always back yourself up, if needed.

Be prepared to stand your ground and have the confidence to keep going. These situations are never easy but with the right support and confidence you will get there.

## Contact Details

For more information on Crosby-on-Eden Village Hall, please contact:

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