

NEWS RELEASE



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ABINGDON RESERVOIR WOULD INCREASE SERIOUS FLOOD RISK

The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) is warning that local land and villages will be hit by more flooding in the future if plans to build Abingdon Reservoir get the go-ahead. The area is already susceptible to flooding with many homes in South Abingdon and nearby villages, such as Steventon, being flooded as recently as 2007.

Nick Thompson, retired civil engineer and Chairman of GARD, said:

“There are four key risks which will arise if plans for Abingdon Reservoir are not thrown out. Local residents need to know the truth about the problems they will face if this scheme is approved. The inconvenience caused by the reservoir will not be limited to the nine-year construction period – the challenges to local people could be expensive and interminable if flood risk increases.”

As it is likely that the reservoir would increase the risk of flooding at the Ock, it is of great concern that the Environment Agency has stated that they have no current plans for future flood protection of South Abingdon in the event of the River Ock flooding.

Flood problems will be exacerbated by:

- **Increased run-off:** this will be caused by the very high embankments that will be built to accommodate the reservoir.
- **A higher water table due to seepage:** the water table in the surrounding area will be affected by water seeping from the reservoir.
- **A loss of flood plain:** the land where the reservoir is due to be located includes a large area of flood plain. If the reservoir displaces this valuable flood plain, more will have to be provided on a level for level basis in other nearby locations, potentially between Hanney and Garford.
- **Natural flows of groundwater** below surface of the soil were identified in a professional study which indicated that interruption could have a serious impact.

GARD has been delighted with the level of support for the campaign against the reservoir in recent weeks and is calling on even more local residents to join the campaign ahead of a public inquiry on 15 June. To keep up to date with the campaign, local people can join the campaign at www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk or by signing up to GARD's Facebook group and tracking the campaign on Twitter.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Nick Thompson please contact Peter Jones on 07917 312 749. GARD is also able to provide photos of flooding in South Abingdon and Steventon in 2007.

Notes to editors:

1. The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) is a group of local residents campaigning against plans by Thames Water to build a **huge** and **unnecessary** reservoir in the countryside, south west of Abingdon. Thames Water has ignored or dismissed more sustainable and viable long term alternatives.
2. Local residents can sign up to our campaign via our website and make their voice heard. Campaign updates are available via Facebook, Twitter and the website. Go to www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk
3. A public inquiry on Thames Water's plan is due to start on 15 June this year and GARD will be challenging the plans at the inquiry. If Thames Water's plan is approved in the face of strong local opposition, work could start as early as 2016.