

Flood scheme unites village

by Alex Gore

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VILLAGERS are reaping the rewards of coming together as a community to stop a repeat of the devastation caused by the July 2007 floods.

Construction of an ambitious flood alleviation scheme has got under way in Bucklebury. The £600,000 work is being funded by the Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC), West Berkshire Council and villagers. It will protect 25 homes and the village hall, which were badly damaged by summer flooding three years ago.

The scheme is the result of villagers setting up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to look at alleviation plans. The CIC teamed with the Environment Agency and the district council before gaining approval from the RFDC.

Newbury MP and flood-

ing minister Richard Benyon, who visited the village on Friday, said: "This is a fantastic example of local people working with the Environment Agency to tackle the risks of flooding.

"I hope this scheme will stand out as a shining example of what can be achieved with partnership working."

Villager Piers Allison, one of the CIC leaders, said Bucklebury is seeing results thanks to the willingness of residents to push their ideas forward.

He added: "We have raised funds from within the community and from other generous local benefactors to contribute to the scheme. I hope our equitable funding mechanism, the type of company we have formed and the contract we created with the Environment Agency can be used by others in the future."

The work, which is



Flood-ready: Left to right, field manager Barry Russell, MP Richard Benyon and Bucklebury Village Flood Team's Piers Allison visit the Bucklebury Flood Relief scheme. 105498. **PHOTO: MIKE SWIFT**

expected to be completed by Christmas, centres around the River Pang and includes building flood bunds, digging a bypass channel and developing a new ford to divert flood

flows around Bucklebury. The scheme also includes work to ensure the flood risk is not increased downstream in Stanford Dingley. Environment Agency

flood risk manager Barry Russell said: "This flood alleviation scheme represents a great example of communities working together to make their village a better place."



Twyford, Charvil, Hurst, Sonning, Wargrave

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Chorus concert at St Peter's

THE Sonning-based Bel Canto Chorus will hold its third Christmas concert at St Peter's Church in Earley on Saturday, December 11, at 7 pm.

Tickets are £6 and include festive refreshments. Under-16s are free. This will be the last concert for the chorus' musical director Nicky Jerome. David Kirby-Ashmore has been appointed the new director. For more information, and to join, visit www.belcantochorus.org.uk

Keeping the reserve clean

THE Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust need helpers to remove overgrown scrub and clear fences at the Loddon Nature Reserve in Twyford on Saturday. Meet at the Waggon and Horses Pub on the Old Bath Road, Twyford, from 10am-1pm. Volunteers should wear suitable clothes and waterproofs. For details, call 01628 829574.

Motorcycle trip in Africa

STEVE Kay, from Hurst, has raised £5,000 for Enduro Africa charities which aims to help AIDS orphans by improving schools in South Africa. Mr Kay rode his motorcycle in the eight-day Enduro Africa trek which goes through poverty-stricken provinces. He also helped refurb a primary school in Gojela, near Qhora Mouth.