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 flooding 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 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."