

## Transcription

### RESILIENCE AFTER THE FLOOD

**A digital story told by Anthony, a business owner from Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, UK**

We had a little warning in 1998 when we had about 6 inches of water in the new shop and thought that exceptional. In 2007 we had the big flood. I knew it was coming; I knew the signs. I recognised at 2.30 in morning of July 20th that we were likely to be in trouble. We started at 8.30 in morning to put things upstairs, on top of desks - thinking, knowing the water was more than likely to come in.

It was rising at roughly a foot an hour but we didn't think it would amount to anything more than 2 or 3 feet deep. Of course, it was more like 6 foot deep and we weren't prepared for that. The result and damage was overwhelming to a point where I almost chucked in the towel and thought I would stop running a garage and I'll go and become a hermit somewhere. It was so depressing to see the damage that water can do.

However, you have to pick yourself up and the first thing I went for was photographs because they're irreplaceable and after that mechanical things - the loss of vintage motorbikes, 9 cars, a new van. I decided we would need to get operational within 2 weeks and this we did with help from friends, customers and the job centre. With the good old zero hours contract, we were able to find quite a few people, drag them in, pay them on an hourly basis to clean the place up and sort through things and get us back operational.

Two weeks from that weekend, we were back in business. We had a little bit of help from insurance companies but it wasn't until April the following year that we got any money out of them. We did have a £10,000 bung but we didn't get the balance until the following year. But I had always kept a rainy day fund of £30000 tucked away in case. What a good job I did otherwise we would have been out of business. So since then, we understand that flooding is something we have to put up with. A flood prevention scheme would not be really possible because we would have to build massive banks around the building and it just isn't practical.

So, we had to do a flood acceptance scheme - the mezzanine floor I had put in, there will be a crane there to lift stuff up and the sliding rails will move back, a post will come and we'll be able to put heavy stuff upstairs. There is a plan afoot to build an extra storey on this building and install a lift. I hope that this will happen in the next two years, and that will mean we really can shift stuff upstairs in the event of the flood. There will be four 4-post lifts which means that we can put an awful lot of stuff in terms of vehicles up in the air and out of harm's way.

Everything else, we have a contingency plan to ship stuff up to the 'Power Station' which is the name of a business that occupies the old railway station. They're quite prepared to take anything that we can whizz up there in the event of another 2007 flood and another flood there will be. It's not the 50 year flood that everybody thinks - I'm thinking 10 years.