

# The Telegraph

Friday 21 February 2014

## **The Government needs to call in the flood experts**

Professionals on water management can help prevent floods in future

**SIR – As landscape architects, architects, engineers, hydrologists, ecologists and other specialists with the experience necessary to tackle flooding, we would like the Government to be aware that the expertise of our professions is available and, we believe, urgently required.**

While we are pleased to hear that the Prime Minister will provide leadership and funding, it is essential that government actions are based on best practice developed over many years. Water management techniques could have helped prevent the effect of flooding on villages, towns and over surrounding land seen recently. Emergency measures are in order for the immediate crisis. But in the long term, the management of water requires a clear strategy. We need to look at how forestry, land management and soft-engineered flood alleviation schemes can hold back water in the upper reaches of rivers, and how dredging may assist in the lower reaches.

We need to fit sustainable drainage systems comprehensively for existing buildings and all new buildings. Buildings and land that cannot be properly protected should be made resilient to withstand flooding. All new housing on flood plains must be resilient when built.

Co-operation is needed between the professions, the water companies, internal drainage boards, local authorities, the Environment Agency, and Natural Resources Wales. They must all work with landowners and residents to be effective.

In the Environment Agency are people experienced in addressing these problems, as there are among the members of all our organisations. We need to mobilise that joint expertise. We are asking David Cameron to convene without delay a cross-departmental conference, including the professions, with the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Communities, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, similar to the one convened to address the problem of ash dieback.

**S E Illman**

President, Landscape Institute

**George Adams**

President, Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers

**Heather Barrett-Mold**

Chair, Institution of Environmental Sciences

**Martin Baxter**

Executive director – policy, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

**Shireen Chambers**

Chief executive, Institute of Chartered Foresters

**Adam Donnan**

Chief executive officer, Institution of Environmental Science

**Michael Doran**

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

**John Gregory**

Institute of Fisheries Management

**Sally Hayns**

Chief executive officer, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

**Louise Kingham**

Chief executive, Energy Institute

**Steve Lee**

Chief executive officer, Chartered Institution of Wastes Management

**Karen Martin**

Chief executive, Arboricultural Association

**Dr Peter Spillett**

President, Institute of Fisheries Management

**Alastair Taylor**

Chief Executive, Institution of Agricultural Engineers

**Professor William Pope**

Chairman, Environmental Policy Forum

**Mike Summersgill**

President, Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

**Jim Whelan**

Council Member, Institution of Environmental Science