

Welsh company completes four Environment Agency contracts to help protect Dylan Thomas land from destructive flood threat



Extensive flood protection work for ninety properties across the heart of Dylan Thomas Land has successfully been completed by Floodgate, a Welsh company that has been providing defence against flooding for more than 10 years. Having won the four contracts awarded by the Environment Agency of Wales, Floodgate delivered comprehensive flood safety activity in the Carmarthenshire towns of Laugharne, Meidrim, Pennant and Llanddowror.

It is estimated that across the UK, over five million properties are at risk of flooding at some stage every year. It takes only two inches of water to incur an average repair cost of £20,000, a significant amount of money, made even worse if not covered by insurance.

40 properties in Laugharne, an ancient township reputed to be the place where Dylan Thomas, "got off the bus and never got on again", have been fitted with Floodgate's unique door barrier system, which comes in a variety of sizes. The homes that benefited from the scheme spanned the full residential variety, from listed character cottages to funky, modern flats.

After carefully assessing 20 properties in the small parish town of Meidrim, a range of solutions were used on old stone cottages, terraced houses and several sheltered properties for the elderly. Although one of the benefits of Floodgate is that it can be conveniently stored away until needed, Floodgate can be installed permanently where this is deemed to be the safest option, as is the case with homes of older or less able-bodied people.

30 buildings in the little villages of Pennant and Llanddowror were deemed to be in need of flood defence precautions, including an old chapel and an adjoining house. It was originally thought that a bespoke solution may be needed for this unusual property, but the flexible nature of Floodgate proved to be ample protection.

Floodgate is ideal for use across a range of buildings because, uniquely amongst flood barrier products, it requires no modifications to be made to the property where it is fitted. It comprises of a 25mm steel box frame which expands both horizontally and vertically, to fit according to the door size. The frame is covered by a 7mm neoprene jacket which expands with the gate, creating a seal between it and appropriate surfaces. Several Floodgates can be joined together to protect larger entrances, such as garages or even driveways. Crucially, it takes only two minutes to activate, meaning a speedy reaction time if a flood risk is imminent.

In March this year, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) increased the number of towns and villages across the country that are eligible for flood protection grants but many local communities still feel that not enough has been done to sufficiently protect their homes and livelihoods from the significant threat of flood damage.

Mary Dhonau, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum, believes it is important to take as many protective measures as possible, given her own extensive personal experience of flooding: "There are now so many things you can buy to prevent or minimize damage that weren't around when I was first flooded. I would urge people to invest in such items to give them peace of mind and stop the terrible damage flooding can inflict."

One of the first flood protection products to pass the stringent physical tests set by the Environment Agency, Floodgate has been accredited with the prestigious BSI Kitemark since 2003. It is now regularly awarded government contracts to consult on flood risk, assess the precautionary requirements of properties in hazardous areas, and to supply suitable protection.