

RESIDENTS' JOY AT FLOOD DEFENCES

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STONE residents who were hit by a deluge of water from a nearby brook are now flooded with relief following the completion of a £400,000 defence.

In 2004 flash floods from the brook affected more than 30 homes and gardens on the Aston Lodge estate and neighbouring streets.

Some homes were inundated three times in 11 days and St Michael's First School's grounds were also flooded.

Three residents, Jeremy Slann, Nigel Holmes and John Whitehouse, formed a residents' association to campaign for measures to prevent the flooding happening again.

At that time Aston Lodge residents and the Environment Agency hoped to create an overflow lake, or balancing pond, and complete the project, estimated to cost £130,000, in 2007.

The project was financed through the Local Levy Fund administered by the Regional Flood Defence Committee, which is paid into by all local authorities in the Midlands.

And although it took longer to get off the ground than first anticipated, six years on from the floods, the work is now complete.

A 110m long, 4.4m high earth embankment dam with emergency spillway which can store 9,500 cubic metres of



DEFENCE DELIGHT: Jeremy Slann, Neil Lote from the Environment Agency, John Whitehouse and Nigel Holmes at the new flood defence site, and, right, flooding at St Michael's First School in 2004.

flood water has been created on land at Stone Park Farm.

It will reduce flood risk to a one per cent chance of happening in any one year with a built-in allowance to take account of climate change.

Residents, councillors and other invited guests were due to celebrate the launch of the pool this morning with a tree planting ceremony but the event has been postponed because of the snow.

Association members this week paid

tribute to the work of those involved in the project, including Environment Agency project manager Neil Lote and former Stone county councillor John Wakefield.

Mercer Avenue resident Mr Holmes, whose car was written off by flood damage in 2004, said: "People like myself who were affected are very relieved this project will reduce the risk of floods. It gives a lot of peace of mind.

"Some people who had young children



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had to move out for a while. And every time it rained you would look out the back window and expect water to come charging down the garden."

Mr Whitehouse added: "People who saw the flood said a well of water 10ft deep came flushing down.

"The brook is at the bottom of my garden and my garden was flooded.

"The Environment Agency have done a cracking job, it's good news for everybody."