Kendal Flood December 2015 project interview

Peter Thornton, born 1951
Leader of SLDC in December 2015
Interviewed May 2016

314f / Summary Sheet
Track 1, pp.1-2
Childhood memories of frequent floods in Kendal. Kendal Flood Scheme in 1970s.
Regular flooding of roads in Longsleddale (where he lives).
Great activity and concern over Storm Clodagh (November 2015) a 'nearly' flood.

Track 2, pp.2-3
At home in Longsleddale on Saturday 5 December 2015. Cut off, so not in Kendal.
Social media and Westmorland Gazette website showed him how serious the
flooding was in Kendal.
Came into Kendal on the Sunday morning – looked around, assessed the damage.
Shocked by the situation. Wondered how the council would deal with it.

Track 3, pp.3-5
A great deal of activity on the Sunday afternoon. Lots of press in Kendal.
A team of people set up (councillors/ other) to try to deal with the massive
emergency. Opened a small room in the Town Hall to co-ordinate offers of help and
requests for assistance. Many people offered goods and assistance.
Volunteers sorted the goods in the Town Hall.
Reflects on the different situations of people who had been flooded – some with
resources, some not.
Some people were in a very difficult situation.
Concern over how to house the very large group of homeless people. How this was
resolved.

Track 4, pp.6-7
Reflects on the important role played by social media in alerting the council to
problems, but also in encouraging people to be very critical of the council and others.
Details of the various grants that were available to homes and businesses that had
been flooded and the confusion this caused.
Government promises not always kept.
A great deal of support and goodwill within the local community.

Track 6, p.8
Reflects on the extent of the flood and wonders whether it will happen again.
People are rightly very concerned about this.
What sort of flood preventions measures should be taken? This will be a major issue
for the future.