

# 'Forget your foreign aid Cameron and help our own people'

[essexlive.news/comment-forget-foreign-aid-cameron-help-people/story-20728776-detail/story.html](http://essexlive.news/comment-forget-foreign-aid-cameron-help-people/story-20728776-detail/story.html)

3/3/2014



*Flooding this winter has devastated families and businesses across the country, with the Environment Agency and Whitehall coming in for some criticism.*

*But should the government divert funds from our international aid budget to help those affected? The Essex Chronicle's Old and Grumpy columnist **Derek Threadgall** thinks they should.*

WHAT is it about David Cameron? How can he, in all conscience, stand in the midst of our flood devastation yet continue to defend ring-fencing his precious international aid budget?

Like many others, I firmly believe that charity begins at home and currently there is no more deserving cause than the tragic plight of victims of the flooding catastrophe affecting huge swathes of our countryside.

By now, most of us have read about and seen pictures of the devastation to homes, businesses, farms and shops, the human victims of which cried out for help and, in many cases, just cried in a quiet fury at the helplessness of their situation.

It was inevitable that our Government was, as usual, slow off the mark to respond, and the Environment Agency deservedly took most of the flak.

Stable doors and horses spring to mind when our politicians belatedly sniffed out a photo-opportunity; like Cameron, they are big on rhetoric and small on action.

Let's face it, how could our posh boys really comprehend the enormity of this tragedy when the nearest they get to a flood is when their bath water overflows?

And no doubt David Cameron will utter that political cliché that lessons will be learned. Lessons are never learned.

I was 15 fifteen years old and living in Clacton when on January 31, 1953, the storm of the century hit our east coast and claimed 307 lives in England.

The largest loss of life occurred on Canvey Island where 59 died, comparable to the worst nights of the Blitz during the Second World War.

For 18 hours, the deadly combination of Force 11 storms and high spring tides smashed through the sea defences to flood more than 150,000 acres of land, with 160,000 acres of prime farmland rendered useless for years.

Across the UK, 32,000 people were evacuated from their homes. Lessons learned?

One lesson that must be learned is that we cannot live without nature, but nature can live without us and is proving it – big time.