



Community Resilience Case Study Long Sutton Parish Council

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a case study of Long Sutton Parish Council's Community Resilience scheme.

Background

The Parish of Long Sutton is situated in the heart of Somerset, bordered to the south by the Levels and the river Yeo and to the north by rolling hills and woods. The Parish contains the village of Long Sutton and the hamlets of Knole and Upton. Current populace is approximately 890 persons with a total of 366 households. The Parish benefits from a School, Church, Public House, Shop and Post Office.

The Parish had formally undertaken some Community Emergency Planning during the Cold War period under the auspices of the 1983 Civil Defence Regulations. Since the end of the Cold War, there was no further activity until 2009 when the impact of severe weather upon the Parish highlighted the need for basic Community Resilience measures. It was decided by the Council of the time to form a new structure for Civil Contingencies planning.

Organisation:

Community Resilience is organised by the Parish Council. It forms part of the general function of Community Safety and is grouped with Neighbourhood Watch, Community Speedwatch and Civil Contingencies. The Parish Council as tier of Local Government take the lead as they have the existing legal framework for decision making and relationship with partner organisations including District Council, County Council and the Police.

Partner Organisations:

The Parish has developed its Community Resilience plans in partnership with South Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council and Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Effective communication at a local level has enabled good working relationships to be formed, so that in the event of an incident there is an awareness of the capabilities of the Parish.

Delivering Local Community Resilience:

The Parish Council have a monthly meeting where Community Resilience is a standing agenda item and progress is reported each month. This section describes the different elements of the organisation.



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Control Structure:

The Parish Council is the lead organisation. It has ownership of the Community Emergency Plan and designates a lead Councillor for delivering Community Resilience. In the event of an incident, day to day management is delegated to a Councillor supported by an Emergency Committee.

The Parish Council controls such issues as funding, insurance, and a framework for working with partner organisations.

Volunteers and other Community Organisations:

Volunteers are recruited from within the Parish Council and from members of the Public. They directly report to the Parish Council. Volunteers undertake training and have PPE available to them including:-

- Reflective Jackets
- Coveralls
- Gloves
- Torch
- Safety Helmets

Recruitment has been by letter to every household and by word of mouth. Volunteers are known to the Council.

Where there may be access to vulnerable persons, Disclosure and Barring Service Checks are in place for some volunteers or alternatively, for safeguarding purposes there are clear lines of communication to the Police.

Other organisations within the Parish work alongside the existing structure to support the Council in the event of incident including:-

Women's Institute-Volunteers from the WI have provided Emergency Feeding during exercises

Holy Trinity Church-Pastoral Care and volunteers have been provided for the delivering of leaflets and information with the Church magazine.



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Resources:

A Parish Resource Register has been produced detailing the physical and human resources of the Parish. A copy is provided at APPENDIX A. A letter was issued to every household asking them to complete the Parish Resource Register. This details local information on skills, resources and volunteering. The Council maintains this database of volunteers and resources.

Emergency Accommodation Centres / Place of Safety / Emergency Accommodation:

The Parish participates in the County Emergency Accommodation Centre (EAC) programme and it has trained to operate such a Centre for Civil Contingencies purposes. It now has basic equipment for the operation of such a facility. In addition to the primary EAC it has identified 2 further standby EAC's within the Community which could also be operated a fall back / stand-alone / overflow Centres. An Emergency Accommodation register is also compiled of Holiday Cottages, B&B Rooms and Empty properties that could be used if there was a need for such accommodation.

Dormant Contracts:

The Council has dormant arrangement that in the event of incident that it can call upon local suppliers for the provision of food, resources and other such items as may be required to support the Community in the early stages of an incident until resources from the Local Authority are deployed.

Technology:

New technology has been embraced and this includes:-

- Digital Mapping
- Wi Fi Remote Cameras
- Use of IPADS for emergency management

Flood Preparations:

A sandbag store has been created and during flooding incidents, filled sand bags are available to local residents.



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Warning and Informing

The Parish of has addressed the issues of local warning and informing as follows:-

Parish Website:

The website has a dedicated Community Safety/Community Resilience set of pages on the website. During an incident the pages can be updated quickly and remotely. Fallback provisions exist with an external provider to provide continuity in the event of loss of services locally.

Email / SMS / MMS Messages:

Via the website residents may register for automatic alerts in the event of an incident.

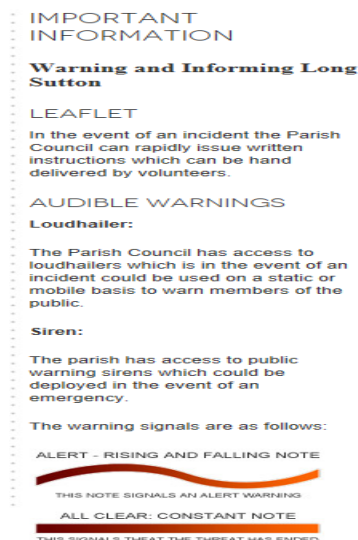
Public Information Sheets

These can be produce quickly using local resources and hand delivered using Church volunteers. An example from the 2014 floods is at APPENIX B.

Public Warning Sirens

The Parish also has the capability to issue public warnings via powered siren.

These give two forms of warning-ALERT & ALL CLEAR. The sirens are controlled by the Parish Council. Due to the impact that these audible warnings may have on neighbouring Communities, the decision to activate would be taken in conjunction with the Police and the Local Authority. Extract from Parish Website:-





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Funding:

The Parish Council sets an annual budget for Community Safety within its annual precept. It has been further funded by the National Lottery Awards for All Scheme and is now working with the Somerset Community Foundation for further funding. The annual cost of maintaining the scheme is £250 pa with capital equipment funded through grants or local fund raising. By utilising the Parish Resource Register, capital expenditure is minimalised as equipment required in the event of an incident can be pre-identified and earmarked accordingly with the consent of the owner.

2014 Floods:

The 2014 floods were a test of the local resilience plans and the Parish response included:-

- Providing filled sandbags to local residents and working with District when the local bridge was closed, to provide a wider distribution service to neighbouring Parishes
- Warning and Informing Local Residents
- Organising Parish Meetings and Community Updates
- Operating a Community Delivery Service when Bridges and Roads were closed
- Deploying remote monitoring equipment for SITREP purposes.

Example photo from remote Wi Fi Camera below:-



Long Sutton-08 January 2014



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Dual Use:

The Parish Council positively encourages the use of Community Resilience Volunteers and Resources for dual use within the Community. An organisation with resources solely earmarked for Civil Contingencies would become static very quickly and so, this resource is applied to all Community activities including fetes, events and functions within the village. This provides activity and training for volunteers. It also allows for equipment to be tested and familiarised. It also shows the benefit of such an organisation because it provides a direct benefit to the very fabric of the Community. A recent example being the World War One Anniversary Events:-

- Volunteers assisted with the organisation of the event
- Sandbags from the Sandbag Store were used to create 'trench positions'
- Emergency Feeding equipment was used for the catering for the event
- Volunteers provided first aid and stewarding
- Other Civil Contingencies equipment including safety barriers, PA system, traffic cones, etc were deployed for the event
- There was liaison with the Police prior and during the event

This practical application of Community Resilience provided a good training opportunity.

Future Objectives:

To ensure that there is a commitment to Community Resilience and to motivate Parish Volunteers, the 2014/2015 objectives include:-

- Parish First Aid Training for Members of the Public
- Updating the Parish Resource Register
- Monthly testing of the Warning and Informing capabilities of the Parish
- Liaison with adjoining Parishes and Towns to form a grouping of Communities for mutual aid purposes in the event of an incident / severe weather
- Joint training with neighbouring Parishes and Towns
- A 'live' exercise to be held within the Parish to test all elements of the Community Emergency Plan
- Division of the Parish into sub areas, managed by a volunteer warden who will be responsible for their allocated area of the Community and to be a local hub for vulnerable person checks and flood defence equipment.



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Summary:

Whilst this sounds an extensive and comprehensive scheme of arrangements for local Community Resilience, the emphasis is on being a 'good neighbour' and utilising the day to day skills within the Community. By ensuring that Civil Contingencies resources are used on a regular basis for a Community use such as local events, this 'added value' allows the Community to see the benefits of local resilience arrangements. This service was invaluable during the 2014 floods and allowed the Community to self-manage much of the local incidents whilst still working in partnership with its colleagues from other agencies and organisations.



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Appendix A: Community Resource Register:

**CONFIDENTIAL & RESTRICTED WHEN COMPLETED
LONG SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLAN-RE SOURCE REGISTER**

For the attention of the Parish Clerk

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

MOBILE:

PLEASE TICK:

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO VOLUNTEER & TRAIN TO ASSIST THE COMMUNITY []

IS YOUR PROPERTY ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?			
A house	Flat	Bungalow	
Farm	Caravan	Other	
HAVE YOU OR ANY OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SKILLS?			
Doctor	Building	Mechanic	
Pharmacist	Plumbing	Gas installation	
Nurse	Electrical	Fire fighting	
Firstaid	Engineering	Catering	
Vet	HGV license	Rescue	
Radio Operator	Plant operator	HM Forces	
Administrative	Nursery Nurse		
PLEASE SHOW IN THE SPARE BOXES ABOVE ANY OTHER SKILLS YOU HAVE			
HAVE YOU OR ANY OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD ANY SKILLS THAT MIGHT BE OF USE TO THE PARISH IN AN EMERGENCY? IF SO, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS:			
HAVE YOU ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY USE?			
Tractor	JCB	Radio Transmitter	
Trailer	Lifting Gear	Portable Heater	
Snow Plough	Heavy Lift Cables	Gas Cylinders	
4 WD Vehicle	Generator	Emergency Lighting	
Lorry/Utility	Portable Pump	Boats	
Motor Cycle	Mobile Water Tank		
Cycle	Chain Saw		
PLEASE TICK THE SPARE BOXES AND SHOW ANY OTHER EQUIPMENT THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL			
DO YOU COOK BY:			
Electricity	Mains Gas	Solid Fuel	
Bottled Gas	Tanked Gas	Oil	
HAVE YOU ANY ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF COOKING OR HEATING?		YES	NO
DO YOU HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY ON YOUR PROPERTY?			
Well	Spring	Borehole	None
HAVE YOU ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION? PLEASE GIVE DETAILS:			

When completed please place in an envelope and deposit at the Long Sutton Village Stores and Post Office in the specially provided mailbox within the shop- or send by post or email to:-

Mrs Paula Allen-45 West End View-South Petherton-Somerset-TA13 5EW
Telephone: 01460 241497-Email: paula.allen45@hotmail.co.uk



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Appendix B:

Warning and Informing-Example Community Emergency Newsletter:



LONG SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY UPDATE SEVERE WEATHER & FLOODING

For several weeks now, the Somerset Levels has been affected by severe weather and flooding. The County Council has declared a major incident and a multi-agency response to the incident is underway. The Parish Council as part of its emergency response is issuing this Community Information sheet to update to local residents on the current situation.

LONG LOAD BRIDGE:

The bridge is currently closed to traffic and pedestrians. The Parish Council has been in contact with County and the following extract from the Officer response details the current position:-

.....It should be noted that during the last inspection of this structure a bulge in the abutment was noted and our current concerns do relate to the possibility of this bulge either increasing and or being washed/scoured out resulting in loss of support for the structure..... I would never recommend that anyone stand on a bridge when a river is in full flood and arches are at full capacity. As we unfortunately saw in Cumbria in 2009, bridges are not safe refuges and it was only right that the Police's concerns were actioned with a closure.

Secondly the road, I understand, is currently impassable due to the flooding and the flood water has damaged a section of carriageway within the flooded area, which has to be patched before the road can be reopened. Unfortunately this patching can only occur once the flood waters have rescinded from the carriageway.



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I understand that our area highways office have their contractor on standby waiting for the water levels to drop so that the road condition can be assessed and the necessary repairs actioned.

However, now the closure is in place we have to take measures to ensure it is safe to re-open – whether or not we believe there is damage, it would be remiss of us not to. Before we can reopen the road a full detailed inspection/survey of the currently underwater elements of the structure has to be carried out as anything could be happening beneath the water line. The abutments, piers etc could be scoured/undercut, we just don't know and I am not happy to open the road until we have a better idea into the condition of the structure.

LONG LOAD BRIDGE:

That said, initially we were hoping to carry out our inspections once the water levels drop to enable access into the watercourse however it has become clear that this could be a significant time and we do not want to keep the road closed any longer than is absolutely necessary. Therefore our contractors have a team of divers on standby who will carry out a detailed underwater inspection of the structure to determine if there are any problems.

These divers visited the site last week and again earlier this week but unfortunately the water flow was too great for them to enter and carry out the works safely, they will be regularly monitoring the site and the water flow and will carry out the inspection at the earliest safe opportunity. Fortunately the structure was recently inspected (back in August 2013) and the northern most arch completely desilted. Our engineer on site at the time took defect records, so when it is safe for the divers to re-inspect we have a very recent bench mark to compare against.

Unfortunately I am unable to give you any idea of timescales of when the road/bridge can be reopened; we are wholly dependent on the water levels/flows at this site, which unfortunately we have no control of. The site is regularly checked and as soon as it is safe to carry out a diving inspection it will be done and hopefully the bridge is in a good state of repair to enable its reopening, once carriageway repairs have been completed, but unfortunately the course of action which will follow depends solely on the outcome of the diving survey and inspection. Once we have these findings we will be able to decide the course of action we need to follow. I can also confirm that I met the Army out on site this morning on a reconnaissance of the site to see what options were available with regards to the possible provision of a temporary bridge and following this site visit they were going back to carry out further detailed investigations and then present their findings at tonight's COBRA briefing.



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The Parish Council is in contact daily with County and District to get updates on this situation. Public safety has to take the priority and all agencies are working to get the bridge open as soon as it is practical to do so. Further updates will be issued via the Parish Noticeboards and through the Parish Website.

SANDBAGS & FLOOD DEFENCE ITEMS:

Whilst it is hoped that the Parish should not be subjected to further flooding, supplies of sandbags can be obtained from South Somerset District Council (see contact details below).

To request sandbags in an emergency please phone us on 01935 462462 (when the offices are closed you will need to hold on and be transferred to the SSDC Out of Hours cover for emergencies).

Further information is available from:-

www.southsomerset.gov.uk/environment/emergency-planning/request-sandbags/

The Parish Council also holds limited stocks of sandbags and other flood defence items. You should contact your local Parish Councillor if you require these items urgently.

KEEPING INFORMED:

The following websites are being updated on a regular basis about the flooding situation:-

South Somerset District Council

www.southsomerset.gov.uk/majorincident

Somerset County Council News Room

www.somersetnewsroom.com

PARISH WEBSITE:

The Council is pleased to report that the Parish Website is being updated and whilst operational now, it is undergoing further enhancements. Thank you to all residents for their patience during this process. Please revisit the Website for regular updates and details of how local community groups and organisations will be able to upload information to the site.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE REGISTER:

On page 4 of this information sheet is a community resource register questionnaire. The current major incident has demonstrated the need for community emergency plans.



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The Parish Council is seeking to update the list of skills and resources within the community that could be used in an emergency. The information will be treated as confidential and restricted. Nevertheless, to satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act, please agree to your details being recorded in either hard copy or held on computer. This data will only be used by the Parish Council and will be kept securely. It shall be assumed that by returning the questionnaire, you agree to these conditions. Completed forms should be returned to the Parish Clerk. There is also a request for Civil Contingency Volunteers.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS:

The current road closure is affecting local businesses. The Parish Council is supporting a 'shop local' campaign to encourage business to the affected areas of the Levels in order to sustain local businesses during this difficult time. We are also looking at other ways to support local commerce with the partner agencies we work with.

FLOOD RELIEF GRANTS:

The Somerset Community Foundation working with the Parish Council has been issuing flood relief grants to affected residents. For further details of the scheme please refer to the Community Foundation website or contact your local Parish Councillor.

Somerset Community Foundation-Telephone 01749 344949

www.somersetcf.org.uk

OTHER COMMUNITY INFORMATION:

The Roundabout Appeal envelope (as mentioned on page 9 of the Roundabout magazine) is attached.