

St Cuthberts Out Parish Emergency Plan

Section 1 - Introduction

Definition of an emergency

An emergency/major incident is any event or circumstance (happening with or without warning) that causes or threatens death or injury, disruption to the community, or damage to property or to the environment on such a scale that the effect cannot be dealt with by the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations as part of their normal day-to-day activities.

Context

County Councils, district councils and emergency services have an emergency response structure. Although there is no statutory requirement for a local community to produce an emergency plan, they are encouraged by these authorities to develop one.

A Community Emergency Plan documents how a community would respond to an emergency situation while awaiting the assistance of statutory responders, or in support of them.

Please note – Parish Councillors are all volunteers. Many are retired, disabled, or have to keep their own jobs going; furthermore there are only about half a dozen in each parish (or Ward in the case of St Cuthberts Out). The implementation of this plan depends on volunteers coming forward from the community to help. Parishes have no financial resources of their own to draw on for emergency response, nor any but the simplest equipment. Although parishes will support legitimate claims to County for expenses incurred in emergency response (supported by records and receipts), it is not up to parish councils to decide whether they should be paid.

The Parish Council would very much welcome people coming forward now, so that you can be briefed on how best to help yourselves and your immediate neighbours, even if you can't assist in a larger capacity.

This plan covers the geographical area of St Cuthberts Out Parish, which is divided into four Wards (North, East, South and West).

Aims

To increase resilience within the local community.

To develop a robust co-ordinated strategy for coping with emergencies.

To complement the plans of emergency services and statutory organisations..

Objectives

- Identify the risks to the community
- Identify a means of contacting vulnerable people / groups in the community
- Co-ordinate the local skills and resources available in an emergency
- Compile a list of important contact details

Section 2 - Key roles within the community

Three roles need to be covered during the operation of the Emergency Plan:-

1. Co-ordinator
2. Roving patrol
3. Welfare

These roles are described in Appendix 1

Section 3 - Possible Emergencies

Examples of the types of emergency that could have an impact on our communities are:-

- severe weather
- flooding
- widespread disruption to some or all utilities
- an incident at Hinkley Point nuclear facility
- a major incident at the annual Glastonbury Festival
- disruption to the national transport network leading to shortage of essential supplies
- a local or national health emergency

Details of possible scenarios are described in Appendix Two – Risk Assessment and Actions.

Section 4 - Activation of the Plan

If the responsible authorities require assistance at parish level, the Somerset Civil Contingencies Unit will contact the Emergency Community Contacts on the parish council, and ask them to arrange for the Emergency Plan to be activated.

We may also be asked to activate it if warnings are received, prior to an anticipated event such as severe weather.

In an acute situation, the senior police officer at the scene has the power to ask us to activate our Emergency Plan.

If all contact is lost with the responsible authorities, and emergency actions within the parish are required, the Emergency Plan can be activated by the Parish Chair, Parish Vice-Chair, the Chair of the Emergency Plan Committee and the Parish Clerk acting in concert, the quorum for such a decision being two.

If the Emergency Plan is activated, a log book of the event is to be started at once.

Parishioners are to be informed of the activation of the Plan by any and all means possible, given prevailing circumstances.

Section 5 - Resources available within the community

Volunteers

There will be a need to draw upon various skills before, during and after any emergency. The success of this Emergency Plan rests largely on the goodwill of volunteers.

Upon activation of the Emergency Plan, volunteers should report to the parish Duty Co-ordinator to be allocated tasks.

The table in Appendix Three lists volunteers who have made themselves known to us in advance, along with any particular skills they may have. This list is 'restricted'. The Emergency Plan Committee and the responsible authorities have access to it outside an emergency situation, but the general public do not.

Other resources

Other resources will be required in an emergency, and it is important to be able to locate them quickly. These are also detailed in Appendix Three (restricted).

In an emergency, some support can be sourced through the District or County Council via the Duty Civil Contingencies Officer.

Parishioners who could supply any of the following in an emergency, or its aftermath, should contact the Parish Emergency Plan Committee, via the Parish Clerk.

Please don't bring these to the site of an emergency, or a place of safety, unless you're asked to do so.

- Tables
- Chairs
- Tents
- Camp beds
- Blankets
- First Aid kits
- Hi-vis clothing
- Equipment to make hot drinks, including cups
- Other kitchen equipment
- Tinned food and other supplies; pre-cooked meals
- Bottled water, clean water containers
- Bathroom supplies – soap, toilet roll, disinfectant
- Information boards, chalk, notebooks and other stationery
- Old style telephones (need no mains power)
- Mobile phones and chargers
- Torches and batteries
- Emergency lighting
- Portable heaters
- Warm clothes
- Off-grid power
- Generators and fuel
- Tractors
- Maps
- Shovels and other tools
- Wood and metal working equipment
- Amateur radio equipment, including CB radios

Local place of safety

District or unitary councils are responsible for setting up a central rest centre during an emergency. However it may be necessary to set up a temporary place of safety within the community as an option, for example to receive visitors or for local people evacuated from their homes.

A village hall, or other building, registered as a place of safety will be contacted by the Civil Contingencies Unit, or by a senior police officer, if it needs to be opened. There is a procedure for this in the registration process.

Parish councils are not involved in setting up these facilities. Should a place of safety be activated, the keyholder or other member of the management committee should inform the parish council Emergency Plan Committee at once.

In the event of contact being lost with the responsible authorities, the Parish Emergency Plan Committee can require a place of safety to open. This must be recorded in the event logbook, and counter signed by a member of the management committee of the building where possible.

Section 6 – Communications

Communications are vital before, during and after an emergency in order to ensure that warnings and information are received and passed on, responses co-ordinated with emergency services, and actions by volunteers within the community co-ordinated on the ground.

It is particularly important that schools, places of safety and workplaces, including farms, are kept in the loop. Neighbouring parishes, and the City of Wells, should be contacted. Updates must be provided at regular intervals, even if there is no change.

Contact details are found in Appendices 3 and 4.

Before an emergency

We may be asked to activate the Plan due to an impending severe weather event, or other disruption which could lead to an emergency situation.

In such an event, the Parish Emergency Committee would distribute warnings and advice to parishioners. We would use social media – the Parish Facebook page – and, to a lesser extent, the Parish website. Established Parish e-mailing lists and telephone trees would be utilised.

If it is safe to do so, leaflets and house-to-house calls may also be employed. Listed volunteers and resources holders from Appendix 3 would be contacted.

Contact details for statutory authorities, emergency services and key public resources are given in Appendix Four.

Using consent forms supplied the specific needs of parishioners who may require extra support during an emergency will be identified.

As the Emergency Plan is activated in this scenario, the Parish Emergency Plan Committee will have set up a command centre. Information will be available there, and reports can be received. Volunteers who are not yet listed can contact this centre to offer their services.

During an emergency.

Social media will be used to communicate advice and warnings, but it may not be possible to update the parish website.

E-mail lists and telephone trees will be maintained for as long as possible, with regular updates even if there is no change in the situation. Records will be kept of these communications.

A notice board will be set up at the command centre, with up to date information, and volunteers will be available there to advise, and to receive reports for the log book.

If it is safe to do so, house-to-house calls and leafletting will be maintained daily. This will depend upon sufficient numbers of volunteers coming forward. The Roving Patrol Co-ordinator (see Appendix 1) will oversee these initiatives, which would be greatly enhanced by bicycle messengers coming forward as volunteers.

The Duty Co-ordinator will attempt to maintain contact with the responsible authorities by any means available, including social media, mobile phones and amateur radio.

It is important not to assume that, just because a message has been sent, it has been received. Texts may not arrive for some hours, for example. If you receive a specific message, please acknowledge receipt of it.

After an emergency

The Emergency Community Contacts will be informed by the responsible authorities when the emergency is deemed to be over.

During the recovery period following an emergency, normal communication lines should be restored. Parishioners must be informed that the emergency plan situation has finished

The standing down policy will include sending an 'All Clear' message out along the communication lines used during the emergency, as recorded in the main log book. It is important not to dismiss volunteers until this is achieved.

Section 7 – Recording actions and obtaining feedback

The main log book must be started as soon as the Emergency Plan is activated. The Duty Co-ordinator is responsible for keeping it up-to-date, though it can be best if volunteers do the actual writing, especially if minutes of a meeting must be recorded.

Where a command centre is established, the main log book will be kept there. The contents are not necessarily available to the general public.

The Roving Patrol Co-ordinator, and any volunteer messengers, will keep field notebooks to record actions and information. These must be fed into the main log book as soon as reasonably practical.

The Welfare Co-ordinator, and any person responsible for a place of safety, should also keep a record of events, requests, resources received and so on.

It's important to record the date, time and the name of the person making the note (usually by initials) The template in Appendix Five can be printed for indoor use, but roving patrols are better equipped with a small notebook.

It can be useful to separate entries with a line drawn across the page. Ideally, notebooks should be bound, and you should only tear out pages from the back.

Once you have started a log, try and make an hourly note even if nothing new is happening.

Events and actions may also be recorded using phone cameras, but this should be in addition to written records, not instead of them.

After the emergency, this information can be used to make a report to the full Parish Council. Normal services and resources will be used in the recovery process, which does not count as an emergency.

A public meeting should be held to discuss our emergency response, and how the Plan can be

improved. The responsible authorities may wish us to provide feedback.

Section 8 – List of Plan Holders

There are two versions of this Emergency Plan – a restricted one and an unrestricted version. The distribution of the restricted version is limited as it contains contact details of potential volunteers (Appendix 3). The unrestricted version contains only publicly available details of emergency or statutory services, and key leads within the community.

Formal copies of this Emergency Plan are held by the following:-

Person	Unrestricted (U) or Restricted (R) version of plan	Form – paper or electronic	Notes
Local authority Emergency Team Officer at Somerset Civil Contingencies Unit	U	E	
SCO website	R	E	
Cllr Jane Walker (Parish Council Emergency Community Contact)	U	P/E	
Cllr Jim Reeves (Parish Council Emergency Community Contact)	U	P/E	
Cllr Ian Humphreys (Parish Council Emergency Community Contact)	U	P/E	
Cllr Gill Pettitt (Parish Council Emergency Community Contact)	U	P/E	
Parish Clerk (and Deputy Parish Clerk)	U	E	
Places of safety responsible persons	R	P	
Other key volunteers or groups within the parish	R	P/E	

Section 9 – Plan Review and Maintenance

In order to keep the plan up to date, contact lists will be revised as personnel changes occur. In addition, the plan will be reviewed annually by St Cuthberts Out Parish Council Emergency Plan Committee to ensure it adequately reflects the needs of the community.

Any changes to the plan will be noted on an Amendments sheet at the front of the plan. Annual updates will be circulated to formal holders of the plan as detailed in Section 9, even if there are no changes. It is the responsibility of the plan holders to ensure that they retain and use the most up to date version of the plan.