

The Epwell Community Emergency Plan April 2021

Introduction

This aims to be a simple plan maintained by the community to assist in coordinating local resources to respond to a disruptive event. It is initiated by the Parish Council which takes responsibility for updating, distribution and implementation of the plan, in consultation with others such as the Village Hall Committee, the Church Wardens and PCC and members of the community.

The Plan form part of a coordinated response with emergency services and the local authorities, in particular the Emergency Planning Team of OCC.

Why do we need a plan? Emergencies happen. Local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, focusing their efforts where life is in danger.

There will be times when individuals and communities are affected by an emergency but are not in immediate danger and will have to look after themselves and each other for a period until any necessary external assistance can be provided. Having a plan means we can create an efficient way to identify people who might need help, might be willing to help, equipment that could be used and safe locations where local people can gather if they cannot stay in their homes.

The plan should be communicated by EPC to the OCC Emergency Planning Team and the emergency responders, and updated annually, confirming the following:

- Emergency contact numbers: eg Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Church Wardens
- Designated safe locations: eg Village Hall, St Anne's Church.
- 24-hour key holders for safe locations: eg Church Wardens for church, chair VH and one other for Village Hall.(?)

The annual review of contact information and locations is a useful prompt for plan holders to review the document's content.

The Plan

General

What are the risks? Would include snow, ice and extreme cold, power/water failure, transport accidents on local roads, plane/glider crashes, road blockages and bridges collapsed, high winds, very heavy rain, fire, heatwave, human diseases (eg flu, Covid) epidemics or pandemics, animal diseases (eg foot and mouth, avian flu).

How to respond to an emergency? There should be well-established communication systems around the parish, such as notice boards, website, email network, Facebook groups.

Website should maintain an emergency section. Should establish contact details of key people within and outside village

Who is likely to initiate action? Epwell PC is the most likely organisation to activate the plan when the situation demands it. They will contact relevant village organisations, such as the Community Volunteer Groups, Church Wardens and PCC and Village Hall chair, as well as outside emergency responders, local emergency and resilience teams (OCC and CDC).

Details

1. Identify local resources and skills. Who can/might offer help, their contact details and the likely sort of help (eg drivers ready to pick up supplies, medicines, and do surgery/hospital runs, 4x4 owners, tractor owners, First Aiders, neighbours of vulnerable people, local shops prepared to deliver).
2. EPC should identify on a confidential basis who is reckoned to be vulnerable: eg living on own, unwell, elderly. The PCC may be able to help. EPC should use the Electoral Register to check on names and addresses. The full Register may require CDC permission to access and use.
3. Have in place Community Volunteer organizations, such as EVA (Epwell Village Assistance), to put those who need help in touch with those volunteers who are offering it. Identify resources they can draw on. There might well be other groups who have specific aims eg providing food.
4. Disruption of utilities. The electricity and water companies issue guidance on what to do. Ensure these leaflets are distributed to all. Encourage those eligible to apply for utility priority service in case of disruption.

5. Put together the comms systems as above viz notice boards, website, email network, Facebook groups.

A list of key village phone numbers should be prepared, eg of First Aiders, comms experts, volunteers, helpers, neighbours of vulnerable people.

Plus emergency contact numbers outside the village should be readily available. Police, Ambulance, Fire and NHS details.

Will need to co-ordinate and update the messages and information available on the various means of communication.

EPC should ensure that forecasts of adverse and severe weather are available, and also updates on emergency situations (eg location of accidents, blockages, flooding) and ensure information about human and animal diseases is readily and widely available.

6. Ensure that the salt/grit bins are replenished and maintain a year's worth of material in stock.

7. Designate safe locations where people can gather if cannot stay at home. Village Hall and St Anne's Church are likely places. 24-hour key holders for safe locations will be identified.
8. Review the plan annually, when OCC ask for updates on village contacts and safe locations.

9. Resources

Oxfordshire County Council's Emergency Planning Team offers advice on working out and testing emergency plans. They keep information on local community emergency plans, updated annually.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/emergencyplanning

emergencyplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk

01865 323765

On their website they have general information and specific guidance eg on snow and on utility failure. Leaflets are available.

There is a government document, with quite a useful template.

Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum have website and a booklet "Are you ready", available as hard copy, on line pdf and an audio version. See

<http://thamesvalleylrf.org.uk>