



Broadhembury Parish Council

Guidance for Households

This leaflet has been drawn up by Broadhembury Parish Council. Its aim is to give guidance to residents in the unlikely event of a major incident in the Parish or a smaller accident which effects a single household. Current contact details of Parish councillors can be found on the inside front page of the Parish Magazine or on the Broadhembury Parish Council website at www.broadhemburyparishcouncil.org.uk

Trying to predict the nature of any incident is impossible. This leaflet is intended to inform you whatever the eventuality may be. However, some things are clear. Our climate is changing and we are moving to a period of more severe weather. Dealing with large volumes of water, run-off from hills and fields will become a more regular occurrence. Strong winds, dry summers and very cold spells will all increase in frequency. 'Global warming' does not only mean hot weather!

Given the current financial situation of local authorities, many of the services that have hitherto been provided by the County or District Council have been cut or reduced in frequency or scope. The focus has shifted to 'community self-reliance'. We have to ask "what can we do to help ourselves?" It is clear from the experience of flooding events in other areas at the start of 2014, that national and local government were slow to respond. At Parish level we can respond more quickly and deal with the immediate need until other help arrives.

This leaflet sets out details of how we can help ourselves to prevent emergencies, who to contact if we need to, where to find information and where to access physical resources such as sandbags.

In the event of a major incident the Parish Council has an emergency plan which would be activated by the Chair or his/her Deputy. In the plan, resources and rest centres are identified if needed.

Thinking through how you might cope with an emergency and discussing it with your family is not alarmist or pessimistic. It is good sense! Most of the suggestions here are common sense! We hope this leaflet will help you.

What can we do to reduce the risk of disruptive events?

FLOODING

We can reduce the risk and severity of disruptive events such as flooding by preventative actions. As local residents we are familiar with where water runs off and pools. Are drains and road gullies clear or are they full of rubbish? It may be the responsibility of the local authority, but given the size of the network is it realistic to expect them to keep them all clear? By noting where there is debris, especially in the autumn and if possible clearing it then, we might be able to prevent blockages and back-up. If you know of ditches that are blocked it is possible to have them cleared by our Parish Lengthsman, but the time allocated to our Parish is very limited. On a domestic level are all your gutters and drains clear?

STRONG WINDS

Power and phone lines can be brought down by branches rubbing against them in strong winds. Summer is the time to notice this and to contact BT or the power companies so that they can sort out the problem before the onset of winter. Large branches overhanging property look very pretty but can be lethal in storms. Remove them in the autumn if you can.

THATCH FIRE

Broadhembury Parish has a higher proportion of thatched properties than most and therefore the associated risk of fire is greater.

Thatch fire usually occurs as a result of heat transfer from a chimney breast or electrical fire in the loft. Sometimes a mouse eats a cable! A spark or firework igniting a thatch roof from outside is rare, but it is a wise precaution to avoid a bonfire within 100 metres of a thatch roof (and of course any naked flame in the loft!).

What preventive action can you take? Low cost and easy action is to get your chimneys swept in the summer. Log burners burn with intense heat. Get them maintained! Lay mouse bait in the loft space and have a fire blanket in the kitchen and install inexpensive smoke alarms. More expensive action is to install smoke sensors in the loft, heat sensors around chimney breasts under the ridge, fire extinguishers at critical points and when renewing thatch install a breathable fire retardant membrane underneath. You might also install automatic extinguishers in the loft space. If you insulate your loft space above the ceiling with vermiculite granules mice dislike it because they sink into it like quick sand, but the material is expensive. Some of these actions may already be conditions of your household insurance.

Prevention is the best approach. Thatch fires are usually very serious so get everyone out of the property, close all doors and windows and move vehicles away from the house in the event of fire. Make sure visitors to your property know how to escape in smoke and darkness. If thatch fire starts in a terrace of thatch houses make sure everyone in the terrace is awake and alerted. It will spread very fast.

SEWAGE TREATMENT

Many properties in the Parish have septic tanks or sewage plants. These can be affected by flooding and in some cases power cuts. Are they emptied in the autumn? How will you manage in these situations? The discharge of untreated effluent to water courses is an offence.

TRAVEL

Travel in winter is more likely to be disrupted. What can you do? Study the weather forecast on www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast before you set out. Carry water, small toiletries, a shovel and coat and wellies in your car. You may have to spend a night in a school or community centre! Have a torch and something to eat in the car. For a long journey in adverse conditions put a sleeping bag in the car. In summer replace the shovel with more water! Remember, at all times of the year small country roads are far more dangerous than motorways.

POWER FAILURE

An extended power failure will cause major disruption. Have torches in known places. Think about what you would do if you rely on electrically-powered medical equipment. Contact vulnerable elderly people. Be careful if you use candles. Modern cordless or powered phones will not work. Have an old plug-in phone available which will work on BT line without any power-boost.

ACCIDENTS

Most accidents happen at home! Power tools, lawnmowers, ladders and hot liquid are the most frequent causes. Wear safety equipment! Eyes, hands and feet are the most often injured parts of the body. Make sure children know how and when to alert emergency services.

If you have to leave your home?

As a last resort you may have to evacuate your house. It would be wise to consider the implications of this well in advance when you can be calm and take your time. If you have to evacuate it is likely to be hurried!

- Don't forget to make provision for your pets!
- If you have to leave, lock windows and doors. Switch power off if you can, but think ahead about whether there are essential items that still need power. These might include freezers, fridges and sewage plants.
- If you are flooded move valuable items to a safe place, upstairs if possible. Ensure electrical appliances are unplugged and sockets switched off.
- Put bricks under furniture and white goods to raise them up.
- Think about where you might go beforehand (friends, relatives etc.).

EMERGENCY BAG

Have an emergency bag. Make a checklist of what should be included and know where to find things in a hurry. If you have spare items keep them in the bag! Other items used on a daily basis will have to be added at the last moment. This should be waterproof and contain:

- Medication
- Essential keys
- Glasses
- Mobile phone and charger
- Cash/debit/credit cards/purse/wallet
- Essential phone numbers
- Toiletries
- First Aid Kit
- Torch and spare batteries
- Important documents (e.g. passport). Don't forget that if you have important information on your computer you should regularly back it up onto a portable device which you can take in your bag!
- Long-life pet food and water if required...and dog poo bags!
- Baby gear and food if necessary
- A copy of this document for the contact details!

GETTING IN TOUCH

Have you put ICE contacts in your mobile phone?

The emergency services are trained to check for the ICE number. This stands for 'In Case of Emergency'. ICE allows the emergency services to contact someone if you are unable to do so. Think carefully about who you choose as an ICE contact, because that person may need to give their consent for medical treatment. If you don't have a mobile phone or you keep it locked, you can keep the same information on a card in your purse or wallet, or make the lock screen your ICE number.

Emergency Services and Key Agencies – Contacts list

The advent of social media means that information can be shared very rapidly. In the event of severe disruption the Parish Council will keep residents updated with the latest information on the website and via Twitter.

Website www.broadhemburyparishcouncil.org.uk

Twitter [@BroadhemburyPC](https://twitter.com/BroadhemburyPC)

| Service | Telephone Number |
|--|---|
| Emergency Services | |
| Police | 999 or 101 |
| Fire | 999 |
| Ambulance | 999 |
| Health Services | |
| NHS Direct | 111 |
| RD&E (Exeter) | 01392 411611 |
| NHS Devon | 01392 205205 |
| Coleridge Medical Centre Ottery St Mary | 01404 814447 |
| Honiton surgery | 01404 548544 Eve, w/end 0845 6710270 |
| Culm Valley Integrated Centre for Health | 01884 831300 |
| Bramblehais, Cullompton | 01884 33536 |
| Local Councils | |
| East Devon District Council | 01395 517456 |
| Devon County Council | 0345 155 1015 |
| DCC Emergency Planning | 01392 382680 24/7 pager 07699734637 |
| Utilities | |
| Water | 01392 431847 |
| Electricity | 0800 40 40 90 |
| Power Cut | 0800 6783 105 |
| Gas | 0800 917 2414 |
| BT | 0800 800 151 |
| Other Agencies | |
| Environment Agency - general | 08708 506506 |
| Flood Line | 0845 988 188 |
| www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods | |

Local Radio Stations

BBC Radio Devon

94.8, 95.8, 96.0, 103.4, 104.3 FM

www.bbc.co.uk/devon

Heart FM

97 – 103 FM

www.heart.co.uk/exeter/contact-us

Exe FM

107.3 FM

www.radioexe.co.uk

Sandbags

There are sandbags available at the **Drewe Arms, Broadhembury** (in the car park), at **Luton Green Sawmill** (just inside the gate) and at **Dennis Farm** at Kerswell.

In addition extra sand will be stored in the **Broadhembury Memorial Hall** car park.

Road Salt

Road salt is available at points where the road tends to become impassable in bad weather.

Possible emergency situations

A note to help you think through possible risks

FLOODING

Parts of Broadhembury, Kerswell, Luton and Colliton are liable to flood after prolonged rainfall or sudden downpours which can lead to 'flash floods'. The majority of this flooding is due to the inability of road drains to deal with the capacity of water, though in some cases the problems are exacerbated by run-off from fields. In some instances the rivers and brooks do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate increased volumes of water.

VIRAL INFECTIONS

The UK, along with much of the northern hemisphere, experienced a mild influenza pandemic during the winter of 2009/10, where the H1N1 flu virus spread throughout the nation, causing significantly higher than normal infection rates. Fortunately, the virus did not affect the majority of the population too severely, with risk of death confined largely to 'at risk' groups such as under 5's and those with bronchial ailments. Scientists and others in the medical community are still concerned that a more lethal virus, such as H5N1, which can lead to the death of up to 50% of those infected, but is currently confined to those who have close contact with birds such as poultry, could become a pandemic. Modern travel patterns mean that infection easily spreads from abroad to populations with no immunity. Be particularly alert to illness or signs of illness in those who have recently returned from abroad.

SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

The winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11 had spells of severe weather leading to significant transport incidents in Devon (e.g. Haldon Hill 2009) and communities becoming isolated or deprived of usual services such as domiciliary care to vulnerable residents. Some areas of the Parish are isolated and access in these conditions can be difficult. There is the possibility of groups or individuals being stranded for example in schools or motorists on the A373.

WIDE AREA BLACK OUT

Electricity supplies are essential for every aspect of modern life. We have become so used to things being available at the flick of a switch or press of a button that it would be a major culture shock to have to do without. However, whilst the UK's national electricity grid makes it unlikely that any one area would be without power for too long, such infrastructure is vulnerable to either industrial action or terrorist attack, or we could envisage a situation of lack of generating resource, such as oil or gas, or natural forces taking out generating capacity. Emergency Planners actively plan for regional power cuts of up to 72 hours in duration which could lead to widespread chaos, such as that experienced in New York during their extended black out – albeit less than 24 hours – in 1997. It is highly likely that given a choice of maintaining services to a town or a country area, the country area would be selected for black-out!

FIRE (in multiple buildings)

Fire is an ever present threat and will happen. Occasionally, such as the fire in Crediton in early 2012 which destroyed a number of thatched roof houses, fires can have a significant impact on a local community. Consideration would have to be given to immediate response, in particular care of evacuated families, and their support over the time it will take to re-build their properties or in their re-housing, which is the responsibility of the District Council. Long spells of dry weather are likely to lead to more fires in woodland and grass land.

ACCIDENTS

Accidents happen all the time. Your home is the place where an accident is most likely to occur. The stairs and the kitchen are the most risk-prone areas. Do you have a fire blanket? When cooking outdoors do you wear flip-flops or shoes? Is the stair carpet secure? If you do DIY do you have safety equipment? Do you work in daylight and not at all after a drink? Remember, alcohol is a common factor in many accidents! Would you be able to call for help?

COMPUTER INCIDENTS

Computer fraud and the theft of personal information can be just as upsetting as a flood! This section therefore deals with what you can do to reduce the risk at home.

There are two kinds of criminal activity which can attack your computer. The first is when you are persuaded to purchase or agree to something online believing in good faith that it is trustworthy. The second is when unknown to you, your computer is infected with software that allows others to do things to, or have knowledge of what you are doing on your computer.

- What can you do, and what should you urge your children to do? First have passwords which are secure. Change them frequently and never use the same password for more than one thing. If you can't remember them all create some kind of coding system which only you know. Never tell anyone your password. If asked for your password it is likely that the intention is criminal!
- Keep your software up-to-date and install anti-virus software. Never respond online to people who unsolicited offer to do this for you.
- Never open emails or attachments from people you do not know or if the email address looks strange. These may contain tricks which will take control of your computer without your knowledge.
- Never conduct sensitive business (e.g. banking) over an open wireless internet (like in bars, coffee places or other public areas which are not password protected).

- If your children use social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.) tell them never to disclose where or when they are going somewhere, their phone numbers or personal details. Try to join yourself and get them to include you in their messages or as their 'friends' so that you have some oversight of what they are doing. You can purchase specialist software to track their online communications if you are really concerned.
- Get younger members of the family to show you how to do things. By including them they will become your trusted adviser and you can question them about their own security. You will also learn a lot!
- Online purchase is potentially risky. Some websites disguise themselves to look like the websites of well-known retailers to trap you. If in doubt phone and question. Only submit payment details over secure links (usually indicated by a padlock symbol). Use a credit card. It will give extra protection if things go wrong. If what you are buying is really cheap, then there probably is a problem!
- Remember all emails, pictures, text messages and web activity can be accessed by people for whom they were not intended. With proper cause this could be the police or security services, but it is more likely to be criminals seeking to extract some reward from you. Never put anything online that would embarrass your grandmother!

Remember there is lots of information about you held by different people who will do their best to keep it secure, but mistakes do happen. Try not to make it easy for people to 'steal' your personal details and link different pieces of information about you. Always shred or burn utility bills, bank statements and salary data. If you leave home for a long period treat your computer with the same security as you would your jewellery. Never let everyone use the same computer. Above all, even if you know them well, do not let visitors 'log-on' to your computer to get their own emails!

The internet has revolutionised our lives for the better, but not all of its users have good intentions. Even the most sophisticated and protected national systems are sometimes successfully attacked, so if it happens to your personal computers do not feel embarrassed. Get help quickly!



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