

Meeting	Finance & Policy Committee
Date	18 th November 2025
Report Title	Community Emergency Plan
Agenda	12
Authors	Laura Cutter, Deputy Clerk/RFO, HR & Services Manager Julie McMorrow, Meetings & HR Administrator

Officers' Recommendations:

1. To recommend to Full Council to approve the draft Community Emergency Plan to replace the 2022 version. To note this is a working document which will continue to evolve.
2. To confirm that key contacts, for continuity, will be assigned to 'roles' for example Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Officer, Deputy Clerk, POS Facility & Operations Manager, Lead Operatives, Chairs & Vice Chairs of Committees.
3. To confirm a recruitment and promotion process to publicise the plan.
4. To develop a Community Resilience page on the website and add the case studies in Appendix A.

Working Party Meetings

The first Community Emergency Plan Working Party meeting was held on Wednesday 1st October with Councillors R Hailstone & P Park. It was explained that Haydon Wick Parish Council's plan needed to be updated and must be incorporated into the Swindon & Wiltshire plan template so that all local councils have a similar procedure.

A follow up meeting was held on 4th November 2025 with attendance from Councillors Hailstone, Park, Jackson, Manro, John, Roupelis and Worman. The plan was discussed in further detail.

Community Emergency Plan & Key Contacts

It was suggested that the key contacts, for continuity, will be assigned to roles within the Parish Council. This would start from the top of the chain to the bottom of the chain, to confirm the authority and scope of how the Parish Council is safely able to deal with the emergency.

Key contacts and venues locally are included within the plan, but as most are operational businesses or schools, capacity and timings are limited. These are detailed within the plan.

The next step would be to recruit volunteers with assigned roles and communication methods, such as WhatsApp, to build a team. The volunteers would receive training from Swindon & Wiltshire prepared and its partners for Flood & Snow Wardens.

Communications & Networking

The Meetings & HR Administrator met with personnel from Swindon Borough Council to talk through the process at Borough level and more locally with personnel from GLL Haydon Centre to talk about their process for being a rest centre and subsequently will attend a meeting on site at the GLL on Tuesday 11th November to discuss their current processes and ensure it is in line with HWPC procedures.

Community Resilience Training

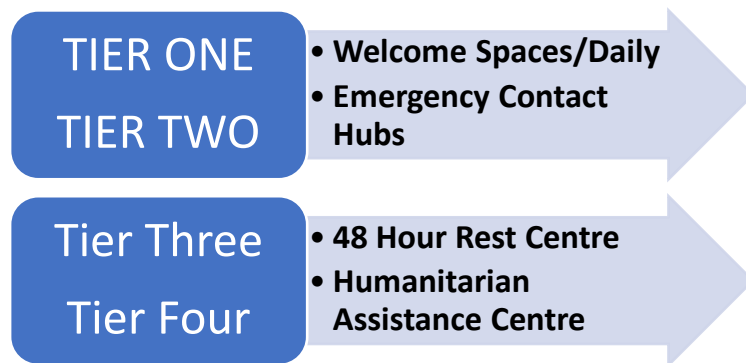
A date has been reserved on the 4th December at 16.00hrs lasting approximately 90 minutes and all local councils were invited to send one member.



The training is to introduce Wiltshire and Bath Ambulance Charities Awareness programme and to gain knowledge of how to best manage medical emergencies prior to the arrival on an ambulance.

This essential session will cover topics including the recovery position, CPR, defibrillators, choking and bleeding. This is a hands-on session therefore giving an opportunity to learn skills that could be lifesaving in an emergency.

Tiers of Community Help



Community Emergency Plan Kit

As a 'Emergency Hub' HWPC is expected to provide a couple of hours of warmth and shelter until more in-depth help and assistance is received. For this reason, it is suggested that the Council houses a kit of:

- A Generator £ To be established
- Blankets £ To be established
- Torches £ To be established
- Defibrillator Already on HWPC grounds

This can be met from the grant funding received for community emergencies.

Business Continuity Plan

Was last updated in 2021 following the pandemic and needs to be updated. The experience of the pandemic shows that the community came together to help the most vulnerable and the staffing team were flexible with working arrangements, identifying the most vulnerable key workers and accepting all different tasks assigned day to day in ever changing circumstances.

Cyber Attack Policy

As part of the discussions, it was suggested that the Council develops a cyber-attack policy as this could cause detriment to the parish and if large scale could be a data compromise emergency. Councillor P Park has kindly offered his advice and amendments to the policy.

Case Studies

Councillor V Manro has prepared a list of previous case studies (see Appendix A) to bring to the fore front live examples of scenarios that have happened and how the Parish Council has dealt with these and how multiple organisations come together to aid the community during and after the emergency. These will be added to the website and communications when launching the finalised plan to the public to call for volunteers.



Appendix A

Case Studies

To help understand the need for an Emergency Hub previous case studies have been identified. The understanding is that any emergencies that take place would be reported on immediately after the event.

Thames Avenue Burst Water Main – December 2019

Point

On Christmas Eve 2019, a burst water main on Blunsdon Avenue, near Thames Avenue, caused flooding that threatened several homes. The parish council acted quickly, opening its offices as a refuge and coordinating with emergency services and Thames Water to keep residents safe during the holiday period.

Evidence

- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue attended shortly before midnight and found garages already flooded.
- Thames Water engineers isolated the supply by 1 a.m., stopping the flow.
- Swindon Borough Council's incident manager attended to check road safety and drains .

Explanation

Surface water spread quickly, affecting driveways and garages.

The parish office was opened to residents as a warm refuge while repairs continued through the night. Inside, staff provided tea, phone charging and information updates. The office also became an operations point for Thames Water and Borough officers, using its phone and internet access to relay updates and reduce calls to utility helplines. By morning, engineers had stabilised the system and staff carried out welfare checks on nearby households, ensuring that vulnerable residents had safe drinking water.

Link

The incident demonstrated that even small, localised infrastructure failures can test community resilience. A rapid, practical parish response kept residents calm and supported emergency crews during a difficult public-holiday period.

What Worked Well

- Immediate activation of the parish office as a warm hub.
- Effective cooperation with Thames Water and the Borough.
- Welfare checks for older residents.
- Clear public messaging reduced anxiety.

What Could Be Improved

- Maintain a small stock of blankets, bottled water and drinks.
- Create a shared call list with Thames Water and the Borough for faster mobilisation.
- Formalise the parish office's role as a community resilience hub.



- Record post-incident learning logs after each event.

Haydon Court Flooding – November 2020

Point

In November 2020, a burst water main near Haydon Court flooded sheltered housing. The parish council coordinated the response, opened its offices as an incident hub, and ensured all residents—including those needing additional social care—were supported.

Evidence

- 27 homes flooded; 10 households evacuated, 8 rehoused by Thames Water.
- Swindon Borough Council assumed incident command early as the burst damaged a public footway and involved residents requiring care.
- Sanctuary Housing and Thames Water were active partners in the response.

Explanation

Residents evacuated in nightwear took temporary shelter near Morrisons supermarket. The parish office was opened to provide warmth and refreshments, supported by Morrisons' food donation. The building became an incident hub for Police, Fire, Borough Council, Thames Water and Sanctuary Housing. Donations of clothing were collected for evacuees. Thames Water organised temporary hotel accommodation. For several days, the parish office served as a drop-in centre for residents retrieving belongings and receiving updates. Surrounding streets also lost mains water, and Thames Water distributed bottled water to affected households until supply returned.

Link

This event highlighted how a parish facility can underpin a multi-agency operation.

The Borough led incident command, but parish coordination delivered real community care and communication.

What Worked Well

- Parish office provided safe refuge and information point.
- Strong cooperation among all agencies.
- Quick provision of food, blankets and bottled water.
- Ongoing advocacy by Sanctuary Housing for displaced tenants.

What Could Be Improved

- Streamline the emergency plan with clear activation steps and up-to-date contacts.
- Improve information-sharing channels between parish, Borough and utilities.
- Keep emergency blankets and refreshments stocked.
- Use temporary text-lists or noticeboards for affected residents.
- Hold annual multi-agency training to test plans.



Mouldon Hill / River Ray Pollution – August 2022

Point

A burst sewer polluted the River Ray, killing thousands of fish over a three-mile stretch. The parish council pressed Thames Water and the Environment Agency for answers and long-term improvements.

Evidence

- Angling Trust reported more than 2 000 fish dead.
- Parish minutes recorded repairs “using a collar and pressure testing” and councillors requesting inspection schedules .
- Thames Water publicly admitted wastewater escape and later invested £78 million in Swindon infrastructure upgrades, including a 3.5 km sewage pipe at Haydon End.

Explanation

The parish liaised with the Environment Agency, Angling Trust, Thames Water and local media. The office issued updates through website and social media. Residents and anglers helped gather evidence. Follow-up meetings ensured emergency repairs were complete and future asset checks scheduled. Thames Water’s 2024 programme added new transfer pipelines and pollution-reduction targets (50 % fewer untreated discharges by 2030).

Link

A model of environmental accountability: the parish’s persistence turned a pollution crisis into measurable infrastructure investment.

What Worked Well

- Fast reporting by anglers and residents.
- Transparent engagement by Thames Water.
- Sustained public communication through parish channels.
- Strengthened links with environmental groups.
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What Could Be Improved

- More regular local progress updates from Thames Water.
- Establish a parish-borough-agency environmental protocol.
- Encourage volunteer water-quality testing.
- Plan for ecological restoration and restocking with partners.

Thyme Close Flooding – September 2024

Point

Intense rainfall caused surface flooding and a fallen tree in Thyme Close. No evacuation was required, but coordination among agencies was essential.



Evidence

- Parish minutes note water “knee-deep” and sewage overflow nearby.
- Swindon Borough Council and Thames Water confirmed drainage responsibilities.

Explanation

The parish received initial calls and immediately contacted Borough drainage, Thames Water and the Fire Service duty officer. Grounds staff cleared debris and checked residents. The parish office was placed on standby as a refuge hub. After rainfall subsided, Thames Water and the Borough carried out drain jetting and gully clearance. A post-incident review led to routine brook-bank vegetation monitoring (parish trims up to 12 ft on path side; Borough/Environment Agency manage beyond).

Link

Showcases proactive coordination where refuge activation was unnecessary but readiness remained vital.

What Worked Well

- Rapid multi-agency communication.
- Parish staff actions reduced risk escalation.
- Residents kept informed through parish updates.
- Drainage works completed promptly.

What Could Be Improved

- Borough to share drainage-maintenance schedules.
- Develop concise information-sharing protocol between partners.
- Formalise pre-winter inspections of flood-prone areas.
- Conduct joint post-incident reviews confirming completed works.
- Test community-hub activation annually.

Post-Incident Learning

- Annual drain jetting now logged by Borough.
- Parish added brook monitoring and overgrowth reporting.
- Shared contact sheet established between parish and Borough drainage teams.
- Emergency plan updated to capture these lessons.

Groundwell Industrial Explosion – September 2025

Point

A major explosion and fire at Groundwell Industrial Estate—on the parish border—prompted a large multi-agency response.

Illustration



Residents nearby felt vibrations; roads were closed; the public were told to remain indoors while Fire Service and Police secured the area.

Link

- Keep parish office on standby as refuge hub.
- Liaise with Borough incident command on air-quality advice and evacuation routes.
- Map welfare-check zones closest to the estate.
- Adds industrial-incident scenario to parish emergency plan.

North Swindon Major Power Cuts – 2024 to 2025

Point

Underground-cable faults caused area-wide outages across SN25, affecting Haydon Wick homes for several hours.

Illustration

Residents reported loss of power and heating; DNO (SSEN) issued updates via the 105 helpline; restoration took around 4 hours.

Link

- Promote Priority Services Register sign-ups.
- Ready parish office as warm/charge hub.
- Pre-agree welfare-check triggers with DNO when outages exceed 3 hours in cold weather.
- Share “what to do in a power cut” guidance.

Extended Water Outages & Bottled-Water Provision – Recurring Risk

Point

Water-supply interruptions periodically affect Haydon Wick and Priory Vale.

Illustration

Thames Water’s policy triggers bottled-water stations and home deliveries for Priority Services customers.

During the 2020 Haydon Court event, bottled water was delivered to adjacent streets.

Link

- Identify accessible car-park sites for bottled-water stations.
- Pre-print signage and ensure traffic/queuing plans.
- Disseminate PSR sign-up details through parish media.
- Coordinate with Thames Water and Borough on accessibility support.



Storm Henk & Severe Weather Preparedness – January 2024

Point

Storm Henk brought heavy rain and high winds, raising River Ray levels and testing drainage capacity.

Illustration

Regional alerts warned of flooding; minor surface-water pooling occurred near Mouldon Hill and Seven Fields.

Link

- Activate pre-storm checklist: gully inspections, grit-bin status, brook vegetation checks, comms templates.
- Conduct post-storm review with Borough and Environment Agency.
- Maintain year-round readiness for rapid-onset weather events.

SWOT Analysis – Parish Emergency Response Capability

Strengths	Weaknesses
Proven ability to mobilise parish office quickly.	No permanent 24/7 on-call rota for senior officers.
Established relationships with Borough Council and utilities.	Limited onsite storage for emergency items.
Strong resident trust; effective communications channels.	Early information-sharing with agencies still informal.
Experienced staff familiar with coordination roles.	Reliant on Borough incident command for formal authorisation.
Opportunities	Threats
Join official Resilience Hub Network and annual Borough training.	More frequent extreme weather events.
Apply for small resilience fund to expand supplies.	Industrial or transport incidents near boundary.
Recruit volunteer list for welfare-checks and hub staffing.	Power/telecom failures could cut communications.
Use case studies for community education.	Climate-related maintenance strain on resources.

Future Readiness Plan (2025 – 2026)

1. Update the Parish Emergency Plan to include industrial incidents, extended outages and bottled-water logistics.
2. Agree formal data-sharing arrangements with Borough Council, Thames Water and SSEN.



3. Develop warm-hub protocol for power failures and extreme cold.
4. Maintain pre-storm checklists and brook-monitoring schedule.
5. Hold joint training exercises annually with key partners.
6. Publish resident guidance on flood, power and water incidents.

References

1. Wiltshire 999s News, "Christmas Eve Burst Main Floods Blunsdon Avenue," Dec 2019.
2. Haydon Wick Parish Council Minutes, 3 Nov 2020 and 24 Nov 2020 (Haydon Court Flooding response).
3. Swindon Link & ITV West News, "Thousands of Fish Dead After River Ray Pollution," Aug 2022.
4. Haydon Wick Parish Council Minutes, 23 Aug 2022 (Mouldon Hill Sewage Issue).
5. Haydon Wick Parish Council Minutes, 24 Sept 2024 (Thyme Close Flooding).
6. Thames Water Press Release, "Thames Water Completes Major Swindon Infrastructure Upgrades," Dec 2024.
7. Swindon Advertiser & Sky News Reports, "Explosion at Groundwell Industrial Estate," Sept 2025.
8. SSEN Outage Reports (2024–25) & Priority Services Guidance.
9. Swindon Borough Council Section 19 Flood Investigation Report (Autumn 2023).
10. Environment Agency Flood Alert Data & Met Office Storm Henk Summary (Jan 2024).