



STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

**Minutes of Meeting held on
Wednesday 15th January 2020
at The Free Church, Staplehurst**

Present: Andrew Watson (Chair) Patrick Blunt
Bill Piper Peter Jeffery
Margaret Friswell Erica Lock
Laureen Rodwell Sandra Ongley

Apologies: Joan Buller, Bob Howse, Colin Bowden, Adele Sharp, John Parsons-Smith, Caroline Highwood, Chris Ralph, Mira Martin, Rory Silkin

Chairman's Welcome: Andrew apologized for the brevity of notice, accentuated by clashes with other meetings on this evening.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved with minor amendments.

Matters Arising:

Kent Police have at last responded to our enquiry about our managing traffic in a crisis. Our participation would not be approved.

Cooperation with neighbouring parishes: People from Marden participated in our last exercise. As no other parishes have shown any interest (and all of the neighbouring parishes were invited to the last two meetings and the exercise) there seems no point in SEHT's attempting to involve them.

Information about SEHT is shown on the new Parish website. There was some discussion as to whether this had been modified from the original text written early in the team's activities. Although it had been altered (to incorporate changes such as the introduction of Data Protection Act) it was agreed that SEHT did not require the Parish website to be changed.

There was no reference in the above information to the 'Vulnerable Residents Register' directly; but it touched on aspects of SEHT's (documented) approach to their management in a crisis. There had been three aims when introducing the Register: a) to offer a service which some vulnerable residents would welcome, b) to use it as a means to promote SEHT and to raise its profile in the village, to assist in the recruitment of new volunteers, and c) the Kent Resilience Team had suggested a format for such a register. It was now agreed to shelve the Vulnerable Residents Register for three reasons: 1) in each of the opportunities for vulnerable residents interested in having their details added to the Register (in the Parish Magazine and in the Village Update), there had been only one response on each occasion, and 2) it had become clear that not all SEHT volunteers were in favour of such a register. So it was decided to shelve the Register until the next meeting when, with more volunteers present (Mira, our Community Warden in particular) who might want the Register to be continue, could be present.

Agenda: .

The last exercise was discussed. A report has been written. The main points we discussed were

1. the need for a firmer leadership in the allocation of tasks,
2. the lack of responses on the day to the calls on the telephone tree,
3. that the information board was not used.

The Telephone and the Tree:

The tree did not work well on the day of the exercise. The problem was that not one of the second tier answered Andrew's call (who initiated the tree), leaving him with six more calls to make, and then two of those were also not answered, so he had to make another call to the third tier. In the context of a two-hour exercise, the time it took Andrew to work down the tree was a serious handicap. Whether this issue would be critical in a real emergency was the question, and perhaps the current format should be retained, to keep the number of contacts at its present number (about 30 volunteers). It was agreed that Laureen would contact Adele about this.

The team's mobile telephone is defunct: we discussed whether or not it should be replaced:

A PAYG phone has limitations, particularly its inability to divert calls.

MBC and KRF both have our individual numbers. During recent flooding, Laureen was contacted by MBC who had got her number from KRF. Thus it seems that numbers on the tree are effective points of contact.

It was unanimously agreed that the mobile phone should be scrapped, and that in the event of an emergency the KRF would contact SEHT using the tree. SEHT will (continue to) provide the KRF with the latest version of our telephone tree whenever it is updated. SEHT's.

Andrew will inform KRF through Guy Gardner at MBC of this change.

Recent flooding. (Sandbags were delivered to the Village Centre; Laureen was contacted by MBC (in lieu of Dave Staunton-Lambert.)

Andrew asked for information about who collected sand and how much. There were only two collections noted by Laureen and the amounts taken were limited.

Bill asked whether the event should be regarded as a success for SEHT's procedures; Laureen said yes.

It was agreed that people of Staplehurst should be asked whether they were affected by the recent flooding. A means of doing this was discussed. (Marden did it by Facebook.) Ultimately the information should be passed to Andrew in his role as Flood Warden.

Safety Day: Staplehurst will be holding another Safety Day on Saturday 18th April. It was agreed that SEHT would have a table. While Andrew agreed he would set the table up and, while he will remain present most of the day, and clear up afterwards, it would be helpful if other volunteers would represent SEHT for some of the time during the day.

Any Other Business:

Andrew commented on the low turnout for meeting and for exercises. Even though many people on the list will make themselves available in an emergency, he believes that SEHT's effectiveness would be much improved if more volunteers had had some experience in the basics of setting up a shelter.

As he said at the last A.G.M. Andrew will be standing down this year. He has completed five years as chairman. While he remains fit and well and able to provide his professional experience in any emergency, he can support the incoming chair for several years. He made the point that, when he had taken over, he had received the support of both the outgoing chair (Rory Silkin) plus the regular attendance of the Kent Resilience Team's Rob Wyles at both meetings and the training exercises. Since Rob Wyles has retired, the on-going support from the Resilience Team has ceased, which makes the handing over of SEHT's chairmanship all the more critical, and that he can remain to offer experience and guidance as a volunteer.

Date of the Next Meeting (the A.G.M.): 7.30 Thursday 12th March