

WIDDRINGTON STATION & STOBWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

EMERGENCY PLAN AND POLICY

1. Purpose

This Emergency Plan sets out how the Parish Council will respond to a major incident or emergency affecting the community. It is designed to support, not replace, the role of the emergency services and Northumberland County Council.

The Plan is prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, government guidance, and sector good practice for local councils.

2. Scope

This Plan may be activated in the event of any emergency that has a significant impact on residents, property, infrastructure, or the environment within the parish, including but not limited to:

- Severe weather (flooding, snow, storms, heatwaves)
 - Major accidents or incidents
 - Utility failures (power, water, telecommunications)
 - Public health emergencies
 - Fire, explosion, or hazardous incidents
 - Loss of key community facilities
 - Any situation where local coordination and support are required
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3. Objectives

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Provide a coordinated local response to emergencies
- Support vulnerable residents
- Facilitate communication between agencies and the community
- Assist with the provision of temporary support facilities where appropriate
- Help maintain community resilience until normal services are restored

4. Role of the Parish Council

The Parish Council does not have statutory emergency response powers but may assist by:

- Acting as a focal point for local information
- Supporting communication with residents
- Coordinating volunteers where safe to do so
- Assisting with welfare support to vulnerable persons
- Helping to identify local resources
- Opening designated buildings as emergency support centres if requested and safe

The Council will not undertake tasks that should be carried out by trained emergency responders.

5. Activation of the Plan

The Plan may be activated by the Parish Clerk, Chair of the Council, or their delegated deputy where an emergency is occurring or imminent.

Upon activation, the Council will:

1. Gather information from reliable sources (emergency services, local authority, Met Office alerts, etc.)
 2. Establish a coordination point
 3. Inform councillors and relevant partners
 4. Begin communication with residents using available channels
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6. Emergency Contacts

A confidential contact list of key personnel, agencies, utilities, and volunteers will be maintained separately and reviewed regularly. This list will include:

- Parish Councillors
- Parish Clerk
- Northumberland County Council emergency contacts
- Emergency services
- Local utility providers
- Community organisations
- Key local volunteers

7. Communication

Effective communication is essential during an emergency. Methods may include:

- Parish Council website and social media
- Notice boards
- Local radio
- Direct contact with community groups
- Door-to-door contact where safe and appropriate

Only verified information should be shared to avoid misinformation.

8. Vulnerable Residents

The Council may assist in identifying and supporting vulnerable residents where information is available and lawful to use. Assistance may include:

- Welfare checks (where safe)
- Signposting to appropriate services
- Coordination of volunteer support

Personal data will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

9. Emergency Support Centres

Where requested by the emergency services or local authority, and where safe to do so, the Council may assist in opening a designated community building as a place of safety or support.

Responsibilities may include:

- Providing access to facilities
- Basic coordination of volunteers
- Liaison with official agencies

Health and safety considerations must always take precedence.

10. Volunteers

Community volunteers may provide valuable assistance. The Council will:

- Coordinate volunteers only where safe and appropriate

- Ensure volunteers are not placed at undue risk
- Provide clear instructions on roles and boundaries
- Maintain a record of volunteer involvement where possible

Volunteers must not undertake specialist tasks requiring training or equipment.

11. Resources

The Council may identify local resources that could assist during an emergency, such as:

- Community buildings
- Equipment (e.g., sandbags, generators if available)
- Local businesses
- Transport options

Use of any resources must be authorised and recorded.

12. Health and Safety

The safety of responders, volunteers, and the public is paramount. The Council will not support actions that place individuals at unreasonable risk.

Risk assessments should be considered where activities are organised by the Council.

13. Business Continuity

If the Council's own operations are disrupted, priority will be given to maintaining essential functions, including communication and financial governance where practicable.

14. Recovery Phase

Following an emergency, the Council may assist with community recovery by:

- Supporting information sharing
 - Coordinating community assistance
 - Liaising with authorities regarding restoration of services
 - Reviewing lessons learned
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15. Training and Awareness

Councillors and relevant personnel should be familiar with this Plan. Awareness activities or briefings may be provided where appropriate.

16. Review and Maintenance

This Plan will be reviewed at least annually and after any activation to ensure it remains accurate and effective.

Updates will be approved by the Parish Council.

17. Adoption

Adopted by Widdrington Station & Stobswood Parish Council on:

Date: _____

Signed (Chair): _____

Signed (Clerk): _____