

Harberton Parish Emergency Plan

A written update to give context to discussion at the meeting of the Harberton Parish Council
8th March 2022

Context

Following storms in February of 2022 a number of properties in the Parish experienced interruptions to power. 18 homes in the Tristford Farm/Besford area were without power for several days.

The Parish Clerk was contacted by Cllr Croft to ask if there was any emergency planning provision for this kind of scenario; for residents to use community venue such as the Parish Hall to be able to fill a thermos or charge a phone, use emergency fridge/freezer space for example.

It was agreed to put the Harberton Parish Emergency Plan on the agenda to discuss options.

Harberton Parish Emergency Plan 2018

The Parish Council did adopt an emergency plan in 2018, drafted by Cllr Geoff Broom, who has now left the Parish. It is a simple plan, with reference to local authority services to use in cases of emergency, access to resources in flood or snow and telephone numbers to use in cases of emergency.

The Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair are referred to within this plan as an 'Emergency Core Team', with the role and responsibilities being underdeveloped and with no engagement from other members of the community.

There is a section within the emergency plan intended to act as a directory for local community voluntary support and who had skills or equipment that could be used in a range of emergency situations. This section was never fully populated and the plan was never put under regular annual review, which suggests it is not fit for purpose.

Opportunity to reinvigorate the Emergency Plan

During the first COVID-19 lockdown two community organised groups formed in Harberton and Harbertonford. Both groups engaged the support of volunteers who were willing to help others who were isolating and couldn't go to the shops, pick up prescriptions or just needed a friendly phone call.

The Clerk has been in contact with the leading members of the Harberton Helps group to ask if it could be possible to work with the structure of Harberton Helps and the list of volunteers who signed up to offer support during the pandemic to reinvigorate an emergency plan. It has been suggested that the list of volunteers could be reworked where residents could put themselves forward to help or offer support in different circumstances, (from shopping, to offering to charge batteries, filling flasks of hot water, sweeping or clearing roads, able to give emergency medical support). This combined with inclusion and regular review of flood and snow warden volunteers would build a stronger plan that could have the effect of encouraging a greater and more active network of community support.

There is some interest in discussing this further, should the Parish Council be interested to do so.

In response to the Clerk's queries, the Harberton Helps group has suggesting holding an online meeting to discuss thoughts and ideas, suggesting that a representative of the Parish Council attend and act as a lead conduit to the Parish Council. Whilst others would be asked to join to help organise this, the Parish Council would ultimately 'hold' the plan on behalf of the community.