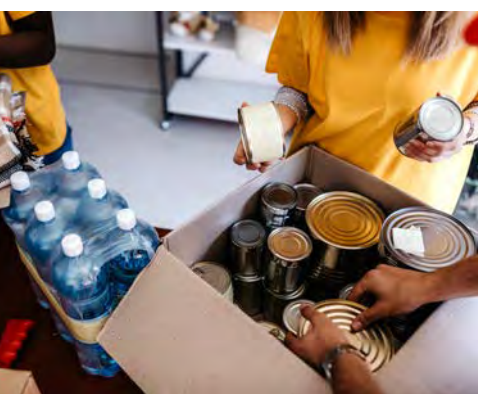




# A Guide to Rural Community Resilience



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# Introduction

We tend not to think about emergencies until they occur. This guide aims to help communities in rural areas adopt a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to emergencies, in order to be better prepared and help reduce their impact when they do happen.

When an emergency strikes, its impact can be severe, both for individuals and the services that support them in their day to day needs. Recovery can take months, if not years, with many people and businesses not being able to fully recover. Emergencies can also have a devastating impact on individual mental health, with the stress of dealing with major incidents and the effect that can have on family and working relationships leading to anxiety, depression and PTSD.

However, with a practical and positive approach, and by planning ahead, you can make yourself more resilient to major incidents that might affect your community and your home. This will mitigate the worst effects of an emergency whilst helping you and your community to recover much more quickly. Building resilience can also have many other benefits not directly related to emergencies, including environmental improvements, better supporting community networks, and underpinning social cohesion.

## What's involved?

This guide aims to help you to understand how your actions can build resilience by supporting you to identify and record local risks, understand who is responsible for what during an emergency, and develop the preparedness and resilience of your community. It has been designed to help you plan how your community

can assist emergency responder agencies as part 4 of a coordinated response to emergencies in your community. Here you will find practical advice on setting up Community Emergency Volunteer (CEV) groups, as well as tips and guidance for managing your own personal resilience.

Importantly, this guide also provides information to help communities link the local farming community and rural contractors (such as agricultural, building, forestry, or countryside rangers) into their emergency response. They are often pivotal in the provision of resources that can be utilised during an emergency. By building links with farmers and contractors, communities can potentially benefit from technical skills, heavy lifting and clearance equipment, 4x4 capabilities, as well as potential storage space for the CEV group's equipment.

The principles of community planning will be used, and communities that have already prepared Parish or Town Community Emergency/Flood Plans, will recognise the key principles involved:

- **Identifying local risks**, most often at parish, town, or ward level
- **Valuing local knowledge** and sharing this within the community
- **Setting out key roles** and responsibilities to be undertaken by CEVs based

Your actions  
can build  
resilience

on the local risks identified in the plan

- **Mapping resources**, key contacts and assets that exist locally, and a method for triggering their call out and managing their use.

This plan should be kept as simple as possible and drawn up in consultation with the local community, particularly with those who can contribute local knowledge, resources and assistance at the time of an emergency. By doing this, the plan will be more robust and practically focused on meeting the particular needs of the community when an emergency occurs.

This guide also sets out how to develop links with local emergency responder partner agencies to build trust, confidence and understanding of each other's roles before an incident. This enables emergency responders at the local level to know and recognise your community group. Such partnership working is crucial in ensuring the effective integration of your community's response to an emergency with the official response from different agencies.

In addition to this guide, further resources, training materials and advice can be found on the Communities Prepared online community resilience hub at [www.communitiesprepared.org.uk](http://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk).

**With a practical and positive approach, and by planning ahead, you can make yourself more resilient to major incidents.**



Community Emergency Volunteer groups can be the local eyes and ears for emergency responders. Image credit: Tusko Films ([www.tusko.co.uk](http://www.tusko.co.uk)).



With access to heavy machinery and technical skills, local farmers and rural contractors can have an important part to play in a community's response to emergencies.

# 2.

## Risks

As individuals and communities, we face risks every day, from crossing the road, to cycling along country lanes. We are so used to consciously or unconsciously looking for dangers and planning our actions to help avoid, or at least mitigate, risk, that we may not even notice that we are doing it. For example, we might find a safe place to cross as a pedestrian or wear a helmet as a cyclist.

Some risks, however, are much rarer and can be more difficult to foresee, either because we haven't had direct experience of them ("It won't happen to me"), they happen so rarely ("It won't happen to us"), or they might have such a big impact that we prefer not to think about it at all. These risks can have a regional or even national impact on our daily lives and the critical infrastructure that supports us. Rural communities can be particularly vulnerable to these types of risks as they tend to be situated on the ends of infrastructure networks and, with smaller populations and more vulnerable infrastructure, can take longer to reconnect.

For these potentially more disruptive risks, national Government introduced the Civil Contingencies Act 2004<sup>1</sup> in order to encourage emergency responders to cooperate better before, during, and after a major incident. Each local police force area has a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) that provides an opportunity for local emergency responders to discuss their plans. The Government also produces and regularly updates a National Risk Register of civil emergencies that assesses the likelihood and impact of the most common risks that

the UK faces<sup>2</sup>. LRFs use the National Risk Register to then develop their own Local Risk Registers, which they then use to help prioritise their emergency planning.

You can use the Local Risk Register as a starting point to guide the sorts of risks you might want to cover in your Community Emergency Plan. Be aware, however, that not all risks that might affect your community can be found in the National and Local Risk Registers, so keep an open mind to other risks that might be prevalent in your community.

### Community Emergency Plan

The Community Emergency Plan should be set out using a clear and simple structure in order that it can be referred to and used in as simple manner as possible depending on the different risks the community might face. There should be contact numbers provided, as well as a set of procedures to follow based on likely scenarios. Many local authority emergency planning departments provide templates for local communities to follow. Having a plan helps communities to cope with incidents even when key people might be away, as well as setting out how risks can be mitigated as part of a risk assessment. This can also

<sup>1</sup> An Act of Parliament introduced to promote shared working between emergency responder agencies. See [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents)

<sup>2</sup> For the latest National Risk Register, see [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/644968/UK\\_National\\_Risk\\_Register\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644968/UK_National_Risk_Register_2017.pdf)

be required to display safe working practices in order to secure insurance.

### Types of risk

The risks that your community might face can be broken down into four main types:

- Severe weather
- Public health
- Non-malicious incident
- Malicious incident

Often these risks can be interrelated with one event, causing a community to be at risk of another.

### Severe weather

The biggest severe weather risk in the UK comes from flooding, whether that's from prolonged or torrential rain, such as that which affected large parts of England and Wales in the autumn and winter of 2019-2020, coastal storm surges, or overloaded infrastructure, such as dams or overflowing drains. Other severe weather emergencies, such as snow (e.g. the Beast from the East in 2018), high winds, heatwaves, and prolonged drought can also have an impact on communities.

### Public health

The National Risk Register notes pandemic flu as one of the top risks both nationally and internationally. At a national level, pandemic flues



By organising a group of volunteers, you will better understand the sorts of risks your community faces and then train to manage them.

can seriously impact public services' ability to respond to local events, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 and 2020. However, other public health risks can also have a major local impact. Animal diseases, such as foot and mouth, swine flu and bird flu, can potentially cause major local disruption to rural communities, especially the farming and tourist industry, with visitors potentially being put off from travelling and restrictions being applied to livestock movements. Human diseases such as measles, meningitis and other contagious viruses also have the potential to impact communities with nurseries, schools and colleges potentially being forced to close. Temperature extremes can cause a rise in deaths and hospitalisation of the vulnerable and elderly as well as crop failures and risks to livestock.

#### Non-malicious incident

These might be incidents caused by human actions, but

not deliberately. This could include major transport or industrial accidents, fires, or failures in our national infrastructure, such as a burst water main or power network outage.

#### Malicious incident

Whilst thankfully very rare, malicious incidents, such as terrorist attacks can have a major impact on our communities. This should not be considered an urban problem alone. For example, the 2018 Novichok attack in Salisbury had consequences for smaller nearby market town communities, such as Amesbury. Malicious incidents are not limited to purely physical attacks. With our lives becoming more dependent on the internet, malicious cyber-attacks can have potentially devastating consequences on small businesses and the self-employed. Those who use it to conduct much of their work in rural areas are more prone to outages due to having more vulnerable

## 4

MAIN TYPES  
OF RISK:

SEVERE WEATHER



PUBLIC HEALTH



NON-MALICIOUS  
INCIDENT



MALICIOUS  
INCIDENT



infrastructure. How would your community and the services it relies on cope if the internet went down for a few days?

#### Assessing and mitigating risks

Once you have highlighted the risks that are relevant to your community you can then set out in your plan. Through a simple risk assessment, think about how your community will go about trying to mitigate each risk. For flooding, it might be tasking volunteers to knock on the doors of vulnerable properties to ensure that everyone is preparing for a potential flood. For snow, it might be having a store of grit and equipment ready to clear and treat strategic paths identified in the plan. These mitigation measures should be agreed with the relevant responder agency when you are drawing up your plan to ensure that they link into the overall response and do not conflict with responses from other agencies or communities.



Image credit: Tusko Films ([www.tusko.co.uk](http://www.tusko.co.uk)).



Community Emergency Volunteers in rural areas can help boost stretched local emergency responder resources.



# 3.

## Responsibilities

Once you have defined the risks that your community faces, and before deciding what roles your community can undertake in order to meet these challenges, it is important to consider how emergency responders are organised. This will help you understand where you might be able to fit in.

### Types of responder

The Civil Contingencies Act splits emergency responders into three separate categories. Each has a role to perform during an emergency, whether that be leading the response or supporting other agencies. This will depend on the type of emergency.

- Category 1 responders – responders who will lead in an operation
- Category 2 responders – responders who will support the Category 1 agencies
- Non-category responders – the voluntary response sector and military

### Category 1 responders

As well as the Police, Fire and Ambulance Service (also known as the blue light agencies), HM Coastguard, the Environment Agency, local authorities and local health authorities are also described as Category 1 responders. Who takes the lead during an incident will depend on the type of incident itself.

### Category 2 responders

These tend to be the companies that run the support infrastructure that we rely upon. From utilities companies to public transport operators, Highways England, and ports and airport authorities, all have a duty to assist the Category 1 responders when required.

### Non-category responders

Non-category responders

### 3 TYPES OF RESPONDER:

CATEGORY 1  
(BLUE LIGHT  
AGENCIES)



CATEGORY 2  
(INFRASTRUCTURE  
COMPANIES)



CATEGORY 3  
(VOLUNTARY  
AGENCIES)



are the voluntary agencies, such as Search and Rescue teams, British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and faith organisations who primarily provide voluntary assistance to the other responders. Flood wardens and other CEV groups also come under this category. Whilst the military also sit within this category, their efforts can become much more integrated into the response process due to the resources they can bring to bear.

### The role of Community Emergency Volunteer groups

As a Community Emergency Volunteer group, you will most likely report to a Category 1 or 2 responder agency; which one will depend on the type of incident you are involved with. It is likely you will be dealing with the Environment Agency for flooding, the local authority for a snow event, and blue light agencies for a major incident. It is always important to agree what your roles and responsibilities will be with the lead agencies before an event and build this into your Community Emergency Plan. Practice and exercise your plan as much as possible and train for your roles, inviting other agencies and local community groups to attend as well. This will help you build trust and confidence, both within your team and with the wider local response community. Remember that a Community Emergency Plan is a 'live'

document. This means it is never 'finished' and should always be seen as a work in progress, to be updated as your knowledge, experience and roles increase. Ideally, try to review your plan annually, with support from your local town or parish council. By using a template, the plan can define the risks that you will deal with and the way that you will respond as you follow the standard system the template has laid out. However, all communities are different and therefore you need to tailor the response to the risks that you face to meet the needs and resources of your community. Templates can be great to get you started but always try to think of what else you could be dealing with and whether the processes the template suggests are right for you.

You will also need to appoint a coordinator for your group. It is important that they feel comfortable leading volunteers, dealing with the public and working with the emergency services, as they will be the main point of contact during an emergency, as well as managing the group's training and equipment. If your group is large, consider appointing more than one coordinator to share the responsibilities; this will be particularly helpful in case one of them is away or unavailable during an incident.



Image credit: Tusko Films ([www.tusko.co.uk](http://www.tusko.co.uk)).



If your community has a local fire or police station, see if your volunteers can use its facilities for storage/training.

# 4.

## Response The three C's.

When responding to an emergency in your community, the most important issue is your group's safety. This is especially true in rural areas where your community might well be cut off and you do not want to put additional strain on the emergency services by putting yourself in danger. In order to manage your group safely, you need to put some simple systems in place:

### Command

All the volunteers know who to report to

Generally, volunteers should take their direction from their coordinator, who, in turn, will be responding to requests, either from the incident commander on the ground or, in rural locations, remotely from the local agency incident room. Be realistic when setting your roles in your plan and be honest and upfront with the emergency responders about what you can and cannot do, especially if they are not on the ground. It can be difficult to say no to a request from the responder agencies, but you don't want to raise expectations and take on more than your group can cope with.

### Control

The coordinator can call volunteers out and stand them down

If your volunteers are spread out over a wider area, it is important to agree a 'muster point' where you can all meet up, be briefed and given your equipment. This might be your local fire or police station (if your community has one and with the agreement of the relevant authority), or alternatively a village hall, parish or town council office. Wherever you choose for your muster point it is best to keep your equipment there as well. Choose somewhere central, easy to get to, and unlikely to get cut off or flooded during an emergency.

If you have only one or two volunteers, it may be that they deploy directly from their home. If so, think about how you might be able to monitor these volunteers' safety. Perhaps have a system in place where volunteers must call in every hour to say they are safe.

You must also decide as a group what your 'triggers' are. A trigger is what sets your Community Emergency Plan into action. For flooding, it might be the Environment Agency's automated flood warning service. Other triggers might be a Met Office severe weather warning, or a pre-agreed message from a Category 1 or 2 responder agency. In certain circumstances you might decide to self-deploy without a formal trigger, possibly to take preventative action. Be cautious when doing this because there might be some good reasons as to why you haven't been called out by the responder agencies, and you may be asked to stand down again.

### Communications

Volunteers can stay in touch and call for help

Communications can be particularly difficult in rural communities. For example, mobile phone signals can be unreliable at the best of times, but during a severe weather event they can be severely affected. If you are concerned about relying on mobile phones to call out and communicate with your group during an incident, have a back-up plan. This might be investing in two-way radios, although, please note, their range is not that extensive and can be quickly reduced by hills. Even a simple whistle can be used to effectively raise attention to yourself.

Ensure that your group is well trained in the 3Cs so they can be safe and more effective when out, and about and know how to assess and deal with risks that they might face.

# 5.

## Top Tips – Community Resilience

### Identifying resources

When planning your response to emergencies you should undertake an audit of the resources available to your group:

- **People** – the number of people willing to help, their health and their skills
- **Equipment** – machinery, vehicles, tools, PPE
- **Buildings** – for storage, rest centres, training and table-top exercises

Once you have a clear idea of what your community already has available you can then make decisions about what further recruitment you might want to undertake or equipment you might wish to purchase. Consider holding a community resilience day or evening in your community, and invite the local emergency services along. It may be worth linking it into an annual fête or other community event where you know lots of people will turn up, rather than organising a separate event requiring its own promotion and organisation.

Consider entering into a memorandum of understanding between your town or parish council and a local 4x4 response volunteer group<sup>3</sup> (who will often have such agreements with local health authorities and other Category 1 agencies) or local farmers to provide additional resources during an emergency. You should check that anyone who is offering a

particular skill or equipment has the appropriate training and insurance in place.

Try, if you can, to keep your equipment close to where you do your training and your muster point. It helps the coordinator to make sure everyone is properly equipped if the tools and equipment are where you are meeting to be briefed or stood down. Having somewhere undercover to receive your briefing, with facilities to make a warm drink and go to the toilet, will always help to get volunteers out on a cold, dark night. Having your equipment store close to where you train also helps to ensure that you can use your equipment during your training sessions, making it more practical and interactive for your volunteers.

#### Keeping motivated

Thankfully, emergencies such as flooding and snow happen relatively rarely. However, this can make it difficult for community emergency groups to retain the interest of their volunteers over time, especially if an emergency has not occurred for several years. This can be a problem when the next incident occurs, especially if contact directories are not updated and the responder agencies lose contact with those who were responsible for setting up the original team. There are a variety of ways to keep your team motivated:

Keep your equipment close to where you do your training.

- **Multi-role** – train for more than one type of emergency
- **Support wider resilience** – assist with work outside of emergencies
- **Train regularly** – as a team, with other groups and local agencies

#### Multi-role

Many groups start off as single-issue groups due to a particular event affecting their community. A committee is formed, funding is applied for, and procedures put in place. If that event then does not reoccur for several years, volunteers can become demotivated, the training becomes stale and they drift away to do other things. Unfortunately, this often means that when the next event occurs there is no one left to put the previously agreed plan into action or use the equipment that had been bought. By taking on a variety of roles, your group is much more likely to be used regularly, and the training and other activities more varied and interesting.





Getting out and about with your group and testing your equipment gets you more confident in working together as a team. Image credit: Tusko Films ([www.tusko.co.uk](http://www.tusko.co.uk)).

## Training and exercising regularly as a group helps to build teamwork and confidence in each other

Writing your Community Emergency Plan can help to identify different roles that your group could consider undertaking, based on the assessment of risks that your community faces. Many of the skills your group develops in terms of teamwork, the 3C's, working with the public and managing risk for one type of emergency are equally applicable in many different types of emergency.

### Supporting wider resilience

Your group's interests don't have to stop at emergencies. Broader community resilience aspects, such as clearing litter and leaves from gullies and ditches, can help build your community's wider resilience in preparation for autumn and winter storms. Your group could take on wider catchment issues, such as slowing water runoff, by assisting with environmental projects coordinated by the

Environment Agency or your local Wildlife Trust. The skills your volunteers learn in first aid, dealing with the public, and assisting the emergency responders could also potentially assist local community-run events by providing crowd marshals, allowing you to test your systems and get your group established in the local community.

### Train regularly

Training and exercising <sup>4</sup> regularly as a group helps to build teamwork and confidence in each other and the skills of your volunteers, as well as maintaining a sense of momentum even during quieter months. By also inviting local officers from the responder agencies, it builds trust, understanding and recognition between you and the representatives of the local agencies who are likely to be there when you are called

out. Inviting other local groups also allows you to support each other with ideas and resources and could help to build the confidence of other communities to set up, or expand the roles of, their own teams.

### Fundraising

Community resilience can be as big or as small as you want it to be: from two volunteers monitoring a local river to a large team able to deploy to a variety of incidents, supporting not only their own community but outlying parishes and settlements as well. The way you go about fundraising and deciding on the amount of funding you need will depend on where you come on this scale. A small group may only need a few hundred pounds for equipment, whereas a larger group might need thousands of pounds in funding to purchase equipment and support

**3.** A local community group who volunteer their vehicles in times of emergency where four-wheel drive is needed. For further information, visit <https://www.4x4response.info/>

**4.** Practising the theory learnt in training through either an indoor desktop exercise or a live outdoor exercise.



Effective training and exercising of your plan, along with the right equipment, will ensure your CEV group is ready to assist the community when required.

themselves in the long term. An important part of planning the longevity of your group is understanding how you will support it financially. There are many local grant bodies that can give small financial donations to organisations and community groups, but larger purchases might need applications to specialist funding streams or a variety of pots<sup>5</sup>. It is important to set up good governance for your group so that any money raised can be accounted for and managed responsibly. Setting up under your town or parish council might help with this as many of those systems will already be in place.

### Insurance

Often people are worried about assisting in emergencies in case they might be held liable for their actions. In the unlikely event that someone might try and take a group or individual to court for

damages due to the group's or an individual's actions in trying to help their community, the Government brought in the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism (SARAH) Act 2015<sup>6</sup>. This aims to reassure those who intervene that, as long as their actions were undertaken responsibly with due regard to safety, for the benefit of society or during an act of heroism, they will not be held liable for injury to a third party.

The SARAH Act does not provide a 'blank cheque' for individuals or organisations to do anything in the name of benefiting society, however. If you or your group can be proved to be negligent then you will still be held liable for your actions. Therefore, your group should retain public liability insurance to cover any negligence claims.

By setting up an organised

CEV group, undertaking a programme of training, equipping your volunteers suitably, and exercising your team, you will go a long way to proving due diligence. This will mean you are less liable to claims made against your efforts to make your community more resilient.

By setting up your group under your local town, parish council or Neighbourhood Watch committee your group can be covered by their public liability insurance. By following a recognised training programme, such as that provided by **Communities Prepared**, and having proper systems in place to manage your group during an emergency, insurers are much more likely to provide your group's activities with cover.

<sup>5</sup> For further funding information and support go to [www.communitiesprepared.org.uk](http://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk)

<sup>6</sup> See [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/5/contents/enacted)

# 6.

## Top Tips – Personal Resilience

Whilst much of this guide has concentrated on community level resilience and how communities can come together to prepare for and respond to emergencies, there is also an important part to be played by individuals and households to help themselves at a personal level. There is a lot that individuals can do to cope better during, and recover quicker from, an emergency.

Personal resilience is the foundation of community resilience. If individuals are unable to look after themselves, then they cannot assist others in an emergency. Those at greatest risk can also reduce the burden on the emergency services if they take small but effective measures to manage their own resilience better. The more at risk you, your household or business is (for example, if you live within a flood zone), the greater your preparations should be.



When a severe weather event is forecast, postpone any travel arrangements you might have if you are able to do so. If that proves impossible then there are some sensible precautions that you can take when driving in poor conditions on rural roads. Try to ensure you have the following in your vehicle:

- Ice scraper and de-icer
- Torch and spare batteries
- Boots and hi-vis jacket
- First aid kit
- Jump leads
- Mobile phone charger
- Warm drink in a vacuum flask, drinking water and snacks
- A shovel
- Road atlas
- Sunglasses (snow can dazzle)
- Personal medication
- A blanket or sleeping bag and warm hat



The following is a simple checklist that can be followed during an emergency to ensure that you don't forget important things. Some of these can be undertaken beforehand, whereas for others you will need to wait until an emergency warning has been issued in your area.

### Items for an emergency grab bag (if you need to be evacuated):

- Prescription medicines & toiletries
- Identity documents (driving license / passport / insurance documents / NHS numbers)
- First aid kit and whistle to signal for help
- Radio and torch (preferably wind-up or with spare batteries)
- Notebook & pen / pencil with key contact details such as the doctor / dentist / school
- Spare glasses / contact lenses, house / car keys
- Mobile phone charger
- Wet wipes, bin bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Items for any pets
- Other useful things to be aware of:
- Knowing where and how to turn off your utilities (gas / water / electricity)
- Family meeting place / alternative place to stay in case of evacuation
- Important computer information backed up onto a USB stick or the Cloud
- 3 days' supply of non-perishable food and water to be kept in your home
- Check smoke / carbon dioxide alarms weekly
- Storing items of sentimental value or importance upstairs or on upper shelves (bank statements / photo albums etc)
- Even if you cannot manage all of these, by doing what you can, you will be better prepared for an emergency affecting your home or business.

Whilst emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic can have a hugely disruptive personal impact on the lives of individuals, in some cases one of the most devastating impacts on a person's life can be if their house or business floods. For households, treasured keepsakes and items of personal sentimental value can be ruined beyond repair. Household furnishings, white goods, and personal items may all have to be thrown away due to their contamination with dirty, often sewage contaminated, flood water. For businesses, valuable computer files, stock and equipment can be irreparably damaged, causing severe disruption to customer orders, and potentially loss of trade. The recovery process can take months, if not years, before people can move back into homes, or businesses back into their premises. The whole process of dealing with flooding can affect individuals' mental health, with symptoms including depression and PTSD lingering on for years after the event. 40% of businesses that are flooded do not recover, which can have a huge impact on a rural

community's economy. Even businesses that are not directly affected can be impacted, as visitors and customers stay away.

The Environment Agency and your local authority have no statutory duty to protect your property from flooding, with the onus being on you to protect yourself. With this in mind, the following steps might be of assistance to you when considering how to protect your property.

### **Property Flood Resilience**

Property Flood Resilience (PFR) is all about keeping the water out of your property. The best forms of PFR are permanent solutions that do not require the householder to activate them, such as external flood doors, non-return valves, specialist airbricks, and tanking to basements and floors / walls. Alternative solutions that are still effective but require the householder to install them when a flood is imminent, are items such as demountable flood gates (either for doors or built into garden walls), air brick covers and toilet bungs. These defences can only offer protection up to a certain level. Most modern construction



**40%**

of businesses  
that are  
flooded do  
not recover

methods can only cope with a force of water applied to them of approximately 600mm deep before there is structural damage to the walls. If your property is likely to suffer deep flooding, then you might also have to consider Property Flood Adaptation (PFA).

### **Property Flood Adaptation**

PFA recognises that sometimes external PFR measures cannot keep out flood water. In these cases, it is better to adapt your house to enable quicker recovery from property flooding than may otherwise be the case. Instead of being flooded out of your property for months, if not years, with sensible PFA measures recovery times can be reduced to days, if not hours.

PFA is centred around three main types of adaptation:

- Keeping sensitive items above water level
- Getting the water out as quickly as possible
- Making sure that anything that comes into contact with flood water can be cleaned and sterilised

There are certain items such as electrics, white goods, and





anything made from paper that will not mix well with water. Simple steps such as raising wall sockets, electrical appliances and bookshelves above the expected water level can have a major impact on your ability to recover. Not everything can be moved out of harm's way permanently. Soft furnishings, curtains and rugs may need to be on or touching the ground. However, by moving as many items as possible out of harm's way before an event, it gives you time to move other items to a safer location if necessary.

It is important that once the flood water has begun to subside, you get it out as quickly as possible. Often, if flood water is coming in through the front door, the simplest thing to do is open the back door and just let it drain through. A sump built into your house floor with a pump is also a good way to remove water that



Image Credit: Aquobex (<https://aquobex.com/>)

**It is important that once the flood water has begun to subside, you get it out as quickly as possible.**

has got inside your property. Remember that even the best PFR measures will let some water into your property, so you need to have a way of dealing with any leakages.

Once the water is out of your property, you need to dry out the dampness and deep clean any surface that has come into contact with the flood water. You should assume that any flood water is likely to be contaminated with sewage and potentially pollutant runoff from neighbouring roads and fields. Traditional building materials such as plaster, chipboard, and cheap fibreboard-based furniture will soak up the water, potentially deform and prove impossible to clean. By using water-resistant materials such as solid wood, stone, stainless steel and special water-resistant plasters, you can ensure that your property can be cleaned, and your life put back to normal in a much quicker time than would otherwise be the case.

### Standards

When flooding occurs, it can be very difficult to ensure that you are getting good advice and that the materials, products and workmanship being used are the correct

quality. The British Standards Institute has a kitemark that you should look for when considering flood protection products. Products that have been certified with this kitemark will have been rigorously tested to the recommendations set down in the specification PAS 1188 <sup>7</sup>.

After flooding, property owners can be at risk of being approached by poor quality builders and scammers, who prey on vulnerable people and the large amounts of money that the government might offer to aid recovery. For this reason, the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) has launched a new code of practice, RP1055, to increase quality standards in the industry and ensure that PFR schemes are managed and delivered properly. If you are considering undertaking PFR on your property, then ensure that the consultants and contractors who you employ comply with this new Code of Practice <sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup>. See [www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/blog/Organizational-Resilience-Blog/flood-protection/](http://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/blog/Organizational-Resilience-Blog/flood-protection/)

<sup>8</sup>. See [https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects\\_underway2/Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_property\\_flood\\_resilience\\_.aspx](https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects_underway2/Code_of_Practice_and_guidance_for_property_flood_resilience_.aspx)







# Case studies

ACTION WITH  
COMMUNITIES  
IN RURAL ENGLAND

hallsweek



# 7. Case Studies

## Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity: Caddington Village

### Background

Caddington is a village of approximately 4,000 people within Central Bedfordshire. In December 2009, like most of Southern England, the area experienced heavy snowfall which led to the closure of Luton Airport and the M1 motorway. In Caddington, just before Christmas, the bad weather led to a leak in the water mains, which then bled into the nearby gas main and subsequently froze, fracturing the gas pipe.

As a result, 1,250 houses in Caddington were without gas and water for three days. The situation escalated when the National Grid distributed fans and hobs to residents, which caused a surge in power use, blowing the mains and causing a complete loss of power. The village was featured on Anglia Look East News television and hit the national press.

### Local Response

Faced with a common adversity, the community really came together. Christmas dinner was provided at the local school for over 100 people. The local Social Club became the command centre for the incident, and the main point of support for residents to keep warm, receive hot drinks and food. The centre stayed open 24 hours a day for an entire week.

Neighbours from unaffected parts of the village came forward to assist those without gas, water or electric supply. Residents even ferried their



immobile neighbours to the centre.

Local organisations such as the Good Neighbour Scheme, Caddington Care, (which is supported by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity), went around the village, door knocking, delivering hot meals and ferrying residents to the Social Club.

Emergency Plans led by the local authority and the Local Resilience Forum (Beds Prepared) swung into action, assisted by BLEVEC (Beds & Luton Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee). The National Grid and EDF Energy fought to restore power and police maintained high visibility for reassurance.

in building on, to enhance existing crisis management arrangements. The Council has prioritised the production of a Community Emergency Plan.

Caddington faced arguably its biggest ever challenge as residents tried to finalise last minute preparations for Christmas, whilst battling a loss of gas, water and electricity. They put on a brave face and pulled together to help their neighbours, gaining praise for their efforts.

Following the incident, the village underwent a marked growth in the number and variety of locally based volunteer groups. For instance, Caddington Care now has in excess of 80 volunteers,

### Community resilience is about being better prepared for such events

The combined response included the Parish Council, Central Bedfordshire, Ward Councillors, Luton Borough Council, Bedford Borough Council, Veolia Water and NHS Bedfordshire amongst others.

### Outcomes

Community resilience is about being better prepared for such events, adequate planning, proportionate response and then recovery, continuing into the future.

Central Bedfordshire wanted to learn from the response and organised sessions as a result. These generated learning points, which the Council expressed an interest

whereas in 2009 they had only 25. They now support over 200 clients. Other local volunteers, the Friends of Heathfield, now, run an unused local school. It provides a much-needed meeting point for over 25 local groups. Local support networks are now much stronger than before.

### References

- Caddhist – Caddington Local History Group: [www.caddhist.org.uk](http://www.caddhist.org.uk)
- YouTube: TheEastAnglia channel, Anglia News 7/1/10, The Big Freeze

# 1,250

houses in Caddington were without gas and water for three days.





Image Credit: David Ambridge



7 Case Studies



# 7. Case Studies



## Water with Integrated Local Delivery Project: a transferable systems approach to community resilience and preparedness

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), in partnership with farmers, the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and the Countryside and Community Research Institute.

Since 2013 FWAG has led on the Water with Integrated Local Delivery (WILD) project, a demonstration project for integrated local delivery, that builds community resilience and preparedness to climate change by working with farmers and partners along water bodies. The WILD project has now been researched as an international case study, being the foundation of a tool kit for action through the IEEP Pegasus Project <sup>9</sup>. The WILD project worked with 20

communities and 100 farmers in 10 water bodies linked to the catchment-based approach.

Here are some of the findings.

There are 6 key steps, which need the support of a Farming and Integrated Environmental Local Delivery (FIELD) adviser:

1. Once invited by a community, begin initial scoping to determine the area, its assets, key individuals and strategic frameworks involved. Historic maps are very helpful
2. Map the issues and opportunities and verify these in an open and inclusive format, valuing all types of knowledge and

contribution – especially the farming community

3. Develop a management group around the key local and statutory stakeholders linked to the parish/ward council
4. Encourage opportunities for local collaboration and adoption of responsibilities through inclusive partnerships linked to the catchment-based approach and the local nature partnerships
5. Establish the capacity and role of local groups, embedding action and identifying and prioritising tasks with partners

<sup>9</sup> <http://pegasus.ieep.eu/case-studies/list-of-case-studies - United Kingdom: UK-1: WILD river basin management initiative>



**6.** Implement proposals by facilitating funding from public, private and third sector sources to deliver multiple objectives at a local level, enabling local action

The aim was to demonstrate the key role of an adviser in inspiring and enabling local communities to take local action. This involved integrating support from all locally relevant partners, particularly in relation to water quality and flooding, with a focus on land management, and issues and opportunity mapping. Some of the key achievements carried out by the advisers included:

- Engaging support from 100 Farmer Guardians covering over 25,000 hectares of Upper Thames in wider WILD Project area
- Facilitating new agreements under the Countryside Stewardship scheme including 5,000 hectares of Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship



**£250,000**  
of grant  
funding from  
other partners/  
funding bodies

- Engaging 20 communities in integrated water management as part of Parish and Neighbourhood Planning
- Securing £300,000 worth of volunteer hours
- Identifying close to 60 km of potential river enhancements and sharing this with partners
- Surveying and sympathetically managing a total of 300 km ditches
- Securing £250,000 of grant funding from other partners/ funding bodies that helped deliver the overall WILD project objectives
- Engaging 20 schools in understanding the importance of water as a primary resource
- Developing the Community Guide to the Water Environment, circulated nationally in collaboration with ACRE, and a case study on an Integrated Planning Tool
- Producing Ditch Management Guidelines, circulated to all members of the Upper Thames Catchment Partnership
- Hosting a National Conference on the WILD Project approach attended by 84 delegates from across the UK
- Holding 15+ events for farmers and Parish Councils
- Working with communities to map and digitise over 1,500 issues and opportunities concerning water flow and its impact on the water environment

The project has now become an international case study for rebuilding socio-ecological systems and is being trialled as a key approach for the new Environmental Land Management Scheme post Brexit.

For more information, please contact Jenny Phelps: [jenny.phelps@fwagsw.org.uk](mailto:jenny.phelps@fwagsw.org.uk)

# 7. Case Studies

## Cambridgeshire ACRE Water Care Case Study

The Water Care Partnership is a group of partners that have been brought together through the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) to deliver the aims of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the Old Bedford and Middle Level Catchment (OBML). Supported through annual funding from the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire ACRE are the catchment hosts and have administered the partnership since its formation in 2012. A range of key stakeholders make up the partnership, including:

- The Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Anglian Water
- Internal Drainage Boards
- The National Farmers Union
- Key conservation groups such as the Wildlife Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)

The OBML is a unique and challenging catchment with many different issues. It is located in the Cambridgeshire Fens and is a low-lying, flat landscape, much of which is below sea level, meaning that water within the catchment must be carefully managed through drainage ditches and rivers.

Working together, The Water Care Partnership aims to improve the water environment in the OBML catchment by:

- Reducing diffuse and point sources of water pollution, for example, through helping farmers to better protect their soils and limit surface water runoff on their land, and through helping rural communities to take better care of their sewage tanks
- Creating and improving wildlife habitats in the water landscape, for example,



and scarcity, for example, through working with farmers and the Internal Drainage Boards to trial new ways to store excess winter water for periods of scarcity

Another key aspect of the partnership's work involves promoting public awareness into the importance of the water environment for both people and wildlife and helping local communities to play a role in protecting their blue space natural heritage assets. For example, Cambridgeshire ACRE led the formation of the Ramsey

### Another key aspect of our partnership's work involves promoting public awareness into the importance of our water environment for both people and wildlife

through supporting conservation groups in making spaces for nature, bigger, better and more joined up. A great example of this work in the OBML catchment is that of the RSPB and WWT in the Ouse Washes SSSI <sup>10</sup>.

- Enhancing and promoting the catchment's waterbodies for boating, hunting, fishing, and overall public enjoyment, for example, through working with the County Council's Public Rights of Ways team to create and promote new ways for people to access and enjoy their countryside
- Improving the way that the water is managed both in times of abundance



<sup>10</sup>. <http://ousewashes.org.uk/about/>

RiverCare community group, who undertake regular river clean ups along the Bury Brook as it flows through Ramsey Town. Removing litter and pollutants from the brook helps to improve the quality of the water in the river, removes potential blockages to reduce flood risk in the town, creates a nicer river environment for local people to enjoy, and promotes the issues of river protection and management to other local residents. This group are now an official RiverCare group for Keep Britain Tidy <http://www.rivercare.org.uk>.

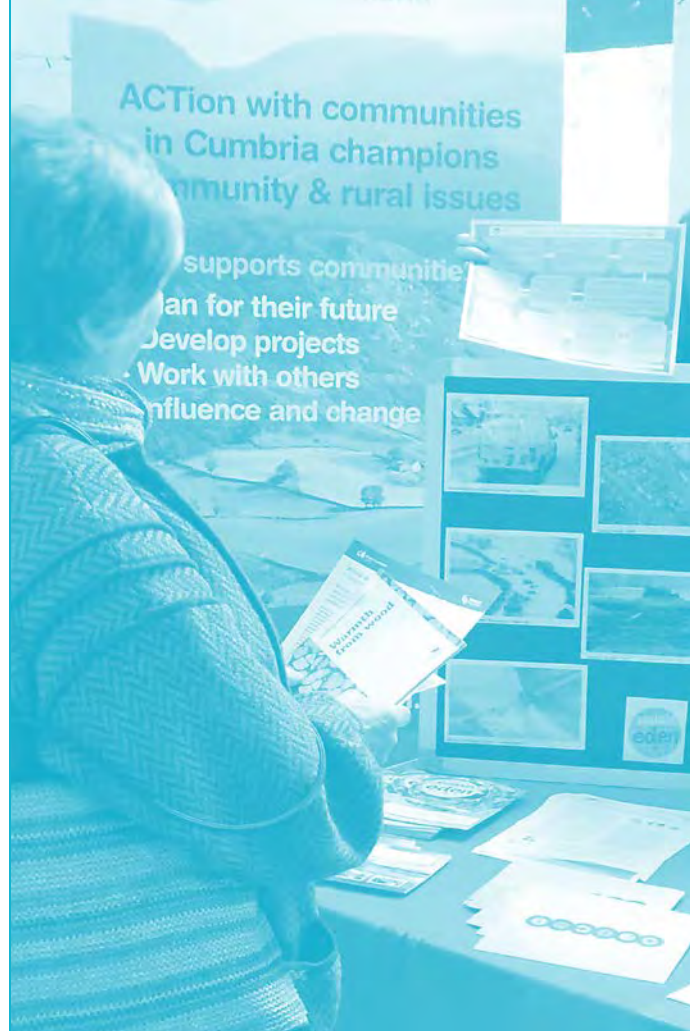




# 7. Case Studies

## Building Resilience Together case study

Rebuilding Together was a 3-year, £1 million programme of work in Cumbria funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, which ran from October 2016 until September 2019. It was developed in response to Storm Desmond in December 2015, which caused widespread disruption.



### Approach

The project built on existing work involving a wide range of partners (the three main partners were Cumbria CVS, ACTION with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) and Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS)). Existing activities were connected, and it was intended to be responsive, to both the different communities we worked with, and to the learning that occurred during delivery.

### Activities

The programme's activities are described in "layers of resilience" rather than by organisation.

- **Individual resilience** was encouraged by newspaper advertisements and social media (#30Days30WaysUK).
- **Household resilience** was promoted by information on household emergency planning.

### • Community resilience

was supported by a wide range of activity, including formal community emergency planning, community conversations around emergencies, neighbourliness and climate change, and community energy projects.

### • Organisational resilience

included helping local third sector organisations and community businesses to develop business continuity plans.

- **System resilience** was an unexpected addition to the project, but one of its most successful. We worked with Cumbria Local Resilience to better link community and voluntary organisations into their plans and structures.

### Key Achievements

The most significant changes to project delivery were the result of much stronger involvement in strategic partnerships, particularly

Cumbria's Local Resilience Forum.

During the programme, the partners:

- Distributed over 60,000 household emergency planning leaflets
- Placed over 40 community emergency plans on Resilience Direct
- Negotiated public liability insurance for community emergency planning groups through Neighbourhood Watch Association
- Trained over 300 community volunteers in emergency response skills
- Involved 1,360 people in training and events on flood refurbishment, property resilience and energy efficiency, and undertook 46 energy audits
- Worked with partners through Cumbria Local Resilience Forum to enable



Distributed over **60,000** household emergency planning leaflets



Strong relationships meant that we were able to explore some of the most difficult challenges, to begin to find common ground.

350 individuals and 70 community organisations to feed into incident debriefs

- Supported 10 other areas that have experienced a major incident, and informed national developments

### Key Learning

The flexibility to adapt the programme's activities within the broad aim of "increasing resilience" was vital.

Over the three years of the programme, things that had seemed like a good idea in the immediate aftermath of Storm Desmond were tested. Some were a great success, some worked well initially, but were then adapted and others met with outright rebellion; for example, early plans to develop a standard training package for community volunteers were revised, and training was



Involved  
**1,360**  
people in  
training and  
events on flood  
refurbishment,  
property  
resilience  
and energy  
efficiency

tailored to each individual emergency response group.

Unexpected opportunities appeared, particularly around strategic partnership working, and a fast-growing awareness of the impacts of climate change, and the partners were able to respond to these.

Relationships were as important as formal structures.

Strong relationships meant that the partners were able to explore some of the most difficult challenges, to begin to find common ground, and work towards sustainable solutions.

### Resources and links

- The key resources produced during the programme can be found here: <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/rebuilding-together/>
- For further information, please contact one of the partner organisations: ACTION with Communities in Cumbria: <http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk>  
[info@cumbriaaction.org.uk](mailto:info@cumbriaaction.org.uk)  
**01228 817224**
- Cumbria CVS: <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk>  
[info@cumbriacvs.org.uk](mailto:info@cumbriacvs.org.uk)  
**01768 800350**
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability: <https://cafs.org.uk>  
[office@cafs.org.uk](mailto:office@cafs.org.uk)  
**01768 210276**

## Further information and support

The following are links to organisations and campaigns that support community resilience across the UK, which you might find useful when setting up or managing your own group.

### Flooding

- ACRE's 'A Community Guide to Your Water Environment' – guidance on understanding the importance of water and connecting with landowners and partners to manage river catchments and flood risk. See <https://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/comm-guides/community-water-guide.pdf>
- National Flood Forum – provides support and advocacy to communities affected by flooding, assisting communities to set up flood action groups. See <https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>
- Know Your Flood Risk – a website full of useful information about property flood resilience and adaptation. Campaign led by flood expert Mary Dhonau OBE. See <http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/>
- Flood risk maps – find out if you're at risk from flooding. See <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>

### Snow

- The Snow Code – Government advice on clearing snow in public areas. See <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/your-home/clearing-paths-and-driveways>
- AA winter driving advice – useful tips and guidance on driving in snow and icy conditions. See <https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/seasonal/winter>

### Terrorism

- citizenAID – training for the general public to cope with terrorism events as 'zero' responders. See <https://www.citizenaid.org/>

### General schemes

- Communities Prepared – a national multi-role training and support programme for Community Emergency Volunteer groups. See [www.communitiesprepared.org.uk](http://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk)
- What if? – West Sussex County Council community resilience scheme currently being adopted by many other local authorities. See <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/preparing-for-emergencies/community-resilience-programme-what-if/>
- Ready for Anything – North Yorkshire County Council's successful community resilience scheme. See <https://www.emergencynorthyorks.gov.uk/readyforanything>
- Duke of Cornwall Community Safety Award – a community resilience training scheme for primary and secondary school children also adopted by uniformed youth groups. See <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/community-and-living/cornwall-fire-and-rescue-service-homepage/about-us/what-we-do/community-safety-and-localism/community-initiatives/community-safety-award/>
- Met Office weather warnings guide – guide to the UK weather warning system. See <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/warnings>

### Public Health

- Public Health England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
- NHS England <https://www.england.nhs.uk/homepage/>

## Partner and funder biographies



### ACRE

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national body for 38 county wide charitable development agencies who work at a local level in support of rural communities across the country. Together they make up the ACRE Network. ACRE's vision is to be the voice of rural communities and is supported by the wealth of evidence and intelligence on rural matters that they collect from their members. They use this evidence to influence national policy on rural issues, from housing, health and transport to broadband, services and fuel poverty.

ACRE has a strong track record of speaking up for rural communities and their members, who have a long and fruitful history of making a difference at grassroots level. As well as supporting its members, ACRE works with a wide range of partners who all have an interest in achieving a fair deal for rural communities. For more information visit [www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk)



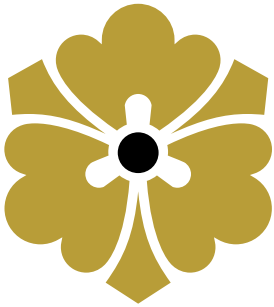
### Communities Prepared

Communities Prepared is a nationwide community resilience programme which equips communities across the country with the knowledge and tools to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from, emergencies such as flooding, snow, other severe weather events and utilities failures. Led by Groundwork South, the programme works in partnership with the Environment Agency, Cornwall Community Flood Forum and Cornwall College Business, as well as teaming up with a range of other organisations at the national and local level.

With backing from The National Lottery Community Fund's Reaching Communities programme until October 2021, and additional support from The Prince's Countryside Fund and SEN, the programme is providing community volunteers with online and in-person training, advice and support, tailored to local needs and priorities. In doing so, it is supporting the development of multi-role community emergency volunteer groups that have the confidence and skills to work effectively alongside the emergency services and other local agencies in order to assist their community and its vulnerable residents to become more resilient over the long term. For more information visit

[www.communitiesprepared.org.uk](http://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk)

## Partner and funder biographies



### THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND

#### The Prince's Countryside Fund

The Prince's Countryside Fund's vision is of a confident, robust and sustainable agricultural and rural community which is universally appreciated for its vital contribution to the British way of life and fit to support future generations.

The organisation is passionate about the countryside. Established by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2010, The Prince's Countryside Fund exists to improve the prospects of family farm businesses and the quality of rural life. Through their partnerships and events such as National Countryside Week they celebrate and promote the value of the countryside.

For more information visit  
[www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk](http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk)



#### The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund is a distributor of National Lottery funding, established as a non-departmental public body by an Act of Parliament.

The Fund is governed by a board, which is responsible for setting the Fund's long-term strategy and key policies and making sure that it's run in an effective and efficient way. It delegates the day-to-day running of the organisation to the chief executive and her senior management team.

The Fund's work is divided into five portfolios, covering funding across England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and the UK as a whole.

It has teams all over the UK who are the main point of contact for communities. They work with people to develop ideas and create opportunities for groups to come together. For more information visit  
[www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

**Building resilience can also have many other benefits not directly related to emergencies, including environmental improvements, better supporting community networks, and underpinning social cohesion.**





Email: [contact@acre.org.uk](mailto:contact@acre.org.uk)  
Telephone: 01285 653477

**[www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk)**



Email: [communitiesprepared@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:communitiesprepared@groundwork.org.uk)  
Telephone: 07715631595

**[www.communitiesprepared.org.uk](http://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk)**



**[www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk](http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk)**



**[www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)**