

Ten Reasons Why Having A Community Emergency Plan Is Worthwhile

1) Because emergencies do happen!

Flooding isn't the only hazard we face in Somerset, as evident on the Community Risk Register (<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/community-risk-register/>) but, even taking just this as an example, a quick look at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/beaches-ports-and-flooding/flood-investigations/> reveals many significant events in recent years and climate change is elevating flood risk still further.

2) Co-ordinates a response

Co-ordination is the most discussed topic in academic literature around emergency response. Having a plan in advance helps avoid duplication of effort and things getting missed.

3) Covers the period before emergency services arrive

An emergency might leave a community cut off from support for some time. Even when access isn't a barrier, an emergency can be so widespread that emergency services have to prioritise other communities and may not get to yours, so being able to manage an "in house" response is important.



4) Reduces risk of panic and poor decision-making

For all of us, our decision-making becomes less good in a crisis. Having a written plan can help minimise the poor decisions and help make sure the response is as effective as possible. Even before an emergency, having a plan also helps community members feel reassured.

5) The better the response to an emergency, the lesser the impact and the shorter the recovery

An effective response reduces the emergency's impact. There are examples from Somerset of groups of community volunteers working together to stop multiple houses from flooding and an effective response can also reduce the time it takes for households to get up and running again.

6) Can identify 'hotspots' which be targeted for improvement as part of a longer-term vision of a more resilient community

Thinking through the likely hazards you face as a community can help focus attention on finding mitigating measures.

7) Brings the community together

Numerous studies in different areas of life have shown that the stronger the sense of community, the more likely the inhabitants are to be well, safe and thriving. Developing an Emergency Plan and putting it into practise provides another opportunity to strengthen this.

8) Cares for the vulnerable

It's the community who best knows who will need extra help in a time of crisis and who the emergency might have made vulnerable. Planning in advance helps ensure than no-one gets forgotten.

9) Allows you to access Somerset Prepared grant funding

Up to £5,000 of funding is available for communities who want to buy equipment to support their Emergency Plan. See <https://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/get-support/funding-support/> for further details.

10) It's in the best interests of your community

To be clear, whilst it is strongly encouraged by government (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-involved-in-your-community/information-for-communities-and-community-groups/>), there is no statutory requirement for Parish Meetings and Parish/Town/City Councils to have their own Emergency Plan. Such bodies are, however, charged with operating in the best interests of their communities and, when emergencies do happen (see point 1), it might be considered remiss to have chosen not to support the community to have been prepared beforehand.

For further tips and advice on creating a
Community Emergency Plan visit:

www.SomersetPrepared.org.uk

