

Minutes of the Meeting of Emergency Planning held in Rickards Hall on 23 September 2024 at 7:30 pm

Present: Cllrs. Angela Baker, Sarah Compton, Michael Gemmell Smith, Carey Jacques, Margot McArthur
(Chair)

In attendance: Town Clerk; Community Warden; Cllr Layland; and PC Maunsell.

Current co-opted members in attendance: R Booth; C Thurston.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs Aldridge, McGregor and Streets; as well as co-opted members P Byrne, J Martin, R McKillop, and K Staff.

2 Declarations of Interest, or Predeterminations (Councillors only)

None.

3 To receive and sign minutes of Emergency Planning Committee on 22 April 2024 046/01-3

Resolved: the minutes of the Emergency Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 22 April 2024, be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record (046/1-3).

4 Financial Matters

4.1 Budget and expenditure 2024-25

Members noted the budget for 2024-24 was £345 to include the radio licences, equipment and training. Total expenditure to date include £25 for a replacement mobile phone charger. Licences usually cost ed£112.50. There were no questions.

5 Review of activity since last meeting

5.1 Annual check on Emergency Planning Equipment

Cllr Jacques and the Community Warden had carried out a thorough check of the emergency equipment held by the Council at the Town Council offices and the WI Hall. The Community Warden said that there were some items that had needed to be purchased for example, a new power pack as the old one no longer held its charge. The remote sites were in the process of being checked, with some items being relocated to the WI Hall stores. He also mentioned monthly battery testing were being done, and that he and Cllr Jacques were considering additional items. The Chair thanked the Community Warden and Cllr Jacques for the detailed checks carried out.

5.2 Emergency Plan Review and update

The Chair said that she had the current Emergency Plan, dated November 2021 and was in the process of working through it to ensure it was current and fit for purpose. Once completed she would circulate to committee members for comment.

5.3 Communications resilience update

Members noted there continued to be no licensed radio amateurs at Sevenoaks District Council (SDC). There had been conversations at SDC regarding the possibility of an alternative patch through system, but there remained no viable solutions for Edenbridge currently. Cllr McArthur and Robert McKillop had investigated options also, but these would require support of SDC. The Chair said that she would continue to keep the issue on the agenda with the Head of Direct Services at SDC. Members noted that in an emergency SDC silver command level would be put in action, referring to the emergency services. The Council's Emergency Planning Committee also had its own WhatsApp group which had been effective in past years where there had been flooding incidents, and would continue with this.

6 Forthcoming Activities

6.1 Resident information

Members received a copy of a flyer 'five steps to become better prepared in an emergency', noting this had been displayed on the Council's website, Facebook and noticeboards, The Council's website also carried information on readiness and what to do to for emergencies and local impacts, including emergency contacts. The Emergency Plan did include help for vulnerable residents.

6.2 Recruitment of co-optees

Members noted the New Edenbridge and District Residents Association (NEDRA) had expressed interest in supporting emergency planning, and the Community Warden could also organise a call for volunteers. Currently the committee had seven co-opted members and it was agreed to pause recruitment until the emergency plan review had been completed, and a brief of what 'volunteers' can do had been drafted.

7 Information Exchange

7.1 Kent Police

PC Maunsell said that when reporting incidents to the control room using 101, it is really important that as much information is passed on, the control room are unlikely to have first hand knowledge of the area, so it would be help to know where flooding was to assist with potential road closures. He mentioned importance of vulnerable care registers for priority to SECAMB and Kent Fire and Rescue.

7.2 Kent Fire & Rescue Service

No representative present.

7.3 Sevenoaks District Council Emergency Planning Officer

No representative present.

7.4 Edenbridge First Responders

Cllr Baker suggested that the First Responders would be willing to provide defibrillator training sessions to committee members and the public, providing basic life skills. Members thought this was an excellent idea and asked the Community Warden and Town Clerk to liaise and arrange suitable dates, subject to Hall availability and publicise.

8 News Release

Defibrillator training sessions, once dates confirmed.

9 Date of Next Meeting - 24 February 2025

Noted.