

Introduction and Background

There is no requirement that defines the facilities or level of detail that a Parish Council needs to have in a Crisis Management Plan. However, Chilcompton Parish Council has such a plan and it is periodically revised. Following the most recent review, the Council has assessed its ability to provide emergency services and has determined that the plan that was in place for some time included very significant expectations that could not be met so that plan has now been retired.

The previous plan was very well researched and documented, however it laid unachievable expectation upon the Council and others. The Council does not have the skills, training, resources or experience to deal with many aspects of the former plan. Furthermore, the plan calls for access to material assets that do not exist and such resources are unaffordable in the current financial climate. It is also noted that the plan was not utilised or referred to in recent years and in relation to the pandemic, it simply said to do what governing bodies required and that was what was done without any further guidance.

Because unachievable commitments were set out in the plan, in the event of a widespread emergency parishioners may have certain expectations which could not be fulfilled. Such expectations could result in very considerable confusion and exposures in the event of a genuine emergency that was not supported by government services. Subsequently, the former plan needs to be replaced.

In the event of a crisis that cannot be covered by the emergency services

Without exception, primary support must always be the national emergency services, such as police, fire, ambulance and social services plus others. They are equipped, staffed, trained and funded to assist in all such situations. Within budgetary limits and other constraints, the chances of them being unable to support or reach village residents in a timely manner is viewed as being extremely unlikely.

Should such a crisis occur however, all village residents, including councillors, have as their primary responsibility taking care of their own needs and those of their family. There is no exception to this requirement and it cannot be overruled. Only when they are safe should village residents volunteer to help others. Volunteering is not restricted to Parish Councillors and all able village residents should play a part.

Once one's immediate needs have been addressed, volunteers may assemble at 1) the village hall and 2) the church hall. The sports club may also be available but the key is that any crisis would be addressed by whomever is available at the time and what skills they can offer or gather. The particular situation would first need to be assessed and the best way or ways of addressing it agreed by whomever is present. This would be based on assessment of the needs, local knowledge and resources that were available at the time. No amount of planning can address every possible scenario however discussion at the time could be led by a councillor or by any volunteer with the ability to lead the group, assess the situation and utilise the volunteer skills that were available.

Parish Councillors do not have the training, experience, resources, equipment or insurance to treat ill or injured people. Additionally, neither the village nor the Parish Council have access to reserves of emergency equipment, food or other supplies or emergency accommodation. It's possible that some resident volunteers would have such skills and assets and would be willing to share these but there is no commitment or obligation upon them to do so.

The Parish Council should not duplicate significant amount of emergency planning information that is freely available and kept up to date elsewhere as this would inevitably lead to confusion and contradiction. Subsequently, we recommend that every household make their own emergency preparations. Some sources of helpful information to assist with this are listed below. The UK Government Domestic planning for an emergency guidance listed below is especially recommended for review and implementation before a crisis arises.

Key locations and contact information

Name or description	Comments
Village Hall	
Saint John's Church Hall	
Sports Club	
Parish Councillors	Per contact page on village website or by local knowledge
EVAG	https://www.evag.uk/ May be able to provide assistance and supplies during serious incidents, floods etc.
National Grid	0800 111 999
Environment Agency	0845 988 1188
UK Government Domestic planning for an emergency guidance	https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/