COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING POLICY

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- **Annex H Emergency Log Template (public)**
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Documents marked as "Public" shall be available on the FPC website when approved by the Council, documents marked as "Restricted" contain sensitive information such as personal contact details which should be held only by a small number of people for use in an emergency.

1. Introduction

1.1 Major emergencies are responded to by key organisations such as: emergency services, local authorities, health, utility companies and voluntary agencies in a combined response. In extreme conditions such as heavy snow and flooding, and where there are widespread incidents across Bedfordshire, there is a possibility that the emergency services may not be able to reach the scene immediately.

1.2 In such circumstances, the initial response may rely entirely on local people. A Community Emergency Plan can help a community prepare for an emergency and minimize its impact should they be affected. Communities may have access to people or resources that allow them to respond to specific incidents that may affect a particular locality.

1.3 Fairfield Parish Council (FPC) has no statutory responsibility to plan for, respond to, or recover from an incident. However, it is good practice for communities to identify risks and make simple plans on how they may respond when faced with such an incident.

1.4 This document does not place any formal requirement on FPC to make emergency plans; any participation by FPC is purely voluntary. The document promotes community resilience, which has proven to be effective in improving emergency preparedness, assisting communities before, during and after an emergency.

1.5 This document is intended as guidance about planning for an emergency; it does not constitute legal advice in relation to emergency planning.

1.6 It should be recognised that FPC is not trained, equipped, empowered, or resourced to carry out the functions of an emergency service.

1.7 Individual volunteers and community groups should never do anything which puts themselves or their community at risk.

1.8 FPC acknowledges that Central Bedfordshire Council (hereafter CBC) shall not have any liability, under this guidance or otherwise, for any actions or omissions in respect of the provision of services by the FPC in an emergency.

1.9 Nothing in this plan removes the requirement to have adequate insurance in place.

1.10 When requested, CBC Civil Contingency officers will provide advice and assistance in preparing emergency plans. The completion and maintenance of the plan will remain the responsibility of the Council.

2. Definition of an Emergency

2.1 An emergency is an incident, happening with or without warning, negatively affecting a community that is beyond the individual & collective resources of residents to counter, and presents a serious threat to, or has the potential for threat to:

- Human welfare -- The loss of human life; human illness or injury; homelessness; damage to property; disruption of a supply of food, water, energy, fuel or money; disruption of communication systems; disruption of transport facilities; or disruption of health services.
- Environment -- The contamination of land, water, or air with harmful biological, chemical, or radioactive matter; or the disruption or destruction of animal or plant life.
- Security -- A war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.

2.1 Incident Categories

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL ACTION
Level 0 – Monitoring	**A warning has been issued or a risk identified, but there is no confirmed local impact yet.**	**Log it. Assign someone to monitor. No formal activation.**
Level 1 – Local Response	**Confirmed impact, but small in scale, short in duration, and within the Council's own resources to manage.**	**Emergency Coordinator manages directly; informs the Chair; no formal declaration needed.**
Level 2 – Parish Emergency	**Significant impact: multiple households or vulnerable residents affected, likely to last more than 24 hours, external support is needed, or the single access road is blocked/threatened.**	**Formal declaration. Activate the relevant playbook in full. Notify the County/Unitary Emergency Planning duty officer and Ward Councillor.**
Level 3 – Major Incident	**Declared by Police or another Category 1 responder under**	**The parish moves into a support role under the multi-agency**

	the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.	**Gold/Silver/Bronze command structure coordinated via the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF).**

2.2 All major incidents are dealt with in a combined response by Category 1 responders (Emergency Services, Local Authorities, Health Agencies) and Category 2 responders (Utility Companies and Transport Companies) as well as Voluntary Agencies.

2.3 In Bedfordshire, agencies contending with any emergency work together as the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum, c/o Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston Bedford, MK42 7NR. BLRF Mailbox BLRF@bedsfire.gov.uk

2.4 Categories 1-3 require some level of CBC involvement.

2.5 Major incidents would be coordinated by CBC with support from FPC; local incidents and Parish emergencies would most likely be coordinated by FPC, with support from CBC.

2.6 The Fairfield Community Emergency Planning will refer to major incidents but will be mostly focused on local incidents, that is those coordinated by FPC.

3. Declaration of an Emergency

3.1 The community will become aware of an incident by one, or more, of:

- Witnessing it themselves
- Notification by one, or more, of the Council, CBC Duty Emergency Planning, CBC Building Control, Police, Fire Authorities, Met Office and Utilities Suppliers
- Receipt of a national alert or warning that will affect the local community

The declaration of an incident will likely follow the following procedures:

3.2 Major incident

Formal notification of a major incident will be most likely by email from the CBC Emergency Planning Team. FPC will always be notified as soon as possible by CBC of any incident which may affect them.

3.3 Parish Emergency

In the event of a local emergency impacting a smaller area, FPC will be contacted by telephone by the CBC Duty Emergency Planning officer (CERT WhatsApp group) or the FPC may itself declare an incident by contacting the CBC Duty Emergency Planning officer on 0300 300 8098 or CERT WhatsApp group.

4. Fairfield Developments

4.1 The village of Fairfield was initially developed on 253 acres that formed part of Fairfield Hospital (formerly the Three Counties Asylum) that closed in 1999 following changes to the provision of mental health nationally.

4.2 Planning permission for the original development was granted in 2002, following which the hospital was converted into Fairfield Hall, a Grade II listed building comprising 229 apartments; the old hospital stable and farm buildings (renamed Middlemarch) were converted into 40 houses and apartments; and some 843 dwellings, comprising a mix of detached, semi-detached, and terraced homes were built in the grounds of the former hospital. The 9 original dwellings on Hitchin Road were subsumed into the new development.

4.3 Since then, further development has resulted in the village centre moving north and east over time with the addition of Bessemer Fields, Fairfield Gardens & Fairfield Meadows.

4.4 The village currently comprises several separate development areas, which fall under differing management companies and managing agents.

Additional to residential dwellings the village currently comprises:

- A community centre.
- Two schools.
- A small parade of shops.
- A garden centre.
- A 75-bedroom nursing and care home for the elderly.
- Two orchards and various green open spaces (including the Urban Park).
- Gymnasium, with accompanying coffee shop.
- Cricket, tennis, and bowls sports facilities.
- A farm situated at the southern extreme of the parish.
- A Wastewater Treatment Plant (Anglian Water) situated to the south-east.

4.5 Fairfield Parish Council came into existence in April 2013 following the completion of the original development, with a population of around 3,500 (2024 census), 1,230 households (2021 census). Once the currently known developments are completed, the population of Fairfield Parish is expected to increase to around 4,600.

5. Community Emergency Plan

5.1 The Community Emergency Plan (hereafter the Plan) is intended to be FPC's response to an emergency. The Plan should generally be confined to looking after the welfare of people in the Fairfield Community and/or helping maintain the Community infrastructure.

5.2 The Plan may only be activated both unilaterally or as a response from communication from the CBC by either:

- Two Parish Councillors or
- A permanent member of the CERT, which will immediately inform the Council of this activation.

5.3 Aim & Objectives -- The aim of the Plan is to provide a coordinated response from the local community in the event of an incident. The Plan will also assist the agencies contending with the emergency with local knowledge & support, where appropriate.

5.4 The Plan will be managed by the Fairfield CERT, comprised of:

- Selected Parish Councillors
- FPC Clerk
- CBC Emergency Control officer
- CBC Duty Emergency Planning officer

All the above should be included in the Fairfield CERT WhatsApp group.

5.5 The objectives of a Community Emergency Plan are to:

- Activate CERT procedures.
- Identify the risks encountered, together with any additional associated risks and to propose mitigation of those risks.
- Identify key contacts able to support the agencies contending with the emergency.
- Identify community resources available to the agencies contending with the emergency.
- Identify buildings within the community as potential places of safety for residents should an evacuation of properties be necessary.
- Identify vulnerable groups within the community.

- Identify critical infrastructure points within the parish.
- identify systems for keeping residents within the parish informed of the situation throughout the emergency.

5.6 Guideline procedures must ensure that all aspects of the emergency have been considered and that all relevant authorities and organisations have been notified. A well-constructed Plan will assist if the emergency services are overloaded in the initial response and will lessen the long-term impact of any emergency on the community.

5.7 The key to helping the Fairfield community in the event of an incident is to keep the Plan simple, but effective. CBC will review the completed Plan.

5.8 Following the activation trigger, the Community Emergency Coordinator will immediately focus on:

- Ensuring 999 has been called (unless already alerted, or not deemed necessary).
- Ensuring which people, if any, are in immediate danger.
- Activate the telephone tree or Fairfield CERT Whatsapp to discuss the situation.
- WhatsApp Comms if possible to Community Hall trustees and councillors. Use walkie talkies if comms are down.
- Establishing an 'incident room'.

5.9 Plan Issuance & Maintenance -- The Plan will include the more obvious resource requirements and the contact details of those people able to support the community in a broad range of crises. Resources and contacts will likely be tailored to respond to any regional or local emergency.

5.10 Resources available to the parish; the Parish's location relative to neighbouring population areas, which could provide support; the type of emergency encountered; and the community population make-up will also be determining factors.

5.11 The completed Plan should be signed off by FPC. All published versions of the Plan should be dated and individually numbered.

5.12 Two versions of the Plan should always be maintained, in both digital and hard copy:

- A full version with contact details, and
- A separate version with contact details redacted (for public view).

5.13 Each version will require its own list of recipients. When a new Plan is distributed, recipients should be notified to destroy old copies.

5.14 A copy of each full version of the Community Emergency Plan should be sent to CBC Civil Contingency Services.

5.15 Any amendments must be made consistently across the two (full & redacted) versions of the completed plan.

5.16 The redacted version of the Plan should be accessible to Fairfield residents so that they will be aware of potential risks, the resources available, and how the Plan will be activated in response to an emergency.

5.17 To ensure it is fit for purpose, the Plan should be periodically reviewed (each section should be checked at least annually); the Plan should be amended to reflect significant changes in circumstances. A nominated person(s) will conduct each review, which must be approved by the CERT and the Council before final distribution.

5.18 The nominated person(s) will be responsible for periodically arranging to exercise the Plan. All people who are involved in the Plan must be made aware of their roles.

5.19 The nominated person(s) must ensure that the Plan complies with all Data Protection and other appropriate legislation when storing and distributing the Plan.

6 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

6.1 The CERT will be designated to coordinate a response on behalf of FPC to any emergency and will, at a minimum, comprise:

- Emergency Coordinator, who will:
    - Have the backing of the Council to represent the community, and who will be willing to speak on behalf of the community.
    - Be the main link between the community, CERT, CBC and the agencies contending with the emergency.
    - Be responsible for the development and testing of the Plan.
    - Identify a small team of people to assist in developing the Plan.
    - Identify those individuals to receive official emergency warning information (Whatsapp CERT).
    - Identify vulnerable individuals or groups that may be at risk during an emergency.
    - Be responsible for the review, maintenance, distribution and annual review of the Plan.
    - Report annually to the Council on any activation of the Plan.

- Report annually to the Council on the status of the Plan and on the Emergency Team Members.
- Conduct a debrief, at completion of the emergency, with the CERT and Council to identify any lessons from the incident that would improve any future response.

- Deputy Emergency Coordinator, who will:
  - Assist the Coordinator in all aspects of the Coordinator's role.
  - When necessary, deputise for the Coordinator, subject to their direction.

- Facilities Officer, who will:
  - Identify a suitable location for the CERT to meet and function.
  - Identify appropriate places for Rest Centres for any displaced persons.
  - Identify and maintain an up-to-date register of resources available to the Community.
  - On the declaration of an Emergency, call-out, activate, and co-coordinate all required resources.
  - Be responsible for ensuring that each member of the CERT has and maintains a "grab bag" containing the Community Emergency Plan and appropriate equipment.

- Communications Officer, who will:
  - Be the only person authorised to speak to the media.
  - Be the contact with CBC media team.
  - Ensure that regular and correct information is available for the community.
  - Be responsible for servicing the meetings of the CERT.
  - Be responsible, at the end of each day, for all the CERT's actions and decisions to be centrally logged.
  - Maintain a 'Telephone Tree' list of team contacts and Whatsapp group.
  - Maintain the circulation lists, ensuring named officials & organisations receive updated copies when issued.
  - Be responsible for communications with the community via noticeboards, email, public meetings, telephone, etc.

- Ensure that the Council website and social media is fully updated with information during any emergency and check that the CBC is updated.

6.2 Need to agree deputies in the event someone isn't available, and rotating in if event lasts longer than a day to prevent fatigue/allow rest periods.

6.3 Members of the CERT would ideally live locally and have good local knowledge of Fairfield Parish.

6.4 Ideally members of the team should sit on FPC but any member of the community who is willing to be part of the emergency team should be considered for a team role.

6.5 Each member of the CERT with a specific role highlighted in the Plan should always be well briefed.

6.6 Each member of the CERT must be willing to share personal details, which will be held by FPC, CBC, and Emergency Services for use during an emergency.

6.7The Plan will be activated when FPC is required to provide a community response. FPC will instruct the Communications Officer to notify the CERT and CBC Duty Officer that the Plan is activated.

6.8 It is essential that when the Plan is activated, unless otherwise notified, the members of the CERT will convene to coordinate and manage FPC's response to the emergency.

6.9The CERT must determine beforehand which method (emails, WhatsApp, or text messages) are to be used to disseminate information to team members and in which order back up methods should be used.

6.10 An 'incident room' should be set up to accommodate team members, ideally with access to phone, internet, kitchen & toilet facilities, and most importantly located outside the known risk zone.

6.11 It is essential that the location of the 'incident room' is available during an emergency, and advisable for the location options and preference to be pre-identified to prevent any delay in response. Any key holders of locations must be aware of the CERT's access requirements.

6.12 The CERT should be easily identifiable to both the public and emergency agencies (vests).

6.13 The CERT, via the Communications Officer, will have responsibility for communications with the community.

6.14 The CERT must determine how, and how often, they update CBC on the status of the Plan.

6.15 All members of the CERT will ensure that a record is kept of their individual actions and decisions.
6.16 It is important that the CERT make decisions in a calm and methodical manner, one decision at a time. For example see JESIP Decision Controls.
6.17 The CERT should be prepared for a delay at the outset of any emergency as responding organisations mobilise their emergency responses.
6.18 The CERT would also be responsible for:

- Compiling a list of any equipment that may be useful in an emergency, e.g. snow shovels or hi-visibility clothing.
- Determining, in the event of evacuation, any emergency transport pick up points, which should be easily accessible and central to the community.
- Determining the need for safe places, which would ideally have access to communications, kitchen & toilet facilities. Fairfield Community Hall would be the primary choice for this purpose, unless situated in the known risk zone.
- Determining locations for public information points (Parish noticeboard, social media etc.) so the Council can pass information to the community during an emergency. Update these during a prolonged emergency.
- Making all aware of the locations of defibrillator equipment within the community.
- Determining key sites for use by emergency services or CBC, who will require a 6-figure grid reference to identify each of these.
- Identifying members of the community willing to help in an emergency by checking on or running errands for vulnerable neighbours.

6.19 The Community Management Team will have responsibility for identifying in advance any resources that exist in the community, which could be used during an emergency.
6.20 Resources may range from physical items (supplies in a village shop, vehicles, mechanical equipment) to community activities (luncheon clubs, hospital runs etc).
6.21 It would also be useful to identify residents with specific skills which they can offer in an emergency (catering, listening, supporting skills).
6.22 These activities should be checked if they are regulated activities, where further checks on volunteers or conditions may be required.

7 Risks & Risk Assessment

7.1 Emergencies likely to be encountered would comprise one, or more, of the following:

- A natural disaster, such as weather-related incidents.
- An interruption, or total breakdown, of a service or services.
- A man-made disaster, such as fire, explosion, or pollution.
- Infrastructure incident, be it transport - road, rail, or air or buildings infrastructure.
- A public health incident, either human or animal.

7.2 Early notification that a risk is likely to materialise can be hugely beneficial to the success of any emergency response measures.

7.3 The CERT shall conduct a risk assessment to identify risks and any possible mitigation in the form of a community risk register.

7.4 This should be presented to FPC and discussed and reviewed annually but updated as soon as a new risk or change of risk is known.

7.5 Any risk that is considered High or Very High should be discussed as a meeting item and actions taken to mitigate it to an acceptable level.

7.6 Events Planning Considerations -- Events should as standard have risk assessments, continuity and contingency planning. In addition to these emergency planning should be conducted, particularly where larger numbers of people and additional risks or regulations are at play, for example, fire, traffic grid lock, and Martyn's Law. The threshold test for Martyn's Law is if 200 or more people are likely to attend a premises "from time to time". It is expected that the Act will come into force in spring 2027.

8 Resource Assessment

8.1 Key Contacts (Public & Restricted Access) – FPC shall maintain an Emergency Contact List (Annex []), containing the names and contact details of organisations, community groups, officials, and individuals who could be useful contacts in the event of an emergency.

8.2 For mutual support during any emergency, the Communications Officer should exchange key contact information with neighbouring Town/Parish councils.

8.3 This restricted contact list will contain those whose details, for reasons of security or privacy, are not in the public domain and will be available only to the CERT.

8.4 The CERT shall introduce a 'Telephone Tree' to disseminate information to the team, starting from the top, with each person calling 1 or 2 in an assigned set of people; anyone not answering is bypassed to be subsequently contacted by the Communications Officer. Put Telephone tree in Cross Scenario Information doc?

8.5 The Public contact list will contain those whose details are in the public domain e.g., Emergency Services, Utility Companies, Clergy etc.

8.6 Emergency Supplies -- The details of the emergency supplies can be found in the Community Resources document (Annex []). The supplies and kit should be checked and contents reviewed at least annually to ensure stocks are sufficient and in-date.

8.7 Any items needing replacing will be discussed by FPC and either disposed of or donated (near expiry items).

8.8 Individual households should be encouraged to keep items such as a first aid kit, wind-up radio, and a torch in case of an emergency.

8.9 Finances -- An amount to be agreed in standing orders that sets a limit with retrospective reporting requirements for the next meeting after it was invoked in an emergency.

8.10 A standard annual budget should also be set in the precept for maintaining emergency supplies, i.e. replacing out of date first aid kit or used items.

9 Vulnerable People & Vulnerable Establishments

9.1 In an emergency it is likely that some members of the community may need more assistance than others.

9.2 Cabinet Office guidance defines vulnerable people as those ‘that are less able to help themselves in the circumstances of an emergency’.

9.3 The following are groups of people who could become vulnerable in an emergency:

- Children
- Homeless
- Minority language speakers
- Mobility impaired people
- Older people
- People who are ill
- Pregnant women
- Sensory impaired
- Non-locals (tourists, visitors, the travelling community)

9.4 It is not always possible to maintain an accurate list of individuals who may be vulnerable to different emergencies.

9.5 As an emergency is declared, the CERT must be prepared to identify any vulnerable individuals who may be at risk for the current emergency only.

9.6 Any vulnerable person should be checked regularly during an emergency to ensure they are safe and coping with the situation.

9.7 The following procedures are suggested for this:

- The team shall promote a buddy system whereby people are encouraged to check on their own next-door neighbour(s).
- The team shall encourage door knocking at the time of an emergency in those areas where potentially vulnerable groups are known to reside.
- The team shall have a high-profile street presence (ideally in tabards/high-vis) to encourage vulnerable people to make themselves known during an emergency.

9.8 Care should be taken to comply with data protection legislation. It is important that residents are reassured that any information they provide will be treated with confidence and will not be shared unlawfully.

9.9 Establishments that may be vulnerable:

- Schools (Kipling and Ruskin)
- Fairfield Hall
- Fairfield Manor Care & Nursing home

9.10 The team should also include details of any emergency plans of these establishments, if available.

10 Working with Volunteers

10.1 It is vitally important that any request for volunteers to supply equipment or services is managed; best practice includes the following:

- Each activity engaged by a volunteer is risk assessed and actions necessary to bring a safe conclusion are identified.
- Volunteers are competent and trained to carry out the task requested.
- The appropriate personal protective equipment is available to, and used by, volunteers.
- Any plant or equipment deployed is fit for purpose and is used for its designed purpose.
- If any plant or equipment is used for an activity that it is not designed for and is insurable, the volunteer is advised to check with insurers that it is satisfactory to deploy that equipment for the use identified.
- All reasonable precautions are taken, and a process or procedure agreed and recorded before any action takes place.

- Any alteration to the process is agreed and recorded before any deviation occurs.
- That the volunteer is thoroughly briefed before engaging in any activity.
- That the volunteer is appropriately supervised during delivering any activity.
- Consideration of regulated activities and proper training, checks and insurance.

10.2 To fulfil these criteria, key people should meet to agree the process to ensure that the volunteers are not placed at risk.

10.3 If in any doubt about who can do what, contact the CBC Emergency Planning Team or Duty officer, they can get assistance from volunteer organisations (BLEVEC) to carry out specialist or regulated activities. CERT members are not routinely DBS checked, and carrying out regulated activity without the right level of check leaves the group legally vulnerable.

10.4 Such activities are better delivered by BLEVEC member organisations who already hold the necessary clearance and training.

10.5 What the CERT can do -- For all activities from CERTs that directly involve interaction with people, it's recommended to team volunteers up in assigned pairs of two.

- Situation monitoring and communication/Community information sharing
- Establish Community Emergency Hub
- Practical support and assistance

10.6 At a the Emergency Hub, CERT members could:

- register visitors and volunteer staff, so we know who is attending the hub
- transport things
- help in car park marshalling
- ensure the centre is adequately supplied and kept clean and tidy
- assist with refreshments, like cups of tea and sandwiches
- provide entertainment activities
- distribute aid and manage physical donations

10.7 Other tasks could include:

- door knocking to check and warn people of the emergency
- leaflet/letter drops
- helping with snow and ice clearance
- removing debris from culverts/gullies, where it is safe to do so
- checking drainage ditches

- helping others set up flood protection
- carry out community impact assessments, where we look how the community has been affected by the emergency and what support needs there are
- help people to clean and clear up after the incident

10.8 Insurance and liability guidance -- CERT members are only covered by insurance when explicitly tasked by CBC.

10.9 If you are not a member of an organisation and decide to take action as part of the CERT, you may not be insured.

10.10 This means that if an accident or other situation occurs due to unsafe or negligent actions, there is a risk of being liable or being sued with no cover to help you.

10.11 However, the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015 is in place to reassure individuals that if they act in a socially responsible and reasonable way, the courts will recognise this in the event of a negligence claim.

10.12 In general, if you have acted as instructed, made sure you are capable at that time to conduct the action at hand and have been careful in executing it, you are much more likely to be covered.

10.13 Examples of regulated activities

- Work with Children - Providing care, treatment, supervision, training or transport to children. When children are affected in emergencies, their regular care takers (parents, school staff, etc.) remain in charge of them. If an unaccompanied minor without caretakers attends a Community Emergency Hub, and none of your volunteers have appropriate vetting in place, please notify the Emergency Planning Team, who have access to volunteers and our staff with the correct level of vetting to help out.
- Work with Adults - Transport of people, if the assisted person is in receipt of a listed health or social care service. Purchasing food or medication on behalf of someone. Providing a listening ear and wellbeing support (beyond signposting to a specialised service) to someone who receives a health or social care service.

11 Preparation and Advice for the Community

11.1 Be familiar with and follow CBC/gov guidance for preparation of emergency plans, kits, supplies and contacts.

- https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/

- https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/about-your-council/emergency-planning/how-can-you-your-friends-and-family-be-more-prepared
- https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environmental-issues/bedfordshire-local-resilience-forum-blrf

- PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) forms filled in
- Have a household emergency plan
- Sign up to Priority Services Register or Vulnerable Resident Register if applicable thepsr.co.uk
- Make business continuity plans if you have, or are part of a business

11.2 Sources of information

- GOV.UK — "Preparing for emergencies" and the National Risk Register (Cabinet Office).
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) — source of the Joint Decision Model and METHANE.
- Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF) — Community Risk Register, via Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council websites.
- Central Bedfordshire Council / Bedford Borough Council — Emergency Planning pages, including the Bedfordshire Local Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee (BLEVEC) and CERT (CERT) / Community Emergency Hub guidance.
- National Association of Local Councils (NALC) — advice notes and events on emergency planning for parish and town councils, including Martyn's Law guidance.
- Met Office — National Severe Weather Warning Service.
- UK Power Networks / National Grid — 105 power cut reporting service and outage maps (network operator applicable to Bedfordshire should be confirmed — see Contact List).
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) — public health incident and pandemic guidance.
- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) — wildfire/outdoor fire safety advice and Fire Severity Index warnings (bedsfire.gov.uk); Bedfordshire was rated "Very High" wildfire risk in summer 2026, with a documented rise in grass, crop and deliberate outdoor fires.
- East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) — community landing site scheme; EAAA covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Fairfield Parish Council
Emergency Plans:
Cross Scenario Information

In a potentially life-threatening emergency, and if not already alerted, call 999.

In Emergency use in combination with the Emergency Scenario Register and Response Playbooks

Purpose and How to Use This Document

This document sits within the Council's Emergency Plans Document set and provides;

- A summary of roles and declaration/standdown authority.
- Assessment and decision-making frameworks used by every playbook, so responders only need to learn one method.
- Compounding and complicating factors that apply across every playbook, including a section on the parish's access limitations.

Emergency Plans Document Set

Emergency Planning Policy (public)

- Annex A Distribution Register (restricted)
- Annex B Community Risk Register (public)
- Annex C Community Resources: Maps, Emergency Supplies Inventory and Info (restricted)
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- Annex J Risk Assessment Template (public)

1. ROLES

Role	Potential people	Actions/responsibilities
Emergency Coordinator	Councillor/ Clerk/Chair	● Have the backing of the Council to represent the community, and who will be willing to speak on behalf of the community. ● Be the main link between the community, CERT, CBC and the agencies contending with the emergency. ● Identify those individuals to receive official emergency warning information (Whatsapp CERT). ● Identify vulnerable individuals or groups that may be at risk during an emergency. ● Conduct a debrief, at completion of the emergency, with the CERT and Council to identify any lessons from the incident that would improve any future response.
Deputy Emergency Coordinator	Councillor/ Clerk/Chair	● Assist the Coordinator in all aspects of the Coordinator's role. ● When necessary, deputise for the Coordinator, subject to their direction.
Facilities Officer	Councillor/ Clerk	● Identify a suitable location for the CERT to meet and function. ● Identify appropriate places for Rest Centres for any displaced persons. ● Identify and maintain an up-to-date register of resources available to the Community. ● On the declaration of an Emergency, call-out, activate, and co-coordinate all required resources.
Communications Officer	Councillor/ Clerk	● Be the only person authorised to speak to the media. ● Be the contact with CBC media team. ● Ensure that regular and correct information is available for the community. ● Be responsible for servicing the meetings of the CERT. ● Be responsible, at the end of each day, for all the CERT's actions and decisions to be centrally logged. ● Maintain a 'Telephone Tree' list of team contacts and Whatsapp group. ● Be responsible for communications with the community via noticeboards, email, public meetings, telephone, etc. ● Ensure that the Council website and social media is fully updated with information during any emergency and check that the CBC is updated.
Venue manager /Keyholder	Keyholder or Trustee for potential Emergency Hub location	● Provide access to the Community Emergency Hub if required. ● Liaise with the Facilities Officer to establish the use of and help manage their venue as the Community Emergency Hub.

1.1. Community roles

Deputies need to be agreed in the event someone isn't available, and to facilitate role rotations in case the event lasts longer than a day to prevent fatigue by allowing rest periods.

1.2. Other Roles

The CERT group contains a CBC Duty Emergency Planning officer who is on-call and should be notified as a first point of call in the event of an incident, second only to 999 if there is an immediate risk to life. They will be able to give an initial assessment, advice and escalate and manage any multi-organisation response if one is required.

Depending on the type of incident and resources available other roles may be required, these will be organised through CBC Duty emergency planning office, the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) or Bedfordshire Local Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee (BLEVEC).

2. DECLARATION AND STAND-DOWN AUTHORITY

- A Level 2 Parish Emergency may be declared by the Chair or Vice-Chair in consultation with the Clerk/Emergency Coordinator.
- If neither is contactable within 30 minutes, any one member of the CERT may declare, ratified retrospectively at the next meeting of the Council.
- A declaration should be logged with: date/time, who declared it, the trigger, and the initial situational assessment.

Stand-down requires agreement that: the immediate hazard is confirmed, removed or controlled by the relevant agency; essential services are restored or a workable alternative is in place; all known vulnerable residents are accounted for and their welfare needs met.

3. UNIVERSAL INCIDENT DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

3.1. Escalation Levels

Level	Description	Typical action
Level 0 – Monitoring	A warning has been issued or a risk identified, but there is no confirmed local impact yet.	Log it. Assign someone to monitor. No formal activation.
Level 1 – Local Response	Confirmed impact, but small in scale, short in duration, and within the Council's own resources to manage.	Emergency Coordinator manages directly; informs the Chair; no formal declaration needed.
Level 2 – Parish Emergency Declared	Significant impact: multiple households or vulnerable residents affected, likely to last more than 24 hours, external support is needed, or the single access road is blocked/threatened.	Formal declaration. Activate the relevant playbook in full. Notify the County/Unitary Emergency Planning duty officer and Ward Councillor.

Level	Description	Typical action
Level 3 – Major Incident	Declared by Police or another Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.	The parish moves into a support role under the multi-agency Gold/Silver/Bronze command structure coordinated via the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF).

4. SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Use this to judge severity and decide the escalation level. Any single "Red" factor means the incident should be treated as at least Level 2. Two or more Red factors usually mean the Council should contact Police (101, or 999 if there is a threat to life) and the Emergency Planning team to discuss whether a Level 3 Major Incident response is warranted.

Factor	Green (Low)	Amber (Medium)	Red (High)
Scale	Under 10 properties/people affected	10–50 properties/people affected	More than 50, or the whole parish — automatically the case if the single access road is blocked (Section 7)
Duration	Expected to resolve within hours	Expected to last 1–3 days	Expected to last more than 3 days, or no clear end in sight
Vulnerability	No known vulnerable residents directly affected	Some vulnerable residents affected, manageable with local support	Multiple vulnerable residents at risk; welfare/safeguarding concern
Complexity	Council can resolve with its own resources	Requires support from one external agency or utility	Requires a multi-agency response (Police/Fire/Ambulance/ County), or emergency services cannot easily reach the village

5. METHANE – REPORTING AN INCIDENT TO EMERGENCY SERVICES OR THE CBC DUTY OFFICER

METHANE is the standard mnemonic used across UK emergency services for the first report of a significant incident. Using it when you call 999/101 or the CBC Emergency Planning duty officer to be immediately understood and speed up the response.

Letter	Stands for	What to say
M	Major incident	Declared, or you believe it should be considered
E	Exact location	What3words / postcode / landmark
T	Type of incident	e.g. flooding, fire, traffic accident, structural collapse
H	Hazards	Present and potential (electricity, gas, water, structural)
A	Access/egress	Best routes in and out; any blockages — always state explicitly if the parish has only one road in/out
N	Number, type and severity of casualties	Best estimate — it is fine to say “unknown”
E	Emergency services	Which are present, and which you believe are needed

6. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Use this to estimate the risk of any potential events or outcomes to assist decision making. For example, for a possible volunteer task, rate likelihood (how often or likely it is to happen) and impact (how badly it could go — for the volunteer's safety, not just the incident itself).

- Red - Orange (Top-right) = volunteers should never handle. These are for trained and authorised people only, emergency services or BLEVEC. Step back, call for backup/police, do not intervene personally.
- Yellow (Middle band) = appropriate mitigation required; buddy system, named lead or trained/skilled person only.
- Green (Bottom-left) = fine for any briefed volunteer solo.

Risk matrix score table

IMPACT					
5	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH
4	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH
3	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
2	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
1	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
	1	2	3	4	5

LIKELIHOOD

7. COMPOUNDING & COMPLICATING FACTORS

These are cross-cutting issues that can turn a manageable incident into a harder one. They apply across every playbook, so rather than repeating them multiple times, keep this single list in mind whatever scenario you are responding to — and step up caution accordingly rather than needing a separate playbook for every combination. This risk is flagged explicitly in the Severe Weather, Major Incident, and Fire & Smoke playbooks, where it changes the escalation threshold. It is relevant to any scenario in this pack.

7.1. Blocked Access

If the parish's access road (Hitchin Road/Stotfold Road) is blocked, impassable, or under direct threat (fire, flood, fallen tree, collision, snow), treat this as an automatic Level 2 Parish Emergency — regardless of the scale of the underlying cause elsewhere — because it is Red on both Scale and Complexity in the Situational Assessment Matrix by definition: it affects the whole parish and can simultaneously frustrate or prevent both resident evacuation and emergency service entry.

From Hitchin Road/Stotfold Road, there are access roads into sections of Fairfield, if one of these access roads is blocked it could prevent access to that section of the Parish with no road alternative. In the event of an incident check the status of these roads if a blockage is possible.
These roads are (north to south);

- Beatrice Place
- Bessemer Fields
- Eliot Way
- Cavendish Lane
- Kingsley Avenue (gated-private)
- Dickens Boulevard

Other roads within the different developments of Fairfield could also be single points of failure for access and this should be kept in mind and monitored too. Consider nominating a local "Road Watch" volunteer — a resident near the vulnerable stretch of road who can quickly report deterioration.

In the event of an access blockage to an incident, inform the emergency service/the responding organisation ASAP and work with them to find an alternative route.

Possible alternatives for entry/exit are;

- West Drive: Arlesey-Fairfield footpath, joins to the north west corner of Fairfield at the end of Hardy Way.
- Cricket Pitch: is a pre-surveyed helicopter landing site with East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) - someone will need to clear the cricket pitch of fencing/ropes and posts if needed. It may also be possible to access Fairfield Park via Palmerston way from Kingsley Avenue (or vice versa) over the cricket pitch depending on the vehicle.
- Hardy-Elliot Way: It may be possible to gain access from one to the other over the footpath depending on vehicle.
- Access by 4x4/on foot may be possible for routes to/from the west of Fairfield Park on various footpaths or over fields.

7.2. Disruption to Communications

Loss of digital communications alongside the incident (power cut, cyber-attack, network fault) can considerably complicate the response. In this event any councillor/ CERT member/resident who believes an incident is underway and cannot contact anyone else through primary methods should go to the Community Hall, if it is safe to do so. From here people can convene and set up the Emergency Hub, runners can be sent out to knock on doors and the available CERT members/Councillors can decide any further actions/escalations.

Refer to the printed copy of the Contact List, the vulnerable residents register, and each playbook.

Mobile network congestion — a network can be technically “up” but too congested to get through during a widespread incident; try text messages, which often get through when calls don’t, and have a fallback contact method.

7.3. Limited or affected personnel

Incidents occurring on evenings, weekends and bank holidays reduce who is readily available or a key responder is personally affected and they may not be able to assist. The CERT whatsapp group contains a CBC Emergency Deputy who is on call 24/7/365 and should be the first point of call, except for 999 if there is immediate risk to life, they will be able to assist with resourcing. Refer to the printed copy of the Contact List for possible deputies and CBC emergency contacts list.

Volunteer and responder fatigue — for anything lasting more than a day, rotate people and set expected rest periods rather than relying on the same few throughout.

7.4. Multiple incidents at once

Severe weather especially can cause flooding, power loss and blocked roads together; if more than one playbook is active, prioritise life safety and the welfare of vulnerable residents over completing every checklist in full.

Access for emergency vehicles and residents — parked cars, fallen debris, flooding or snow can block roads; Hitchin Road/Stotfold Road makes this especially significant - refer to the Blocked Access section.

7.5. Misinformation

Incorrect information can spread faster than official updates, especially on social media; ensure there is a communications officer who can access FPC's social media and website and is in contact with CBC teams. Provide succinct factual updates, if misinformation is spotted, address it by correcting it factually and calmly, and always point back to the single official channel.