

Communities Prepared

Catalyst communities offer for Cambridgeshire CC



Our national model

Communities Prepared is a nationwide community resilience scheme led by community charity Groundwork in partnership with the Environment Agency, Cornwall Community Flood Forum and Cornwall College Business, working closely with a range of other organisations. With backing from the National Lottery Community Fund until October 2021, we are helping communities across the country to develop their preparedness and resilience to emergencies such as flooding, snow, severe weather and utilities failures, by providing training, advice and support. This is available both in person and via our new online community resilience hub, which will be launched in September 2019.

Communities Prepared takes a holistic approach to supporting communities, giving volunteers the resources, skills and confidence to cope with a variety of challenges. Our approach is centred around in-person training and support, tailored to the needs and interests of each community we work with. The online hub will complement this, featuring a range of community resources, our adaptable and downloadable modular training and train the trainer programme, a members' forum, advice and case studies from communities we've worked with.

The training and support on offer includes:

- Introductory incident management modules, covering an introduction to emergency response and procedures and planning for community emergency volunteers
- Issue-specific training modules, covering emergencies such as flooding, snow, heatwaves and utilities failures
- Refresher training, featuring a summary of the training courses and a simple multiple choice test for groups to remind themselves of what they've learned and identify any further support needs
- Train the trainer sessions, providing an opportunity for coordinators and professionals to learn how to train new community volunteers in the topics set out above, and to meet and share experiences with each other
- Additional support and advice on topics such as fundraising, communications, insurance, risk assessments, recruiting and retaining volunteers, developing and testing a community emergency plan, and wider community development issues
- Access to the online hub, with features including training materials, tools and templates, a members' forum, case studies, news, events and links to external resources
- A community resilience advice line and email, staffed during office hours

As part of the support on offer, we can assist communities to work effectively with other stakeholders (such as Category 1 and 2 responder agencies and the third sector) and to facilitate improved multi-agency cooperation in supporting community resilience, helping to



make the task of dealing with multiple organisations less daunting for community groups working in this field.

We are also working with partners to trial and roll out a nationally recognised community resilience 'branding', so that the contribution of volunteers to the overall resilience family can be properly recognised and integrated in the planning, operational, and recovery phases.

Our offer for Cambridgeshire

We understand that there are a number of communities in Cambridgeshire who would benefit from support in growing their resilience to flooding and other challenges. Through discussion between the EA, Cambridgeshire County Council and Groundwork, Elsworth, Bar Hill and Oakington have been identified as three priority communities who have taken some steps towards resilience but would like support in raising awareness of their work, expanding their volunteer base, and developing and testing their community emergency plans. As these three communities are located near to each other and face similar challenges, we would propose a combined approach bringing the three communities together.

We would take a flexible approach to working with the three communities, based on our national model but very much tailored to the needs of the communities and closely aligned with the work and aims of Cambridgeshire CC. Below we set out a proposal for what this could look like, but we would develop with the communities, Cambridgeshire CC and the Environment Agency as engagement gets underway.

Introductory meeting with engaged members of the communities – this would be a valuable opportunity for us to meet key members and to help them think through their priorities, using this to agree a plan of action.

Wider community engagement event – we would suggest this as a way to engage other residents and encourage them to take pride in, and ownership of, their local area. We would propose a community activity in a local space, such as gully clearing or litter picking, bringing in other stakeholders as well as residents, culminating in an opportunity for refreshments and ideas sharing about what the communities would like to see in terms of their resilience and wider community development. We would also share information on our programme with a view to encouraging more people to sign up as volunteers, and other organisations could do the same if appropriate. As Elsworth has been identified as the main community which would benefit from more volunteers, we would suggest running this event there and inviting the other communities to join in.

In-person training – following these preliminary activities we would offer our two introductory incident management modules to the groups. This would provide information on how a community emergency / flood volunteer group works and how to engage effectively with key agencies such as the emergency services. We would then offer our two flooding modules, delivered in partnership with the EA – the first focused on understanding flooding and their role as community volunteers, and the second on flood risk awareness. These four training modules would aim to get the groups to a position where they feel confident to support their community in the event of a flood. The four sessions could be delivered in one full day or over two evenings / half days, with each module taking approximately 1.5 hours. We

would also offer additional training and support to the groups' coordinators, helping them to lead their volunteers effectively as well as liaise with key local stakeholders. This would include a train the trainer session so that the coordinators are able to train any new volunteers in the future without relying on our support, providing an opportunity for the coordinators to share their experiences and ideas with each other as well.

Practical activities – we could also complement the training with practical activities, such as filling and using sandbags and building basic flood defences, communications and leadership skills, and working near live traffic. We would encourage the groups to get to know the flood trigger points for their community by walking the local area and discussing and recognising what the danger signs are and building that into their emergency/flood plans (see below).

Developing the community emergency/flood plan – alongside the above activities we would support the communities in the development of their emergency/flood plans. This would involve an in-person meeting with key stakeholders to start the process, followed by email and phone support – with the option for more in-person meetings as required. We would also signpost interested local businesses to key sources of business resilience advice, such as [Business in the Community](#), making introductions where possible, in order to ensure that their needs are also met.

Testing the plan – once the plans have been developed and the above training completed we would encourage the communities to put them to the test, and would run 'live' exercises where the groups would put into action their plans as if there was an incident. We would provide the groups with a starter kit including PPE and comms equipment, for them to keep. Follow up support would be provided to revise the plans as necessary following this exercise.

Providing support on other issues – depending on the needs and priorities of the communities we could also provide support and advice on other topics which would help to grow community resilience locally, such as those listed in the bullet point list above. We would discuss these options with the communities and other key stakeholders in our initial planning meeting and introductory event, and in a follow up call on completion of the core training.

Refresher training – we would encourage the coordinators and all trained volunteers to complete our refresher training 6-12 months after their original training has finished. This can be done online through our e-learning courses.

Our aims and exit point

Our ambition would be to get to the point at which there are three established community emergency volunteer groups that not only have an emergency/flood plan in place, but also have a trained and dedicated coordinator and a committed team of volunteers who have good local relationships and feel confident to support their community in the event of an incident. Although we appreciate that flooding is a key concern, if there is appetite we would encourage the groups to consider wider resilience issues of relevance to their community, providing training in order to develop comprehensive community emergency plans, and in turn supporting the groups to become multi-role community emergency volunteer groups. We would aim to get to this point within 12 months of our work starting but recognise that some flexibility will be required.