



**NORTHAM TOWN
COUNCIL
MAJOR INCIDENT
EMERGENCY PLAN**

June 2025

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Introduction.

a. There is no Statutory requirement for Northam Town Council to produce, or be involved in any Emergency Plan, however Devon County Council (DCC) and Torridge Emergency Planning Officers, encourage Parishes, such as ours, to consider how they would respond in the event of an emergency situation developing. DCC sees Parish Council responsibilities in Emergency situations as follows.

- Undertake local risk assessment
- Prepare community plan
- Document resources and key contacts
- Validate and maintain an up-to-date plan
- Activate plan when required

It is also considered good practice for Parish and Town Councils to appoint an Emergency Planning Group, (NTCEG), who would produce and manage their Emergency Plan. Northam Town Council has appointed such a group (NTCEG), however, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will take a leading role if such an emergency were to occur. The Emergency Plan (EP) will be designed to assist the emergency services in the early stages of such an emergency. It will also assist County and District Councils.

b. What is an Emergency or Major Incident.

Any event or circumstance which may happen without warning, that causes or threatens death or injury, disruption to the community, or damage to property or to the environment, on such a scale that the effect cannot be dealt with by the emergency services or local authorities as part of their normal day to day activities.

There are no boundaries for this and the scale of such an incident could be local, district or county wide.

c. Purpose of the EP

The plan has been designed to enable NTC to identify the immediate actions which it considers necessary in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. These actions will assist the community in reducing the negative impacts which could happen until further assistance is forthcoming.

The EP identifies the first call out of the NTCEG. It identifies a rendezvous point, where initial command will take place. It identifies places of containment should evacuation be necessary and other places where injured persons can be taken if needed. It identifies a suitable holding place for bodies to be taken, and more.

The EP is not intended to replace any other plans already in place with Police Fire or Ambulance Services, or those in place by DCC or TDC.

Definition of an Emergency.

Any event or circumstance which may happen without warning, that causes or threatens death or injury, disruption to the community, or damage to property or to the environment, on such a scale that the effect cannot be dealt with by the emergency services or local authorities as part of their normal day to day activities.

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Such incidents are as follows.

Floods

Heavy snow causing major disruption

Other severe weather

Electricity or gas failure

Major road accident

Major fire or building collapse

Terrorist incident

Aircraft incident

Hazardous vapour

Pandemic

Environmental impact incident

Any other incident causing major disruption

Why do we need an Emergency Plan?

All Parish, Town, District and County Councils should have in place, a procedure for dealing with those incidents which can have serious consequences to their communities.

This could range from death and injury, loss of infrastructure including homes, power, roads and more. Enforced isolation/quarantine, especially involving older persons living alone, also those who are vulnerable due to severe health problems.

It could be a relatively short-lived emergency, or one which is spread over a long period of time, involving all Emergency Services such as Police, Fire and Ambulance Services. In addition, it may involve, Red Cross, Women's Voluntary Service and other organisations to assist with evacuation, homelessness, etc. etc.

The Police, Fire and Ambulance Service will have in place their own Emergency Plans for such events, and they will have practised these plans, and of course, they will have total control of the incident. However, it is important that they have the support of the local authorities for the various needs that a Major Incident can demand.

This could be simply local knowledge, right through to identified premises for evacuation and/or for bodies to be taken.

They would need Rendezvous Points (RVP) identified within the various Parishes where they could set up a control unit away from the main incident. Northam Hall, (now Wi-Fi enabled). Northam Town Hall, (Wi-Fi enabled). Kingsley Hall, Westward Ho! (Wi-Fi enabled). Blue Lights Hall, Appledore (not Wi-Fi enabled) Community Hall, Appledore, (Wi-Fi enabled) St Mary's Hall Appledore, (Wi-Fi enabled).

Local Councillors should be in a position to immediately identify their respective roles and location of their nearest RVP, in order that they can supply local knowledge to the other organisations involved. This can save valuable time in getting what is required to scenes of incidents and getting to premises above, opened up quickly.

Devon County Council have in place an extensive EP which encompasses a large area, however, a local EP would be of great benefit to DCC and indeed to Torridge District Council.

Aims of the Plan

It is extremely important that the community can react to an emergency and identify the procedures that are required to assist the control of the problem.

Objectives

*We should be in a position to identify the risk to the community and apply the relevant response.

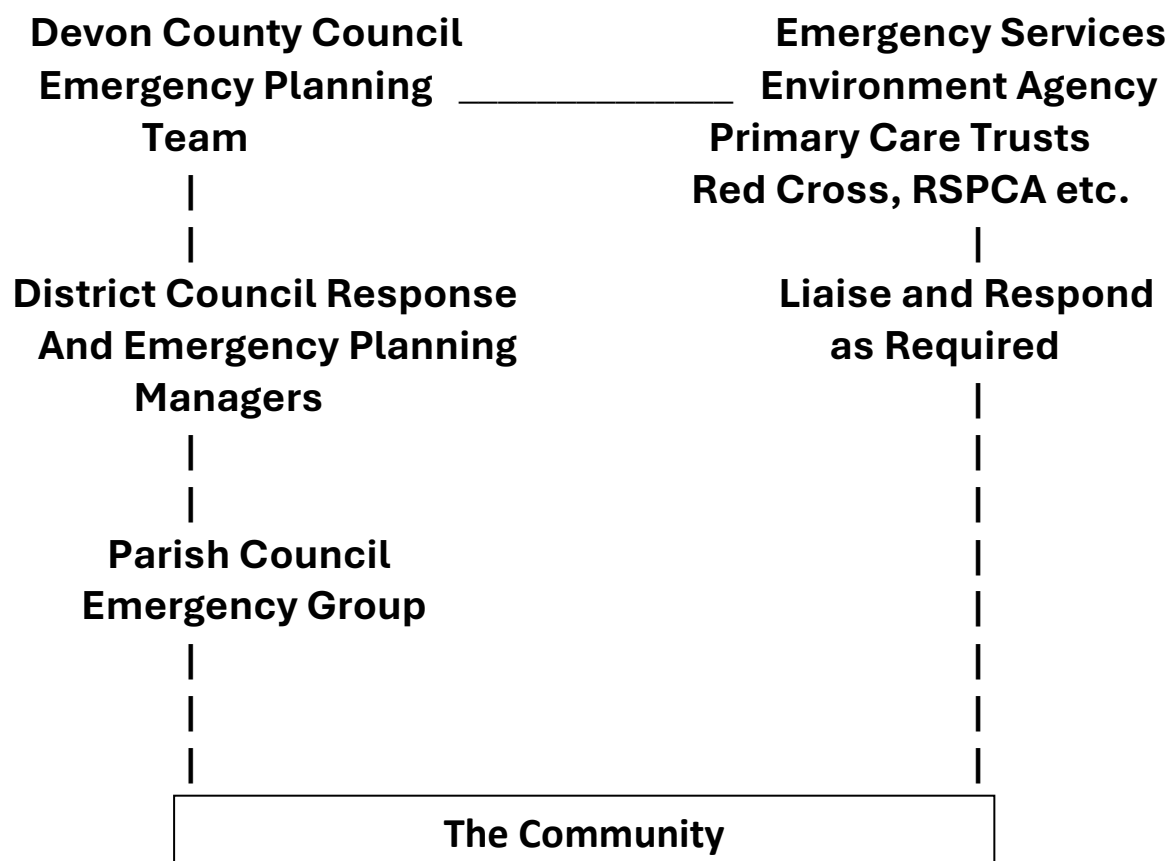
*We should be able to identify vulnerable people in the community.

*We should identify resources in the community able to assist during the emergency.

*We should be able to provide key information for the Emergency Services.

Devonshire Countywide Emergency Planning Structure.

Below is a plan of how this structure ties in with the Parish Emergency Group;



Type of Emergencies:

- *Flooding
- *Heavy Snow
- *Severe Weather
- *Electricity, Water or Gas Failure
- *Road Traffic Collision
- *Major Fire/ Building Collapse
- *Explosion
- *Terrorism
- *Aircraft Crash
- *Hazardous Chemicals
- *Disease
- *Marine Emergency

All of the above are self-explanatory and can vary in size and density.

Some will be dealt with by the Emergency Services in their entirety, requiring no help from any other party.

Contact List/ Keyholder Contacts;

A. Northam Hall, Fore Street, EX39 1AW

Guy Langton (Town Clerk) 07799 911 207/ 07795 576576

Ian Rawle (Parks and Buildings Manager) 07784 544223

Tina Stewardson (Community Engagement) 07349 310718

Corinne Williams (Finance advisor) 07900 596921

B. Northam Community Centre, Fore Street, EX39 1AW

Booking Enquires: 01237 421585

C. Methodist Church, Cross Street, Northam EX39 1BS

Booking Enquires: 01237 479643

D. St. Marys Church Hall, Churchfields Road, Appledore EX39 1RL

Booking Enquires: 07941 205409

E. Blue Lights Hall, Vernons Lane, Appledore EX39 1QU

Booking Enquires: 01237 477627

F. Kingsley Hall, Westward Ho! EX39 1JR

Booking Enquires: 07483 229033

G. Westward Ho! Baptist Hall EX39 1LQ

Booking Enquires: 07970 530703

H. Appledore Community Hall EX39 1LU

Booking Enquires: 01237 424949

Northam Hall would be the first choice because of its elevated location; however, much would depend on where and what the emergency was.

At present there is no communication system available, but mobile telephones are always an excellent substitute to a landline, and there are good connections to most mobile phone companies.

Obviously, a quick decision on which hall to be used would be required and this should not present too much of a problem.

The Town Council Emergency Group

1. The Town Clerk
Guy Langton
Contact number 01237 474976 or 07799 911207
2. The Mayor
Councillor Louis Bach
Contact number 07837 322673
3. The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Sam Newman-McKie
Contact number 07703 640824
4. Chair of the Finance & Human Resources committee
Councillor Claire Hodson
Contact number 07866 562113

In the absence of the Emergency Services, the NTCEG will lead the community response and act as a central point for information and communication for the community.

The NTCEG will take charge of any situation until the Emergency Services arrive, and they then will take overall command of any situation.

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will appraise the various Commanders of the situation and remain with the Command Centre for as long as is required by those Commanders.

Activation of the Plan

The Plan will be activated when an emergency has occurred, in which it is obvious that the normal response by the Emergency Services will be overwhelmed, or where the Emergency Services are unable to gain access to the scene or require additional support.

The Plan will also act as a device to provide monitoring and a warning tool for events that may be anticipated, such as severe weather.

It is anticipated that the NTCEG will be alerted by the Police.

The NTCEG member first notified will then alert other NTCEG members to the situation. This will be carried out using the cascade system, ie. The list of NTCEG contacts in descending order.

The Chairperson will make a detailed assessment of the situation and try to establish the extent and type of support the NTCEG can supply.

The NTCEG will meet at the nominated RVP to discuss the emergency. This meeting place will be decided at the time but would normally be the Town Hall at Windmill Lane. A second RVP should be nominated in case the Council Office is too close or part of the emergency.

IT IS VITAL THAT THE TOWN CLERK OR KEYHOLDER BE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY.

Debriefing

Following any Major Incident, it is vital that a debrief takes place whereby all parties can discuss the events and our reaction to those plans which were put into action. It may well be that parts of the Plan would have to be updated. Experience is a great teaching aid.

The Mayor should therefore call a meeting of those members who form the Emergency Group; following that meeting a Full Council Emergency Meeting should take place in order that all Councillors can reflect and take any action deemed necessary.

Catering

Tea, coffee, biscuits, and other items will be purchased as required and the purchaser reimbursed, it is not anticipated that the NTCEG would be responsible for providing any additional catering provision.