

Wildfires and Community Emergency Planning

Brief notes on the meeting held at Edwardstone Parish Hall on 11th July 2023

Present: Phil Baker (Chair) Edwardstone PC, Roland Cheeseman, Groton PC, Mark Freeman, Great Waldingfield PC, Freddie Gulliver, Suffolk County Council Emergency Planning Officer, Theresa Munson, Boxford PC, Piers Roberts, Groton PC, Chris White, Little Waldingfield PC, Tristan Wood, Edwardstone PC.

1. Introduction

Phil Baker summarised progress so far. Those present confirmed that their Councils had indicated that they would like to produce a Community Emergency Plan (CEP) jointly with one or more adjacent PCs.

2. Content of a Community Emergency Plan

Freddie Gulliver talked through the template CEP already circulated and enlarged on the content of the appendices. He highlighted the key importance of the following elements:

- Deciding on a core group to develop and take responsibility for the plan
- Identifying local people with relevant skills and expertise who could be called upon eg a local First Responder group.
- Identifying a volunteer call list and drawing up a telephone tree
- Identifying one main and possibly other short term rest centres and rest centre co-ordinators (probably the key holder)
- Identifying other local assets (eg a community minibus)
- Training (to be provided by SCC) for rest centre volunteers. This could take place on a single day or over a number of evenings.
- Identifying specific local risks (eg flooding, wildfires) and action checklists. Suffolk Resilience Forum website had maps showing risks already identified. Maps were also available from Parish On-line. The Emergency Services use *WhatThreeWords* for the purposes of precise location.

3. Way forward

In the discussion which followed, the following issues emerged:

- 5 Parishes were represented at the meeting. Would a joint plan for all 5 be practical?
- An option would be to produce plans involving fewer PCs and link them.
- It was felt that if the PCs worked together, they would need to be prepared to respond together in an emergency and support each other, rather than responding only in the parish where the emergency occurred.
- Some risks differed between parishes and this would need to be reflected in the CEPs.

It was agreed that

- 1) Phil Baker would continue to co-ordinate the meetings for the time being.
- 2) PB would circulate Freddie Gulliver's contact details to those present.
- 3) Freddie Gulliver would send the updated papers from his presentation to PB for circulation.
- 4) As soon as the updated papers had been received, PB would arrange another meeting of the PCs present to address the issues above.