

Are You Ready for Winter?

Scenario:

You have 24 hours warning of snowstorms, high winds, subzero temperatures, deep snow, and all roads blocked by snow drifts. It is predicted to last for at least a week, maybe longer, before a thaw. There are power cuts to at least 100 houses in the village for a few days.

This was the situation put to a group of villagers who undertook an emergency planning exercise . It is not as unlikely as some might think.

Your central heating might not work because it has an electrical control system and pump. You might not be able to prepare hot food or drinks. Vulnerable persons might need taking into houses that had solid fuel or wood heating, and hot food/drink given to them. In extreme cases of lack of heating they might need overnight accommodation. The village hall or churches are not considered useful venues for emergency centres. The village hall would be inaccessible due to snow drifts, and there would be no heating there if the electricity was off. The churches would be too cold.

Since movement around the two villages would be difficult it was thought that the community needed encouraging to consider such a scenario before it happened and to make sure they were prepared. To a certain extent residents in Coombe Bissett and Homington already keep an eye out for each other in such circumstances, and generally know who the vulnerable people are in their area.

Who are the vulnerable people?

- the aged.
- those who need to be visited by carers.
- those who normally receive meals on wheels.
- those who are pregnant and about to have their baby in the next two weeks.

Who can help?

- All able bodied villagers who can check on their vulnerable neighbours.
- Farmers who would be willing to clear roads with machinery.
- Local doctors, nurses and midwives who might help if emergency services cannot get through.
- People who could offer to loan mains generators.
- Those persons with 4 x 4s who would be willing to help in an emergency.

Continued

Being prepared is thought to be essential.

How can I be prepared?

- Make sure that you have enough basic dried and tinned foods in the house to last for at least a week.
- Purchase a small gas camping stove to heat up food and drinks.
- Ensure that you have a stock of candles and torch batteries.
- Should be the electricity be on, central heating would work, but ensure that you never let your fuel supplies get so low that you do not have at least 2 weeks in hand. Deliveries of oil and gas may be impossible.
- If you rely on regular drugs, make sure that you have enough to last for 2 weeks, and if not, contact your doctor as soon as such a severe weather warning is issued via the media.

What else can I do?

If you know someone who lives in an isolated area of the parish and could be cut off from all access, check on them by telephone. In dire emergencies, tractors could be used to reach them.

If you would like to register your willingness to provide help of the kind detailed here, please contact Chris Chelu, the Snow Warden.

Phone him on **01722 718 351**

E-mail him at **chris.chelu.cbandhpc@btinternet.com**

If a list of volunteers can be set up, then those in need can phone and he can ask someone to come to their aid.

Will you be available to help if needed?