



Benhall & Sternfield

Community Emergency Plan

September 2026

☐ **Restricted**

This manual is intended for use by our community, for anyone who may need assistance in difficult times or is assisting others.

Keep it where you can find it!

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Introduction

Severe weather, prolonged power outages or a major incident with the potential to endanger life and or property may at any time affect the Benhall and Sternfield Parish's. In such events any outside assistance from emergency services or local authorities may be delayed or reduced.

It is therefore sensible to have a Community Emergency Plan in place which can be activated by the Parish Council. A team of local volunteers will assist the Parish Council to manage the situation, update/assist residents and liaise with outside agencies on behalf of the community until the situation is resolved or the emergency services and/or outside agencies are onsite to co-ordinate.

An incident affecting the villages is likely to be sudden and unforeseen and so early intervention is key. If you see anything giving rise to an emergency then, ensure that you are in a safe place and notify someone from the emergency contact list. If there is a threat to life, ensure that you call 999.

This plan relies entirely on volunteers. If you have any particular skills or equipment or can give your time to help others in the community when an emergency occurs then please contact the Parish Council via the Parish Clerk via email clerk.benhall@gmail.com

Emergency Planning Team

To Report An Emergency Affecting Either Parish Please Contact One Of The Emergency Plan Team If Safe To Do So. If There Is A Threat To Life Or A Fire Dial 999 In The 1st Instance Before Calling:

Name	Mark Stebbings
Emergency Role	Emergency Plan Coordinator
24 hr Phone Contact	07880 854415
Email	mark.benhallandsternfieldpc@gmail.com
Name	Coral Duncan
Emergency Role	Deputy Emergency Plan Coordinator
24 hr Phone Contact	07979 775023
Email	coral.benhallandsternfieldpc@gmail.com
Name	Julie Parmenter
Emergency Role	Deputy Emergency Plan Coordinator
24 hr Phone Contact	07984 036020
Email	julie.benhallandsternfieldpc@gmail.com

Place of Safety/Shelter

In an emergency the standard government advice is – **‘Go In, Stay In and Tune In’**

There may be occasions where you should not go in, for example if there is a fire or you are instructed not to by the emergency services. Otherwise, you should go inside a safe building and stay inside unless instructed differently.

If the need arises to evacuate residents from their homes for any length of time, then the Benhall & Sternfield Ex Serviceman’s and Village Club has been designated as the Prime Community Centre. However, it is recognised that depending on where the emergency is and how many residents are affected, will depend on whether a Secondary Shelter will be operational. Wherever possible all efforts will be made to utilise only the Prime Community Centre.

The Emergency plan is designed to cover eventualities where an event or situation threatens a serious danger to any residents or the environment or any property private or commercial.

In the event of an emergency affecting either Parish, a member of the Parish Council or one of their authorized volunteers will inform you of the situation and if there is a need to remain at home or evacuate and any supplementary relevant information.

When our team call, they will also be trying to identify any vulnerable residents so please assist them with providing details of anyone requiring additional assistance living at your property. This is so we can try to ensure that we can assist everyone in the best way possible.

Benhall St Mary’s Church of England Primary School

If an emergency arises during school hours, the emergency planning team will liaise with the school directly to inform them of the situation. Providing it is still safe to use the school then then it has priorly been agreed to keep the children and staff in the school rather than locating them to the Primary Shelter.

Please do not relocate to the shelters unless instructed to do so by a volunteer or a member of the Parish Council.

Prime Shelter Community Centre

Benhall & Sternfield Ex Serviceman’s and Village Club
School Lane,
Benhall,
Saxmundham,
IP17 1HE

Who May Need Help

In the event of an emergency, some or all our Parishioners may require help and the people requiring assistance may differ depending on the emergency we are faced with. The resilience of our community depends on everyone looking out for others and in particular our most vulnerable residents. An example of the vulnerabilities we need to consider:

- People who are not sufficiently mobile due to age or infirmity
- Disabled people
- Elderly people living alone
- People who are normally reliant on carers/services such as district nurses or meals on wheels
- People with severe illness who need regular care/medication e.g. dialysis or electricity for breathing apparatus or refrigerated medication
- Single parents with small children
- People with hearing or sight impairment
- Pregnant women
- Those living with dementia or have mental health issues
- Non-English speaking or those whose first language is not English
- People recovering from an operation or short-term injuries
- Tourists/visitors not familiar with the area
- Perhaps all of us

Vulnerable people are encouraged to sign up as 'priority service users' with utility companies. This is a free service, and you can inform providers what support is needed in the event you lose power/water. It does not mean you will get your supply back quicker but, it may help to get water delivered first for example. This can be done by telephoning or on a computer but request help now from a relative or neighbour to ensure you are registered, ahead of needing the service.

Anglian Water Priority Service Register

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/water-care/priority-services/>

UKPN (UK Power Networks) Priority Service Register

<https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/power-cut/priority-services/about-the-priority-services-register>

Items to Keep Handy & Keeping Informed

Essential items to keep handy in an emergency:

- House keys
- Wallets/purses
- Car keys
- Important documents (including home & car insurance documents)
- Torches with spare batteries or a wind-up torch
- First aid kit and medication/inhalers
- Warm and waterproof clothing
- Blankets
- Bottles of water and non-perishable food (including for special dietary requirements)
- Camping stove
- Baby food & supplies
- Pet Food & supplies
- Wellingtons
- Chargers for mobile phones
- Portable radio
- Useful contact numbers Z-cards (SOS cards)
- Your own emergency contact numbers for work, school, care homes etc

Keep Informed:

You can register with utility companies for live updates:

UK Power Networks Text POWER and your post code to 80876

Parish Council Website & Facebook:

Providing we have electricity and an internet connection, we will post periodic updates onto Facebook and on the parish council website advising of any plan of action.

<https://benhallandsternfield-pc.gov.uk/>

Local Radio Stations:

BBC Radio Suffolk	95.5FM and 104.6FM
Heart Radio Suffolk	97.1FM and 96.4FM

Potential Local risks & Guidance

Risk	Impact on community	What can the Community Emergency Team do to mitigate/prepare?
Medical	Low	- Call 999 / Seek medical help as appropriate, only qualified personnel to administer any first aid required - Defibrillator is located on the outside wall of Benhall Football Club, School Lane, Benhall IP17 1HE
House or Field Fire	- Low/Medium - Low in terms of likelihood but medium impact on those affected	- Call 999 immediately - depending on spread of those affected DO NOT use BBQ's on dried out land or near wooden structures and fences as this can cause a fire DO NOT leave BBQ's unattended and take home any used BBQ's do not leave in the open where they may re-ignite DO NOT discard cigarette stubs on dried out land as this can cause a fire - Reiterate periodically importance of having building and contents insurance in place - Have a list of alternative properties to rehome those affected in the immediate term - Consider use of Prime Shelter
Extended Loss of electricity supply (Power cuts)	- Medium/High - Loss of heating, lighting and cooking facilities - Low temperatures or loss of electricity could be dangerous to wellbeing of vulnerable residents or those with young children or medical issues dependent of electricity	- Ensure vulnerable residents are registered on the company's Priority Services Register - Register with your provider NOW to receive updates by text during a power cut - Call 105 or 0800 3163 105 (both freephone) to report outage or register new issue on below link depending on outage www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut - Distribution of portable generators, heaters & lighting - Torches/Batteries & Candles - Ensure vulnerable residents have access to hot food & drinks - Consider use of Prime Shelter as warm refuge depending on the duration and time of year

Overhead Power Lines Down	As Above	- Damaged/loose electricity cables/poles must be reported to Open Reach with what 3 words location of the damaged item on 0800 023 2023 or www.openreach.com/help-and-support/damage-health-and-safety - Other actions as per loss of electricity supply
Extreme Heat	Low	- Check on Vulnerable residents during extended periods of heat that they are coping and staying hydrated - Be vigilant for fires on dry communal areas/fields/heaths DO NOT use BBQ's on dried out land or near wooden structures and fences as this can cause a fire DO NOT leave BBQ's unattended and take home any used BBQ's do not leave in the open where they may re-ignite DO NOT discard cigarette stubs on dried out land as this can cause a fire - Prepare to call 999 in the event of a medical emergency or fire
Extended Loss of water supply or water contamination	- Medium - Loss of drinking water and cooking facilities - Possible school closure - Dehydration	- Register with Essex & Suffolk water NOW to receive updates by text during a loss of water - Ensure vulnerable residents are registered on the company's Priority Services Register - Check with Essex & Suffolk Water to establish extent and duration www.eswater.co.uk/report-a-problem/ www.eswater.co.uk/check-your-area/ - If water is expected to be off for longer than 3 hours bottled water will be made available by Essex and Suffolk water which will need to be collected by foot/vehicle and distributed
Sewage	Low/Medium	For any sewage spillage including from a vehicle or back up contact Anglian Water to report the incident 03457 145 145 or www.anglianwater.co.uk/contact-us/
Overhanging or Fallen Trees	Low/Medium	If anyone has been injured by falling trees/branches call 999

		• If there is an immediate risk to public safety from a fallen or overhanging tree/hedge call – 0345 606 6171 • If the immediate risk to public safety from a fallen or overhanging tree/hedge is on a major highway/trunk road then you can report this on 0300 123 5000 • If there is no immediate danger, then the issue can be reported online at https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/ • If the tree has fallen from private land, then the landowner should be contacted as they will be responsible for the clearance
Heavy Snow and Ice or extreme cold temperatures	• Low/Medium	• Ensure village grit bins are refilled prior to the harsh weather arriving and check periodically throughout the season to ensure they are adequately stocked www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/check-which-roads-are-gritted/grit-bins • Check on Vulnerable residents ensuring they have access to torches, blankets, hot food and drink • Consider alternative power sources and opening of Primary/secondary shelters as warm refuge if required • Use salt/grit to clear paths not water. If no salt/grit then sand or ash will provide grip underfoot, but these will not melt ice • Offer to assist the elderly or vulnerable neighbours take care not to block drains with heaps of snow • Suffolk County Council will plough A class roads in severe snow conditions and will grit main roads as a precaution as required • If electricity is affected see above
Severe Storms/High Winds	• Low/Medium	• Prepare by having emergency contact details of service providers and torches etc ready • Prepare by securing outdoor items such as furniture and bins • If trees are damaged in strong winds and if roads are blocked see above

		• If electricity supply is damaged see above • If you have no phone or Wi-Fi and there is no evident damage to cables/poles or green cabinets then you must contact your service provider • Damaged/loose telephone cables/poles or damaged green cabinets must be reported to Open Reach with what 3 words location of the damaged item on 0800 023 2023 or www.openreach.com/help-and-support/damage-health-and-safety • Check on Vulnerable residents ensuring they have electricity, hot food and drink • If there is any structural damage to homes the Primary/Secondary Shelter may be required
Flooding from Burst Water Main or heavy rainfall affecting Rivers and Ford	• Low/Medium	• For flooding from burst water main go to www.eswater.co.uk/report-a-problem/ or call Essex and Suffolk water on 0345 782 0999 • Emergency Plan Contacts to keep an eye on weather forecasts or flood warnings affecting the Parish • Sign up for Flood warning alerts https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings • Depending on the location and severity of the flood the Primary/Secondary Shelter may be required • Check vulnerable residents • Consider moving possessions upstairs, if possible, secure your property and make your way to a place of safety • Avoid contact with flood water as much as possible to reduce risk of drowning and infection • Don't drive through flood water, and try to avoid unnecessary journeys as local roads may also be flooded • Listen to local radio stations for further information and guidance • When flooding is likely, the Environment Agency issues flood alerts and warnings for main rivers and sea flooding through TV and local radio.

		- To report a high or over flowing river contact the Environment Agency on 0800 807 7060 - You can also register to receive free floods warnings by phone, text or email. You can also view flood warnings set by the Environment Agency, or get advice and information via Floodline on 0345 988 1188 Flood Alert – means flooding is possible prepare essential items Flood Warning – means flooding is expected immediate action is required, move family and pets to a safe place turn off gas and electricity and water if safe to do so Severe Flood Warning – means danger to life co-operate with emergency services call 999 if you are in immediate danger
Major Road or Level Crossing Accident	Medium	- Incident may include injury to people, damage to property, road blockages and/or road spillages/debris - Call 999 to report the incident and activate the required emergency services - Call 999 / Seek medical help as appropriate, only qualified personnel to administer any first aid required www.gov.uk/report-road-spillage - Direct traffic safely around the incident - Report to Suffolk County Council Highways for all roads except the A12 on 0345 606 6171 or https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/ - For the A12 only contact Highways England on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk - Road closure information can be found by visiting https://one.network/
Oil/Chemical Spillage or other road debris	Low	- It is important to provide accurate information on the type of material, exact location and if there is an immediate danger to public safety www.gov.uk/report-road-spillage

		Report to Suffolk County Council Highways for all roads except the A12 on 0345 606 6171 or https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/ • For the A12 only contact Highways England on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk • You can also get the latest information by following Suffolk Highways on X (formally Twitter)@Suff_Highways
Pandemic	• Medium	• The Government and Local Authorities will provide guidance which may require some movement restrictions of people and animals or shielding • Volunteers may be required to assist vulnerable residents with delivering goods or collecting prescriptions
Sizewell	• Low	• Release of radioactive material, all residents should adhere to the national advice leaflet which is attached as an appendix to this plan • If you are at home stay there and ensure all domestic pets are inside, farm animals should be left where they are • Shut all doors, windows and air vents • Drink shop bought bottled water only unless advised otherwise which will be notified on national TV and Radio • Only food stored indoors at home or shops should be used, wait for guidance before eating food from markets, allotments or farms • Stay inside and stay tuned to local radio and television for public information on what to do as evacuation may not be necessary • If you are outside then get inside as soon as possible keep doors, windows and air vents or cooling systems closed/off • If you are travelling, get inside as soon as possible and ensure air vents and windows of vehicles are closed

Volunteers

This plan relies entirely on volunteers. If you have any particular skills or equipment or can give your time to help others in the community when an emergency occurs then please contact the Parish Council via the Parish Clerk via email clerk.benhall@gmail.com

Suffolk Prepared

Find out more information on how you can plan ahead to deal with emergency situations from the Suffolk Resilience Forum. Six things you can do to prepare for an emergency:

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/prepare-yourself/>

Assistance Following An Emergency

If following a fire or flood you need advice regarding housing, waste clearing or street cleansing, during normal working hours please call 0333 016 2000 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).

If you are faced with an emergency situation outside of working hours, including the weekend, which requires an immediate East Suffolk Council response, please call the out of hours number 01284 776100. Please **do not** call this number during normal working hours as it is diverted to other services, and **ONLY** call in the case of an emergency (such as further flooding or homelessness).

If your home is inhabitable due to flooding or fire, contact the Housing Team at East Suffolk Council on 0333 016 2000 (available out of hours too).

If your property has been affected by flood water, you can contact East Suffolk Services 0333 016 2000 (including out of hours) to request their assistance to remove damaged items, to clean, sweep away sewage and detritus. Please remember to check with your insurance provider **BEFORE** disposing of items. If items need to be disposed of immediately (normally only if they pose a Health and Safety issue) then ensure that you take plenty of pictures so you can evidence the condition of the disposed items to your insurers.

Emergency Contact Numbers

East Suffolk Council (request a call back from Emergency Planning Duty Officer)	0333 0162000
Out of Hours East Suffolk Council (request a call back from Emergency Planning Duty Officer)	01284 776100
UK Power Network (UKPN)	105 Or 0800 3163105
Open Reach – Telephone	0800 0232023
Essex & Suffolk Water – Burst Water Main	0345 7820999
Anglian Water - Sewage	03457 145 145
Suffolk County Council – Highways Ex A12	0345 606 6171
Highways England A12 Only	0300 1235000
Social Services	0808 800 4005
Environment Agency	24 Hour Incident Hotline - 0800 80 70 60 24 Hour Floodline - 0345 988 1188
Saxmundham Health Services	01728 602022
Saxmundham Pharmacy	01728 602051
NHS Out of Hours Service	111
St John's Ambulance - Emergency Support	08700 104950
Benhall Primary School	01728 602407
Benhall & Sternfield Ex Serviceman's and Village Club	01728 768140
BBC Radio Suffolk	0147 325 000