

GREAT WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Responding to Emergency Situations

Version 1

This policy document should be reviewed and updated as necessary

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1	March 2024	S. Gilbert	New document.

Great Waltham Parish Council

Responding to Emergency Situations

1. The Council recognises that its role in emergency situations is likely to be limited and will depend principally on the timing of responses and resources available from higher public authorities and/or other agencies which typically have primary responsibilities.
2. The Council does not look to specifically identify and define every possible 'emergency' scenario. Instead it keeps in mind, but will not necessarily restrict its actions to, the most likely circumstances which may arise – it will respond to a given situation based upon an informed assessment of urgency and need at the time.

In this context the Council will typically consider an emergency situation to be any sudden and unexpected event or series of events which, in the absence of responses or resources from higher public authorities or other agencies, merit it making, to the best of its ability, immediate (and/or potentially longer-term) intervention(s) to help maintain the safety, health, well-being and/or continuity of usual activities/services of its parishioners or parish businesses.

3. As examples, 'most likely circumstances' would include these, not necessarily mutually exclusive, event(s):
 - Weather-related events, e.g. flood or storm damage;
 - Prolonged and/or unscheduled loss of utility services, especially when most vulnerable residents are at risk;
 - Health emergencies, especially when other services/authorities are unable to respond immediately or adequately.
4. The Council undertakes to retain and update details of useful contacts whose services, input, knowledge and assistance could be utilised during an emergency situation. The Council will secure and maintain data owners' authority to pass on such contacts information in the event of an emergency situation. Typically, the organisations or persons whose data will be held would include the following:
 - Schools (including pre-schools);
 - Village halls;
 - Religious organisations;
 - Scouts;
 - Royal British Legion;
 - Community support groups;
 - Snow clearance group;
 - Local traders, farmers and other service providers.
5. The Council will look to encourage local service providers to make themselves available as volunteers acting on behalf of the Council in the event of an emergency situation. Typically, such skills/resource suppliers would include:
 - Water/food suppliers;
 - Temporary shelter providers;
 - Local builders, electricians etc.;
 - Farm equipment providers (e.g. generators/pumps, tree removal equipment, high wheelbase vehicles);
 - Fuel suppliers;
 - First aid/medical assistance providers.

The Council will ensure that in whatever agreed capacity a volunteer acts he/she will have personal liability cover under the Council's insurance policy.

6. The Council's communications policy will be to ensure that as far as is reasonably possible parishioners, parish businesses and relevant higher authorities or other agencies are aware that the Council holds information of useful contacts' information which may be made available in the event of an emergency situation.
7. The Council's first point of contact for matters relating to an emergency situation will be the Parish Clerk. The Clerk will (if necessary, in conjunction with parish councillors) decide whether the threshold has been met for declaring the existence of an emergency situation. Such assessment will be based on the Clerk's/councillors' own knowledge or that obtained from reliable third parties.
8. The Council will maintain supplies of equipment which could be used in an emergency situation. For instance, high visibility jackets, grit bins and salt bags, snow shovels.
9. In the event of an emergency situation the Council will maintain a log of actions taken in relation to the event(s) and the number of people/properties affected, including the type of disruption which has occurred.
10. The Council will continue to supply and maintain defibrillator units for emergency use at agreed locations in the parish.
11. The Council will take account of the possibility and potential implications of emergency situations as part of its annual risk assessment and financial planning processes.