

Emergency Planning Working group - Report

In March Gloria Creasey and myself attended a Rest Room training session led by Mr Courtney Walsh and Freddie Guliver who are Emergency Planning Officers (EPO's) for Suffolk County Council.

At our meeting on 7th March the working group met with Mr Courtney Walsh, EPO. It was a very informative meeting with lots of ideas and suggestions discussed.

A proposal was discussed to have two response centres. The village hall committee room could be used as a minor incident control room/rest break facility. Wickham Market Primary School could be a designated rest centre for larger scale events and as such would take direction directly from Suffolk County Council. A response team will be discussed at our next meeting on 14th March and organised by our working group with validation from WMPC, said team will be formed to assist officials/co-ordinators if an incident/emergency were to occur.

I have on behalf of Courtney Walsh - EPO met with Mandy Garland, Safeguarding Officer for Wickham Market Primary School to discuss their facilities being used as a Designated Rest Room for large scale emergencies. They are keen to look into what the requirements would be to become one. I explained that it would involve evacuated and displaced persons obtaining a safe place to rest, eat, sleep etc for a period of 24/48 hours maximum. And that after 48hrs the County Council then have an obligation to accommodate these citizens in emergency accommodation. This was met positively by Mandy and the EPO will now liaise with the school directly.

The unit responsible for set up and co-ordination of rest centres across the county is Joint Emergency Planning Unit (known as J.E.P.U).

Suffolk Prepared website has plenty of advice and information about emergencies and how to prepare for them. A small folded card known as a Z-card that compacts useful information has been produced by Suffolk Prepared and is available to purchase directly from the printers. Authorisation from WMPC from our EP budget will be applied for once we ascertain the number of households there are in our area. The aim will be to have these available at all Parish Council events and public places as soon as possible.

Our next task will be to discuss how to set up and run the committee room response centre and discuss if any equipment may be required such as whiteboard, head torches, hi-viz etc.

Another task will be to form a list and make contact with community groups that maybe able to offer volunteers to help run the response rooms on a shift rotational basis.

Please feel welcome to add any ideas to our plan. Many heads make lighter work!

Pauline Huggins