

Chairman's Announcements - 19 January 2011

Local Flood Protection

In the event of flooding the Council's priority is to the elderly or infirm when assisting people and the protection of commercial property to prevent environmental pollution. Although we will do what we can for affected householders we urge those in areas of risk to take precautions themselves.

In order to help communities protect themselves from flood risk, Wiltshire Council is introducing a scheme to supply gel sacs, these are similar to sandbags but inflate when in contact with water. The sacs are filled with a gel that expands when wet, but when dry they are virtually flat. This means they are simple to store and far easier to distribute in an emergency. They inflate when immersed in water, allowing a protective flood barrier to be built quickly to protect doorways and airbricks. When the flood has abated they can often be emptied, dried and reused.

In some places where there is a known flood risk, the Parish or Town Council may already hold a limited supply of sandbags for distribution in times of emergency, and the gel sacs can be used to augment these supplies.

Local communities are encouraged to appoint a local Flood Warden who can co-ordinate their response and be the main contact with the council's duty officers. Those parish and town councils with flood wardens or local flood working groups can seek advice from them on the numbers of gel sacs likely to be required for specific locations.

Parish and Town Councils will be able to:

- Purchase a stock which they can hold in the community for distribution during a flood event or
- Having identified properties that are at risk, or are known to flood, purchase the gel sacs on behalf of the householders

By buying in bulk Wiltshire Council was able to negotiate a discount which would not be available to individuals. The gel sacs are available to Parish and Town Councils for £2.50 each.

Town and Parish Council's wishing purchase gel sacs should complete and email the attached form to Sarah Peterson (sarah.peterson@wiltshire.gov.uk, telephone 01225 713377).

COMMUNITY ORDER FOR GEL SACS

From		Parish/Town Council	
Contact Details			
Name;			
Phone Number:			
E Mail:			
Quantity required:	@ £2.50	Total: £_____	
Cheques should be made out to Wiltshire Council			
Point of Contact for Delivery			
Name:			
Phone Number:			
E Mail:			
SIGNED:			
DATE:			
NAME IN CAPITALS:			

Return to: - Sarah Peterson, Department of Neighbourhood and Planning, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JD

sarah.peterson@wiltshire.gov.uk

Carshare in Wiltshire - Introducing carsharewiltshire.com

Wiltshire Council's dedicated internet based car sharing scheme, www.carsharewiltshire.com is a FREE service that helps match people travelling for whatever reason with others going the same way. This might be on a daily basis to and from work, on an occasional basis once or twice a week to the sports centre, on a regular Saturday basis for shopping trips, or one off trips to festivals, events, or outdoor concerts.

The idea is simple - by pairing up people that would have otherwise have driven separately, 1, 2 or even 3 cars can be taken off the road and hence reduce congestion. The journey will then be quicker, without undue delay, and it will also save all those pairing up money, as the cost of the journey can be divided equally up!

For work trips, more and more organizations are offering their employees who share journeys to and from work dedicated parking spaces, relieving them of the hassle of driving around and around full car parks looking for that elusive space. It also means they can arrive at any time that they choose, rather than have to worry about getting to the car park as early as possible to find a space.

Warning Beware of imitations! - there is an internet site called 'www.wiltshirecarshare.com' that is **not** run or approved by Wiltshire Council! What is more, you have to pay the private organisation that is responsible. There is only one site Wiltshire Council recommends, and it is free: www.carsharewiltshire.com - visit it today for more information and to register.

Over 9000 Wiltshire residents and workers have done just this, and combined with the thousands of other people who are part of the "Liftshare.com" network across the South West, your chances of finding a car share partner to drive or be driven by has never been greater. With petrol prices going up and up, now is a great time to cut your fuel bill in half or even more!

The system is designed with safety in mind, and there is absolutely no obligation to proceed with any car share arrangement. All contact occurs by e-mail, and users are warned neither to reveal any personal details nor too many too early. Once you register your details, including journey information securely on line, the database searches for any near matches. You will receive an e-mail outlining potential suitable matches, and this includes right down to your individual requirements concerning smoking (or not), for example.

It is entirely up to you whether you e-mail any of those suggested to you - and likewise, should you receive an e-mail from someone else, following the database suggesting you as a potential suitable match, again, you choose whether to make contact by replying.

There are simple safety steps to take when proceeding with a potential match, including arranging to meet in a public place, preferably accompanied by a friend. With regards proceeding with the car share arrangement, once you have satisfied yourself that the person you met is who they say they are, for example with a

passport, drivers license, etc, and also that they have a license and appropriate tax and insurance, the car share arrangement operates simply and effectively. You decide where to meet - we suggest either at or near to your home, or a bus stop or train station, so just in case the other party cannot make it, you can still proceed with your journey by other means. You should always make sure that someone knows your arrangement, who you go with, when, and where.

For added peace of mind, schools, colleges, and even organizations can organize private groups on the www.carsharewiltshire.com, whereby ONLY people from that organization are linked together, if desired by the individual. For more information on private groups, email transportplanning@wiltshire.gov.uk.

Students attending or planning to go onto Higher Education often need to travel further distances and at different times to when buses may be available. So car sharing does offer a real, safe, and convenient way of continuing on in further education, and students can save money too, splitting the fuel costs between all those in the car.

Contact Details:

Email: transportplanning@wiltshire.gov.uk

Fairtrade and the Wiltshire Fairtrade Coalition

Fairtrade is based on the idea that small producers in the developing world should be paid a price for their produce that covers the cost of production and gives the family a living wage. The producer makes a long term agreement in advance with the Fairtrade purchasing company that ensures a guaranteed minimum price.

In return the producer commits to working to progressive standards of production and environmental protection. Under the agreement children are not forbidden to work but bonded labour is prohibited and children must go to school.

As a result, producers are able to plan ahead and achieve a degree of stability.

In addition, a specially formed local co-operative receives a social premium that can be spent on projects to benefit the whole community. These are decided by the co-operative not imposed from outside and may include such projects as building a classroom or clinic, starting a small business to help diversify the local income or providing a safe water supply or sanitation. The social premium is often of particular benefit to women because it can give them more of a stake in the decision making of the community. For instance, by using the premium to buy sewing machines, village women can create a sewing business that brings in income.

The Fairtrade mark on products is a guarantee that adherence to the agreement is being monitored. It has been in existence for 16 years and is now widely recognised though not necessarily widely understood.

The success of the Fairtrade movement so far is due in large part to the efforts of small local groups with the support of larger organisations. There are nine towns in Wiltshire which have achieved the status of Fairtrade town awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation.

The Wiltshire Fairtrade Coalition is an association of local Fairtrade town groups, businesses, other organisations and individuals working to promote understanding and uptake of Fairtrade produce. The coalition offers mutual support and encouragement to members and aims to make Wiltshire a Fairtrade county.

Community Resilience – Town and Parish Council Emergency Plans

Intention

The intention is that all parishes have an up to date Community Resilience Plan to replace where necessary the Initial Response Plan that some parishes (the minority) had written some years ago. These plans once written will be kept up to date by a nominated person (nominated by the Town/Parish Council) who will maintain ownership of the plan keeping it fully up to date.

Bradford on Avon Community Area Board who were part of a pilot scheme have fully endorsed the initiative. Subsequently the Emergency Planning Team has emailed all Parish Clerks.

A Government template and guidance notes written for Bradford on Avon are available on request. It is the intention that the remaining 17 Area Boards will have notes tailored to their region to assist the authors of the plans.

Introduction to Community Resilience

In order to ensure that Wiltshire Communities are truly resilient it is vital that they are aware of the risks which affect them. This will help the Town and Parish Councils to decide which threats they are comfortable with, without having to take any preventative action and those where a more proactive approach may be required.

This information will also be made available to each member of the community to ensure that they are able to take necessary measures such as preparing an 'Emergency Box', purchasing sandbags to protect their property or carrying out a business impact analysis for a Business Continuity Plan for example.

Recent studies have shown that the 'just in time' society in which we live has had a major effect on the way in which people view their own safety and their reliance on the local authority and emergency services. Whereas in the past people tended to be very much aware of the precautions they could and should take to look after their family, property and/or business, they are now more reliant on assistance from public services. Whilst this document does not advocate the derogation of the public service responsibility to care for its population, it is intended to highlight areas where members of the public can be more proactive in protecting themselves and their communities.

Community Resilience is not just about the Community Safety agenda, it is much more involved than that. It is about how the community, the individual within that community and businesses can best prepare to meet the challenges they may face if confronted with a major incident. It is also about how the community can continue to

operate for as long as possible and how it can adapt to its new circumstances once the incident has passed. This is best outlined by the following definitions[1][1]:

Resilience: The capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable function, structure and identity.

Community Resilience: Communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services.

We can't stop disruptive challenges from happening, but we can mitigate their effects on the community by comprehensive preparations on the part of both the public services and members of the public, and by carefully planning the recovery from such events. Recovery from a major incident is covered in a separate document which outlines how the local services intend to approach restoration and improvements to communities affected by a major incident in order to help them adapt to their new, post incident circumstances.

If anyone wishes to discuss this matter further they should contact Nicholas Bate, Emergency Planning Officer on 07747 804604 or email:

Nicholas.bate@wiltshire.gov.uk
