

WHPC Meeting 7th April 2026

Agenda Item 26/082

Title: Emergency Plan and Grant Application

Purpose:

1. To invite the Council to approve the draft Emergency Plan previously circulated.
2. To consider loading the Emergency Plan on the Council Website.
3. To invite the Council to consider an offer made by Devon Communities Together (previously circulated) to award WHPC a grant for the purchase of two-way radios for the volunteer Village Responders.
4. To consider approving the purchase of the radios subject to accepting the offer of the grant.

Background:

WHPC established an Emergency Plan Working Group to develop an Emergency Plan for West Hill. The Working Group is led by Cllr Francis Pullman and has membership consisting of a number of village residents.

A draft plan has been developed and has previously been presented to the Council for comments. The draft plan has also been discussed with Devon Communities Together Resilience team who have approved the draft plan.

As a part of the plan a number of volunteers from the village residents have been recruited and are willing to act as Village Responders in the event of the plan being activated. Two training events for the Village Responders have been held. The plan proposes the use of the RBL Clubhouse as a Village Hub to control the response to an emergency event and the West Hill RBL has co-operated and supported this proposal.

The plan requires a means of communication between the Village Hub and the Village Responders in the event of a complete failure of power and telephone communications in all or part of the village. This will be achieved through the use of two way hand held radios and an application was submitted to Devon Communities Together to assist with the purchase of the radios. An offer of a grant to cover the cost has been made to WHPC. A copy of the offer has been circulated to Councillors.

The Emergency Plan Working Group has tested the model of radio it is proposed to purchase to ensure they are fit for purpose. From the Village Hub clear and strong signals were received from all the key points shown on the tactical map in the Emergency Plan. The signal was also strong and clear when the sender was in the dips in the roads on Toadpit lane and Lower and Higher Broad Oak Roads. Whilst there are undoubtedly higher specification radios used by the Emergency Services and the military it is considered by the Working Group that this radio is suitable for our limited needs and, although not the cheapest radio available, is good value for our intended purpose.

For Consideration and Decision:

The Parish Council is invited to:-

1. Consider the draft emergency Plan and decide whether to adopt this as a formal plan for West Hill.
2. Decide whether the Emergency Plan should be loaded on the WHPC website.
3. Consider the offer of a grant from Devon Communities Together for the purchase of two-way radios and decide whether to accept the grant under the proposed terms.
4. Subject to accepting the offer of the grant the Council is requested to approve the purchase of radios for use by the Village Responders. The radios will be held centrally and issued to responders in the event of an emergency.

Next Steps:

If the Council agrees to adopt the plan and approves the purchase of the radios the Working Group will arrange for further training for the volunteer Village Responders including use of the radios and correct radio procedures. Following this a training exercise will be arranged to test the Emergency Plan and assess whether changes are required.

The Emergency Plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it covers any change in circumstances or threat. It is suggested that it should be approved annually at the annual Council Meeting.

Cllr Francis Pullman