



## Community resilience: keeping yourself and your family safe

### Information for residents of the Upper Deverills in case of local emergencies

This leaflet has been prepared by Upper Deverills Parish Council in consultation with Wiltshire Council and the emergency services to help you prepare for situations such as flooding, severe winter weather and power outages. The Parish Council has no powers to prevent or mitigate hazards but will act as a link between residents and those with responsibility for such action, e.g. fire and rescue services, police, local authority and utility service providers.

While the statutory authorities will provide support after an event, there is a lot we can do to help ourselves and our neighbours by way of preparation and in the event of something happening.

If you spot a problem, report it – don't assume someone else will.

**Residents at risk.** Some residents are more vulnerable than others in the event of severe weather or a power outage. You or anyone living with you (such as very young children, elderly individuals or anyone with a physical disability) can ask to be placed on a confidential register with the electricity providers and Wiltshire Council. You will receive priority treatment in case of an emergency such as a power cut or other civil emergency. During a power cut, for example, the electricity supplier can provide emergency heating and lighting. Details of the scheme can be found at:

[ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need](https://ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need)

It is also important that we look out for our neighbours. We are very fortunate to live in small communities where this already happens but this kind of neighbourliness is particularly important in times of crisis.

### FLOODING

**Preparation.** Historically relatively few properties in the Upper Deverills have been prone to flooding but it is worth noting that, as our climate changes, we may experience more frequent and intense rainfall events which can increase the risk (December 2019 was a prime example!).



The Parish Council has been working with Wiltshire Council to identify places in the valley which have traditionally been sites of flooding. These are now

held as maps in County Hall. They also identify points where regular maintenance will reduce the flood risk.

It is the responsibility of owners to protect their own property against floods. This is the one emergency where there is no statutory support from the authorities, unless there is immediate risk to life.

**Environment Agency (EA) alerts and warnings.** The EA issues alerts and warnings of flood events specific to each river. These are:

- *Alerts*: flooding is *possible* and residents should prepare
- *Warning*: flooding is *expected* and immediate action is required

You can ask the EA to advise you automatically by phone, text or e-mail of flood alerts and warnings. This is a free service:

[fws.environment-agency.gov.uk/app/olr/register](https://fws.environment-agency.gov.uk/app/olr/register) or 0345 988 1188.

You can also ask the met office to notify you of weather alerts so you can prepare for bad weather:

[metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings](https://metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings)

**In the event of a flood**, please:

- Always follow the advice of the Emergency Services.
- Assist the Emergency Services as they request, providing information or assistance to the community.
- Do not enter a cordoned off area.
- Evacuate if advised to do so by the Emergency Services.

Note:

- Moving water is extremely powerful and dangerous.
- Flood water may contain many diseases, especially when drains have flooded.
- Debris and silt prevent you from seeing hazards such as uncovered drains and sharp objects.
- Use a stick/pole to probe the ground ahead of you if you are forced to walk through water to safety.
- Stay away from railings/fences where water is flooding – you can be trapped against them and unable to escape.
- Protect broken skin with sticking plaster, etc. to help avoid infections and wash your hands after contact with flood water.
- There are no Flood Wardens in the Parish so nobody locally is authorised or insured to enter flood waters.

If your or a neighbour's property is very likely to be flooded (in other words a *warning* has been issued that covers our valley):

- Help people to evacuate a property.
- Tell them to switch off power, gas and water supplies before leaving.

- Tell them to take medicines and pets with them where practicable.
- Note names of all vacating the property and ensure that it is empty.
- Tell the Community Emergency Coordinator to pass the address information on to the Emergency Services, to avoid a wasted visit.
- Confirm and let the emergency centre know where the evacuees are going and get a mobile number for them.
- Where possible leave a note on the main entrance of the evacuated property saying the property has been evacuated and should not be re-entered until Emergency Services confirm it is ok to do so.

## SEVERE WEATHER

While heavy snowfall may be a delight for some people it can be a serious problem for the very young, the elderly, those with mobility issues and drivers. Householders are responsible for clearing snow from their own driveways. There are very few footpaths in the Upper Deverills villages, but the community could help clear snow from those that we have. Please bear in mind the following advice:



- Use sand or salt on icy surfaces (NEVER use water!)
- Try to remove snow early in the day when it is softer and hasn't developed a crust.
- Spread salt and sand later in the day to help stop overnight freezing.
- Take great care on slippery surfaces: don't become the first casualty!

Wiltshire Council undertakes the gritting of roads. Key routes are trunk, class A and B roads and some of the busier lower class roads. If temperatures remain below freezing after the morning rush of traffic then a larger network may be salted. Together we have identified three particular locations that are at risk in our parishes: Lords Hill (A350), Mere Down (B3095) and Hindon Road (between Monkton Deverill and the A350). Salt bins are located close to these pinch points and are checked and topped up by Wiltshire Council each autumn. This salt is for use at these locations by motorists, to try and prevent accidents and save lives. *Please do not take it for your own private use.* Wiltshire Council holds a list of local farmers may be called on to assist.

Heavy snow can lead to isolation of some individuals and communities. If you are aware of individuals who might be isolated, particularly those who are vulnerable, please check on them as soon as practicable.

When using salt/grit on the road, less is more – a tablespoon 'thrown spread' is sufficient if given time to work rather than a shovelful!

## UTILITIES FAILURE

- Our power supplier is Scottish and Southern: 105 or 0800 072 7282
- Our mains water supplier is Wessex Water: 0800 40 50 40.



**Power failures.** Power outages are not uncommon in our area and can be caused by a number of events. There are several obvious things you can do to **prepare**:

- make sure you have a torch and spare batteries handy in a place that you can find easily in the dark (avoid candles: they are hazardous and you don't want to turn a minor issue into a crisis!);
- have a telephone handset that doesn't depend on batteries;
- make a list of appliances that need turning off at the mains;
- if you use crucial medical equipment requiring electricity, put yourself on your supplier's priority register NOW;
- have some foods available that don't need heating up.

**In the event of a winter power failure** keep warm and don't forget that most forms of central heating use an electrical pump so be prepared to heat your house by other means and/or keep yourself warm with extra clothes or blankets.

- Be prepared to help neighbours keep warm!
- NEVER approach fallen or damaged power lines!

**Water supply failure.** If the supply fails or is interrupted for emergency works, Wessex Water should tell you:

- that the supply has been interrupted and when it will be restored
- where to get an alternative supply
- the phone number where you can get further information

They must also provide at least ten litres of water per person per day to affected consumers within the first 24 hours and maintain this until the piped supply is restored. They may do this by providing bottled water or with bowsers or stand pipes.