

Snow clearing and Community Resilience Scheme - Hovingham

1. SUMMARY

This case study is about how a small village in North Yorkshire established a group to clear snow during the winter of 2010 so that people, carers, and businesses in the area could carry on their regular activities as far as possible. The case study will be useful for those working in other isolated areas that are frequently brought to a standstill during winter. It also shows how councils can provide support for and work with committed community members.

2. ACTIVITIES

The Hovingham Action Group was formed in May 2009 to put into place a community plan for the rural villages of Hovingham and Scakleton, near York. Their remit is varied and includes a number of smaller action groups dedicated to specific tasks. The Hovingham Environmental Action Group deals with all manner of environmental activities: from litter picking to general maintenance. When the group was set up, a member contacted North Yorkshire County Council to ask how community preparation for emergencies could be strengthened.

Meanwhile, North Yorkshire County Council announced in the summer of 2010 that they were looking for communities to take part in their pilot 'Winter Maintenance Programme'. The Hovingham Environmental Action Group became involved.

The strategic plan was developed by the summer of 2010. Early in 2011, the plan was activated. Following guidance from the North Yorkshire County Council Highways Department, up to 22 volunteers ensured that footpaths that were deemed to be a priority were kept clear of snow and ice.

Hovingham have progressed the Winter Maintenance resilience programme by establishing a broad Community Resilience Plan for Flooding. The group provide published advice on preparing for floods and opportunities for residents to receive help and advice from emergency services.

Partners: North Yorkshire County Council, Hovingham Action Group, Ryedale District Council

Length of Time: 6 months from the initial contact to the activation of the emergency plan.

3. OUTCOMES

The work enabled people, including carers, to go about their daily activities more safely. In addition, the volunteers were also able to identify residents and businesses that may have required more help than others.

4. BARRIERS

There were a number of learning outcomes: the exercise emphasised the importance of a proactive leader to direct activities and to ensure that the priority routes were cleared. In addition, The group had to establish a phone cascade system to ensure that those people on contact lists were kept informed.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Recognise the value and need for volunteers.
- ✓ Identify key routes as part of the planning process.
- ✓ Enlist the help of proactive leaders to help with the management and execution of the plan.
- ✓ Recognise that good teamwork is essential.
- ✓ Ensure learning is shared from practical activities, for example, the importance of gritting to remove thin ice.
- ✓ Avoid relying on single individuals – develop a system through which alternative people can be involved if necessary.

6. LINKS

- This is adapted from a longer case study available from the Cabinet Office, Community Resilience Case Studies¹
- Hovingham Environmental Action Group²

7. CONTACTS

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- Katie Speed, Emergency Planning Officer, North Yorkshire County Council Emergency Planning Unit: katie.speed@northyorks.gov.uk, or phone: 01609 532713

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60912/Community-Resilience-Case-Study-Hovingham.pdf

² <http://action.apcp.com/>