



Department for Communities and Local Government

Town and Parish Councils in England

via National Association of Local Councils and
Society of Local Council Clerks

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Dear all,

I am writing to English councils today to let you know that the 'Get Ready for Winter' campaign launched this week and to ask for your help. On the Met Office website (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/barometer/get-ready-for-winter>) you will find advice and guidance to help you and your communities prepare for winter.

Since last winter this Government has announced further funding, so that it will be investing £2.5 billion over the next five years to reduce the risk of flooding, with work already underway, including £12.5 million invested in temporary flood defences that will be available this winter to better protect the country from flooding. But we all still need to be prepared for severe winter weather.

Town and parish councils are an important and highly visible part of the fabric of so many of our communities and I have been reflecting on my personal experience as a parish councillor and a local volunteer working to make sure my own community is resilient to severe winter weather. In the parish where I live, the parish council has developed an emergency plan so that the community can come together to support itself in times of emergency, such as flooding. I was interested to hear on my visit to Boroughbridge in North Yorkshire last week about the work of the local flood action committee. They told me that the process of writing their own emergency plan had improved the links between the local community and the key agencies which makes them better prepared for all weather related emergencies.

If you are thinking of writing a local emergency plan for your area, please see the attached 'Get Ready for Winter' checklist which signposts information, tools and examples to help communities, individuals and businesses to prepare for the unexpected. Your own principal authority and local resilience forum should be able to provide more information on the risks for your area and provide emergency advice.

There is a lot of good local community resilience planning already happening and I'm keen to share these examples, so please contact my officials at Resilience-SPA@communities.gsi.gov.uk with your own experiences.

ANDREW PERCY MP