

# Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum  
Issue 5 – May 2008

Staffordshire  
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire  
www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk

## Countdown to SRF Conference

A high quality line up of speakers and workshops has been finalised for the first Staffordshire Resilience Forum Conference on 19 June 2008.



ACC Marcus Beale

Around 200 delegates are expected to attend the event at the Yarnfield Conference Centre, near Stone.

Speakers will include solicitor Mark Scoggins who has vast experience of legal issues surrounding major civil contingencies issues and represented the Metropolitan Police in legal proceedings following the fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes at Stockwell tube station.

The conference will also see an update given on the new Staffordshire Flood Plan and workshops on the media, command and control and partnership working.

The command and control workshop will be led by Keith Strickland of the Emergency Planning College, while Steve Morley of the Environment Agency will play a lead role in the flooding workshop.

Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale, chair of the SRF, said: "This is the first conference of its kind in Staffordshire and is a major step forward for the resilience forum. A lot of hard work has taken place behind the scenes to ensure delegates will benefit from a range of informative lectures and workshops."



Delegates will include a senior officer from the Amsterdam fire service.

His presence follows a recent visit by a delegation from Staffordshire CCU to discuss civil contingencies issues (see page 3).

[Please click here to book your place](#)

## Project Argus Showcased

Businesses across Staffordshire were given an insight into a terrorist attack in three hard hitting exercises.

The Project Argus events were held in Stoke on Trent, Lichfield and Stone for company managers involved in retail and the night time economy.

The three hour multimedia terrorist attack simulation explored practical ways to prevent, handle and recover from a terrorist attack.

Using visual and audio material from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), Project Argus is run by the force's Special Branch in partnership with ambulance, fire and local authorities.

The sessions looked at issues including spotting suspicious activity, handling the immediate aftermath of an attack - including mobilising staff, evacuation, dealing with casualties and outside communication - and longer term business recovery issues.

Participants were encouraged to develop plans to identify and respond to terrorist threats and activity in their workplace.

Project coordinator, DC Darrell Burns said: "Project Argus plays a crucial role in the CONTEST strategy.

"While there is no specific threat to Staffordshire businesses it is important that they are as prepared as possible to deal with a terrorist attack.

"Argus helps them think clearly about their responsibilities and emergency plans and gives helpful, practical advice.

"The simulations had a real impact on those who took part and we plan to repeat and develop Argus in coming months."

## Retired Fire Officer Steve takes on CCU role



Steve Hill

Former Staffordshire fire officer Steve Hill has joined the Civil Contingencies Unit. Steve has taken on the role of training and exercise coordinator for the Staffordshire Resilience Forum. Steve, originally from Tunstall, joined the fire

service in 1975 and spent many years working in the north of the county.

His most recent role has seen him act as regional coordinator for the Government's 'New Dimensions' fire resilience project for 5 West Midlands based fire and rescue services.

Steve's new role will be to develop and coordinate the SRF's multi-agency training and exercise programme.

## Warning Sounded on Acetylene Storage

Procedures on handling acetylene cylinders suspected of being affected by heat or subject to severe impact or shock can lead to severe disruption to households and businesses in Staffordshire.

A 200 metre hazard zone has to be established around an affected cylinder – potentially resulting in major disruption to homes and businesses.

Now officers at Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit are advising local authorities to check their rest centre plans are robust

CCU officer Bob Brown said: "The regulations can result in residents being moved out of their homes. A lot of people can be affected especially where cylinders are found in a domestic shed on a housing estate.

"The cylinders have to be cooled for at least 24 hours so there will be a need to set up a rest centre. Now is clearly the time for local authorities to review their rest centre plans and ensure they are robust."

Acetylene - or Ethyne as it can be called - is an industrial gas used for cutting and welding metals. It is stored under pressure and is highly flammable. If stored and treated correctly Acetylene cylinders pose little threat, however, if heated or subject to shock could explode causing injury.

Ian Harrison from Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service said: "The setting up of a hazard zone could mean that people may have to leave their homes. Roads may have to be closed and rail services suspended. The potential disruption over a minimum of 24 hours is a serious threat to businesses affected by the establishing of a hazard zone."

Users are advised to seek guidance from the Health and Safety Executive. Information is available at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

Measures brought in under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 became law in October 2006.

## Advice on New Sat Phones

New satellite telephones are now in place in local authority and Primary Care Trust Operations Rooms throughout Staffordshire.

The phones were bought with a £3,000 grant from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat.

Civil Contingencies Officer Steve Berry said organisations should ensure the phones were properly set up.

He said: "Ops room staff need to check the phones are up and running. Firstly, make sure that the sim card has been activated then make a test call to ensure the phone is working.

"Staff should then inform the CCU that the system has been tested and must pass on the phone number for our records."

A system of bi-monthly checks will be put into place by the CCU in future to ensure everything is working properly.

## Emergency Control Room Enhanced

New multi media equipment has been purchased to enhance the emergency control room at the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit offices in Beaconside, Stafford. Principal Civil Contingencies Officer Peter Taylor said: "It is essential that officers have access to the latest technology in the event of an emergency."

## Spotlight on Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team (SSART)



Volunteers from the Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team play a vital role in helping keep county residents safe.

The team, operational for almost 10 years, has assisted on major incidents both in Staffordshire and neighbouring counties.

The SSART is the county's only registered lowland search and rescue team and has members on call 24 hours a day on 365 days of the year

The team is self funding and, as a registered charity, holds regular collection days. Money raised is used on maintenance of vehicles and equipment and for training courses. Team members give up an impressive 800 hours a year each to undertake training exercises.

The team is situated at MoD Stafford and can be contracted via the CCU Duty Officer.

Mark Walker, SSART Deputy Chairman, said: "Our roots are in off road driving clubs where people met to test their vehicle and driving skills to their limits. However, during times of need, we have offered our services at emergencies and we now provide a vital professional standard service."

Further information can be found on the SSART website at [www.staffssearchandrescue.org](http://www.staffssearchandrescue.org).

## Flu Planning Guidance Update

Resilience Forums across the UK are preparing to submit their Flu Pandemic plans to the Government.

The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) wants to compare plans to ensure good practise is being followed across the country.

The CCS wants to:

- Determine if plans have been updated to comply with the new national framework
- Gather and disseminate best practise
- Assess whether there are significant 'gaps' in plans which need to be addressed at national level.

A spokesman said: "Gathering and analysing LRF plans now will help to achieve a full suite of fit for purpose multi agency plans, thus providing reasonable assurance the UK is as well prepared as practicable to cope with a pandemic."

Meanwhile, a new national body has been formed to give scientific advice Government bodies on the issue.

The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Advisory Committee has representatives from clinical and academic backgrounds and is chaired by Professor Sir Gordon Duff.

Sir Gordon is a Florey Professor of Molecular Medicine at Sheffield University and chairs the Commission on Human Medicines and the National Biological Standards Board.

A joint agency planning group meets every 3 months to consider Staffordshire's response to a potential epidemic. All Cat 1 responders attend including Primary Care Trusts, local authorities, ambulance, fire and police. The meeting is chaired by Judith Wright (pictured) with CCU officer Bill Almond as coordinator.

Similar meetings are held in Stoke on Trent chaired by the city's Director of Public Health.

Work has been carried out to identify vulnerable people throughout Staffordshire and to identify essential and non essential services if an emergency happened.



**Judith Wright**

## CCU to Provide Emergency Packs

Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit is to provide emergency packs for use by local authorities in an emergency.

The packs include useful equipment such as a waterproof crate, wind up torches, foil blankets, water purification tablets, a whistle, gel hand wash and a battery mobile phone charger with changeable sockets.

Meanwhile, advice on the Staffordshire Prepared website urges families to prepare a 'Go Bag' in readiness for an emergency.

The article includes useful tips on what to include in the bag. See <http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk/public.htm>.

Information is also available on how to cope with incidents including floods and power cuts and how to get information in an emergency situation.

## Amsterdam Site Visit



**Andy Marshall presents a gift on behalf of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum**

Officers from the Staffordshire CCU flew to Amsterdam to spend a day with the city's multi agency response organisations.

The main aim of the visit was to learn more about flood risk management in Amsterdam in support of work on Staffordshire's new flood plan.

The visit was hosted by the Amsterdam Fire Service and included a tour of the city's emergency command centre, a demonstration of the Fire Service's water rescue capability and a look at one of Amsterdam's vast water pumping stations.

CCU Director Andy Marshall, who led the visit, said: "The challenges facing Amsterdam are vast as much of the city is located well below sea level. However, we can still learn a lot from our colleagues in the Netherlands, particularly in terms of how we work together and communicate in an emergency"

## Civil Contingencies News

The Cabinet Office has issued a new document entitled "Identifying People Who Are Vulnerable in a Crisis."

The guidance for emergency planners and responders can be accessed at <http://www.ukresilience.info/news/vulnerable.aspx>

A review of the 2007 Foot and Mouth crisis has also been published. The review was chaired by Dr Iain Anderson who was previously charged with reviewing actions in the 2001 outbreak. Further information can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/fmdreview.aspx>

The latest Department of Health guidance on pandemic flu can be viewed on the Staffordshire Prepared website at <http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk/panflu/guidance/>

## Smart New Look for Vehicles



Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit vehicles have been given a smart new look.

Each vehicle's livery now includes the CCU logo and website address.

CCU Director Andy Marshall said: "It is important that the public can instantly recognise who we are when we are in attendance at a major incident.

"We are pleased with the livery and hope that people seeing the vehicles might take time out to visit the website at [www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk)."

The distinctive new vehicle markings compliment smart protective clothing and equipment issued to CCU officers in autumn 2007. Civil Contingencies officers Bob Brown and Steve Berry are pictured above wearing new high visibility jackets.

The unit's Land Rover can be seen below.



Staffordshire Prepared is produced and published by the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit on behalf of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum. Telephone 01785 898618 or e-mail [ccu@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:ccu@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

## Businesses Warned Over Lack of Emergency Planning

A report by the Chartered Management Institute has revealed that less than half of UK organisations have Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans.

And less than half of organisations with a plan carry out exercises to ensure it works.

The worrying findings came despite an acknowledgement from senior managers with BCM plans that being prepared had helped organisations carry on during an emergency.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 local authorities have been obliged since 2006 to produce advice and assistance on BCM to local businesses and voluntary organisations.

Thirty two per cent of respondents to the survey were aware of the BCM guidance provided by their local authority or Resilience Forum - up from 23 per cent in 2007.

Andy Marshall, CCU Director, said: "This report should act as a reminder to organisations that they need to plan for potential problematic situations and to ensure that they can continue to function through any disruption.

"It is vital for businesses and the local economy that preparations are made by all organisations in the county.

"Businesses can be affected by a range of problems from staff sickness, failure of key suppliers or IT failure, to a major fire or flood.

The Business Continuity Institute website ([www.thebci.org](http://www.thebci.org)) is a good source of information for organisations looking to update their plans and train staff."

The Government's Civil Contingencies Secretariat said the report showed that much more could be done by UK companies.

## Map Reading Course

Civil Contingencies Officers are offering a map reading course for people working in Emergency Control Rooms.

The 'Introduction to Map Reading' course has been devised by CCU officer Steve Berry. Anyone wanting to sign up for the course should contact their CCU link officer or email Steve at [s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk).