

Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum
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Staffordshire
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire
www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk

SRF Conference is a Hit



Happy delegates at the Yarnfield Park event

The first Staffordshire Resilience Forum Conference proved a hit with delegates.

Around 200 people packed into conference facilities at Yarnfield Park, near, Stone, for the day long event.

They were welcomed by Andy Marshall, Director of Staffordshire Civil Contingencies and Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale, Chair of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum.

Delegates were then treated to a day of informative speeches and workshops based on the theme "You're part of a team."

Read more about the day's events on pages 2 and 3.



Resilience Forum Chair Marcus Beale opens the conference

National Praise for Staffordshire's Flu Plan

Work to protect the people of Staffordshire against a future flu pandemic is among the best in the country.

Staffordshire's Pandemic Flu Action Plan has been commended as 'good' by National Government who judged it to be among the top three in the country.

Resilience Forums across the UK were asked to submit their Flu Pandemic plans to the Government in order for the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) to compare plans to identify good practice across the country.

This will allow further work to take place to spread best practice around the UK and to determine if there any gaps in planning which need to be plugged at National level.

The plan can be seen on the Staffordshire Prepared website at www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk

Meanwhile, the SRF is to compile a complete list of contact numbers for agencies dealing with vulnerable people in Staffordshire.

It is hoped that much of the information will be available from Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent Social Care departments.

Pitt Report Published

Sir Michael Pitt's report into flooding has been published. SRF members can see copies of the report at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview.aspx>.

Director of Civil Contingencies, Andy Marshall said: "The Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) has been actively engaged in the Pitt Review process, and welcomes its publication."

Details of progress on Staffordshire's flood plan are featured on page four of the newsletter.

Armed Forces On Hand to Help in a Crisis

Lt Col Chambers gave an entertaining and thought provoking presentation on the army's capacity to help at a time when Britain's Armed Forces are faced with overseas duties.

Military assistance is available to help cope with a major incident, conference delegates were told.



Lt Col Guy Chambers

Guy Chambers, Lieutenant Colonel, HQ 143 Brigade, Shrewsbury, said the "Four F's" – flood, fuel shortages, fire disputes & foot and mouth – were part of Army life.

Areas of help available include transport, logistics support such as catering, communications, search capabilities and temporary accommodation.

143 Brigade were on hand to help following flooding in south Staffordshire in 2007. Lt Col Mark Norbury headed the military response to the floods in the Lichfield area.

The Army provided two officers and 49 "recruits under training" to assist the clear up operation led by Lichfield District Council. Military cargo vehicles were sent to the scene.

Nationwide, the scale of the floods was unique said Lt Col Norbury, but the military were able to assist by providing command expertise, people on the ground, vehicles and helicopters.

Lt Col Chambers added that whilst the military are stretched there would always be a response to a true disaster.

Media Plays a Key Role When Disaster Strikes

The importance of involving the media in Civil Contingency plans was highlighted during the Yarnfield Park conference.

Working with newspapers, radio, television and relatively new internet based media outlets was the topic for a workshop at the Civil Contingencies conference.

Bob Wade, a senior Government Information Officer, and Ian Fegan, Head of Communications for Staffordshire Police, led the workshop.

They stressed that it was not good enough to either ignore or try to manage the media.

In reality, the media will both set the agenda when a major incident occurs and will be invaluable in getting help and advice to the public.

Civil Contingency planners work particularly closely with the BBC who has a duty to keep people informed if disaster strikes.

The Government gives credit to this important role in its advice to "go in, stay in and tune in to a local BBC station to obtain information."

Bob Wade also told delegates to be aware of the rising phenomenon of "citizen journalism."

Following the London bombings in 2005, the BBC News website had received scores of photographs taken on digital cameras and mobile phones, even before the terrorist strikes had been confirmed.



Ian Fegan

A new Staffordshire Integrated Emergency Plan for Media has been drawn up by a group led by Ian Fegan and is awaiting approval by the SRF.

The plan details protocols for command and control and partnership working between organisations including the emergency services, health trusts and local authorities. It also contains detailed information on proposed Media Briefing Centres.

A training exercise is to be prepared to test the plan.



The Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team was among organisations who set up a stand at the Yarnfield Conference

Good Advice on Record Keeping



Solicitor Advocate Mark Scoggins has been involved in several very high profile court cases. He represented Thames Trains in the public inquiry into the 1999 rail crash at Ladbroke Grove, London and more recently represented the Metropolitan Police in the Jean Charles de Menezes enquiry.

He emphasised the importance of keeping good incident logs during a speech to the conference.

He warned delegates that legal action could follow if there was a perception that any major incident had been badly handled.

Mr Scoggins told delegates: “My business is defending what you did and when. Together we need to prove that you did a good job.”

He added that “the key was good record keeping. Logs must be taken recording what was considered, what was done and why.”

Chief Constable Stresses Importance of “Getting it Right”

Staffordshire’s Chief Constable, Chris Sims, gave the conference’s closing address.

He told delegates: “When you scratch the surface the thing that counts would be getting a major incident wrong. Everything you have invested over the years in building up trust with the community would evaporate overnight.”

“The best thing we can do is to be prepared to act professionally when our communities need us the most.”

Mr Sims stressed the importance of partnership working, commenting: “The public make no distinctions between the roles that agencies perform. They are not concerned about who does what. They quite rightly expect to see a seamless delivery of the services they pay for.

We have a good record in Staffordshire. We have had significant tests in the last 12 months in areas such as flooding and animal health and we have done well, but we should not be complacent and we can always do better – that is why today’s event is important. It has been a good day, a successful day.”

Mr Sims closed the conference with a prize draw. Rewards including passes to Alton Towers and Trentham Monkey Forest, Wedgwood jewellery and a bottle of champagne were on offer to delegates who had successfully completed a networking form aimed at reinforcing the teamworking theme of the day.

Delegates Enjoy Informative Conference Workshops



Visitors to the Staffordshire Resilience Forum conference were each able to take part in two of four workshops.

Experts led sessions on Partnerships, Flooding, Media (see page 2) and Command scenarios.

Keith Strickland of the Emergency Planning College and Civil Contingencies Officer, Steve Berry, led a hands on exercise entitled “From Command to Control.”

Delegates at the partnerships workshop - led by Bob Brown of the CCU and Peter Johnson of Government Office West Midlands - were challenged to work through a scenario involving vast numbers of evacuees moving into Staffordshire following terrorist incidents in Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

Attendees were asked to consider which organisations would be involved in providing assistance and to show how they would work together.

Steve Morley and John Buckingham from the Environment Agency joined forces with CCU Director Andy Marshall and Assistant Civil Contingencies Officer Sarah Moore to run the flooding workshop.

Delegates were asked to look at the consequences of the Summer 2007 floods and consider a scenario involving major flooding throughout Staffordshire.

The importance of partnership working was highlighted in discussion on the Pitt Report.



Progress on Staffordshire Flood Plan

Staffordshire's new Emergency Flood Plan is on schedule to be published in January 2009.

The draft plan is due to go out to consultation next month.

It has been commissioned by the SRF and has been prepared in response to lessons identified following the severe flooding in summer 2007.

It is being drawn up by a Project Board led by John Tradewell, Director of Law and Governance at Staffordshire County Council.

The draft was given its first public airing at the recent Staffordshire Resilience Forum Conference.

Ian Harrison, of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, has helped to co-ordinate work on the plan.

He said: "There has been a tremendous amount of work carried-out by 10 sub groups. The plan has been drawn up following a new format which we believe can be used as a template for formulating all future Staffordshire Resilience Forum Plans."

"Credit should go to Sarah Moore of the Civil Contingencies Unit and Laura Dawson of the Environment Agency for the



John Tradewell

work they have put in to preparing the draft plan."

Ian added: "The previous plan was fit for purpose but it was obvious that it could be improved drawing on lessons from the floods in Staffordshire and elsewhere in England in 2007."

Training programme for SRF

Training & Exercise Coordinator Steve Hill is drawing up a training and exercise programme for Staffordshire Resilience Forum members.



Steve is planning to prepare a coordinated approach to training for all member organisations over a one to three year period.

The training programme will build on the progress at the SRF Conference to foster partnership working.

For further information, or to inform the CCU of proposed events, please contact your CCU Link Officer or Steve direct at sl.hill@staffordshirefire.gov.uk.

Training Day puts Staff and Equipment through their Paces

Staff from Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) ran field tests on vital equipment during a successful training day.

Staff decamped to Cannock Chase to take part in the training day.

A range of equipment which may prove vital in an emergency situation was put through its paces along with the staff. The CCU's Mobile Control Unit, two tents and awning were set up and tests carried out on mobile power generators and satellite phones.

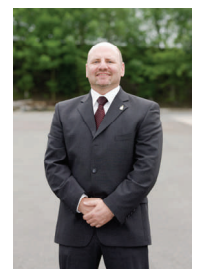
Staff then took part in a table top exercise simulating a major incident.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "This was an excellent opportunity to familiarise CCU staff in deploying the Unit's vehicles and equipment.

This will be very useful to us when we are called to assist in a major incident by one of our partner organisations from the Staffordshire Resilience Forum. Moreover, it will start to prepare the Unit's staff for its greater training and exercising role moving forward."

Former RAF Officer Mel is back in Staffordshire

Former teacher and Stafford based RAF Officer Mel Page is the Civil Contingencies Unit's latest recruit.



Mel's new role primarily involves supporting the Health Economies.

He will also be the CCU Link Officer for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Stafford Borough Council when Marie Dale commences her maternity leave.

Mel moved to Stafford from the Essex Emergency Planning Unit.

He is a qualified counsellor and hopes to continue this work in Staffordshire.

Mel originally from Fife took a commission in the RAF after completing a science degree at Edinburgh University.