

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN

July 2026



Purpose

To provide the parishioners of Biddenden with guidance and advice on improving their resilience to unexpected events.

Philosophy

To promote an approach to resilience which reflects the realities of life in the parish, taking account of risk and probability of unforeseen events. To encourage each household and individuals to develop techniques and tactics which will reduce harm during periods of uncertainty.

Limitations

This Plan has been developed by the Parish Council on behalf of parishioners. The Council will keep it under review, especially in the light of events and developments.

It is recognised however, that the Council has neither the resources nor the technical expertise to deliver a universal safety regime and that some risks are too large to address in isolation – significant natural or manmade disasters. The Council will work with parishioners, other representative bodies and with service providers to identify areas where support can be provided with a view to promote a safer environment across the Parish.

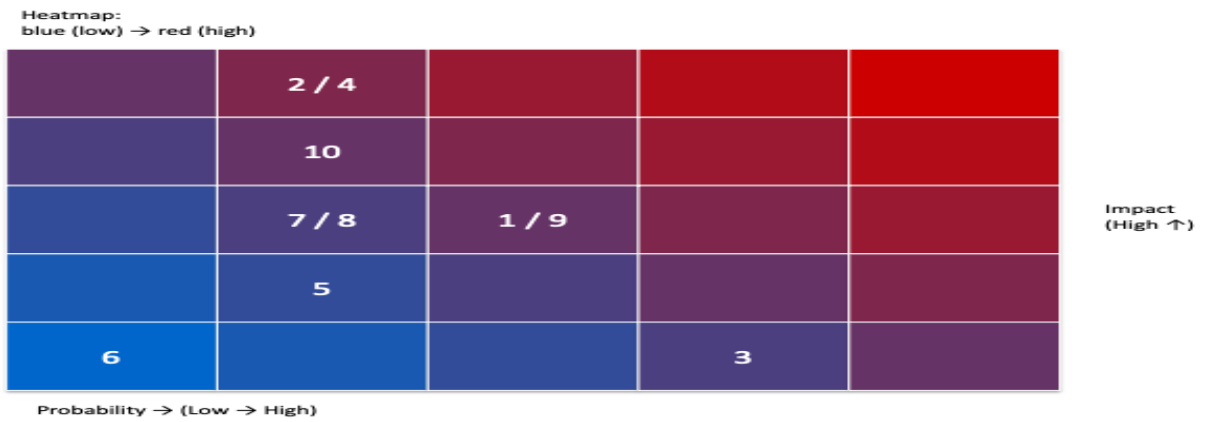
Areas of activity

The following are the principal key risk areas where the Council perceives activity towards safety is necessary and possible. The Council readily acknowledges that number of these areas have at their heart a statutory or a commercial provider, and that these often have in place advice and notification systems which largely rely on internet connectivity. A little further on, the Council includes some suggestions with regard to those who may not wish to use such connectivity.

Communication

Our primary source of communication will be via the Parish Council website @ Biddenden.gov.uk

Please see Heat Map below for key identified risks



ID	Risk	Impact (1-5)	Probability (1-5)	Score
1	Lack of Drinking Water 1 day	3	3	9
2	Lack of Drinking Water +1 day	5	2	10
3	No Electricity – less than 1Hr	1	4	4
4	No Electricity –More than 1 Day	5	2	10
5	No Telephone / Internet	2	2	4
6	Local Flooding	1	1	2
7	High Winds with damage to Trees & blocking roads	3	2	6
8	Lack of Gas / Oil for heating	2	2	4
9	Infectious diseases	3	3	9
10	Excessive Heat / Cold impacting	4	2	8

1. / 2. Lack of Drinking Water

The parish's freshwater supplier is **South Eastern Water**.

Should you find you have limited or no fresh water, contact should be made via the Customer Services Team @ **0333 000 0001 (weekdays from 8am to 7pm and Saturdays 8am to 1pm)**

For Out of Hours Emergencies Contact should be made via **0333 000 0365**

We would strongly recommend that elderly or at risk Parishioners register with South Eastern Water Priority Service register. This will ensure that supplies of water will be delivered to your door should water supply stop.

They can be contacted on :- **0800 952 4000**

For any **Waste Water emergencies**, contact can be made with South Eastern Water on

0330 303 0368

It is recognised that there will be circumstances whereby water supplies could be stopped and we have therefore arranged with South Eastern Water to provide at water station at the rear end car park near Biddenden Squash Club (what 3 word location ///soil.confident.slowness..

We are advised that they would aim to provide 10 Litres of water per person in the first 24hrs thereafter increasing to 20 Litres every day thereafter.

Whilst access to the car park can be restricted (narrow access point) we would aim to provide marshalling during busy periods to help flow of cars thus reducing impact on the main road

Parishioners may wish to consider installing water butts to facilitate, for instance, flushing of toilets at a time of a water outage.

We have established that Biddenden Village is seen as low risk of flooding

3./4. Lack of Electrical Power

UK Power Networks provide the Village electrical supplies –

Contact number 0800 3163 105 if you are without power.

You can also register at ukpowernetworks.co.uk to receive test alerts should power goes down in your locality. This text provides details of what has happened and what is being undertaken to restore electrical supplies.

We would recommend, where applicable, that those eligible sign up to the **Priority Service Register**. This service provides additional support to those Parishioners requiring additional support.

You can register if you or someone in your household @ ukpowernetworks.co.uk if the household / individual

- relies on medical equipment
- have refrigerated medicines
- have a serious or chronic illness
- have a disability
- is living with dementia
- are of pensionable age
- have children under five in your household
- have mental health difficulties

5. No External Contact Telephone/Internet

The entire UK, including Biddenden, is transitioning from old copper lines to a digital/fibre network (the PSTN switch-off), which we understand is due to be completed by **January 31, 2027**.

For the actual "Full Fibre" (FTTP) connection straight to your door, BT/Openreach is rolling this out progressively. Some parts of Biddenden already have access, while others are on the way.

To find out exactly when your property will be upgraded you can check your specific address using the [Openreach Fibre Checker](#) or view available upgrade deals on the [BT Full Fibre Page](#).

We would recommend for those Parishioners perceived to be at risk, that provision of mobile phones are also considered. These provide an added level of security and can be kept upon your person in cases of emergency.

6. Local Flooding of Roads

Surrounding roads to Biddenden have been subjected to flooding in the past (especially on the way to Headcorn).

If your local road is flooded, call [Kent County Council Highways on 03000 41 81 81](#) (or [03000 41 91 91 for out-of-hours emergencies](#)) to report the issue.

Depending on the source of the flood water, different organisations handle the cleanup and emergency response:

- **Roads, Pavements, and Surface Water:** Report to **Kent County Council Highways** using their [Report road flooding](#) tool or the contact numbers above.
- **Sewers or Burst Water Mains:** Call **Southern Water** directly on **0330 303 0368**.

Safety Reminders:

- **Immediate Danger:** Call **999** if the flooding threatens life or property.
- Do not drive or walk through floodwater; it is often deeper and faster-flowing than it appears

7. High Winds resulting in Blocked Roads

We would strongly recommend that in instances of high winds that Parishioners remain inside and away from windows. Where travel is considered critical, use of main roads is recommended and Parishioners should take with them mobile phones and torches/blankets as appropriate should they become trapped.

If the fallen tree poses an **immediate danger to life or property**, [call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service](#). For non-emergencies blocking a road in Biddenden, call [Kent County Council \(KCC\) Highways](#) immediately to report the hazard.

Emergency Contacts:

- **KCC Highways (Office Hours): 03000 41 81 81** (Mon-Fri, 9am - 5pm)
- **KCC Highways (Out of Hours/Emergency): 03000 41 91 91**
- **Power Cables Involved: Call UK Power Networks on 0800 31 63 105**
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How to Proceed:

If you prefer to make a report online or are unsure of the extent of the damage, use the [Kent County Council Report a Problem](#) page to log the exact location and status of the blockage.

Can I remove fallen trees

Legally, you have a common-law right to remove *just enough* of an obstruction on a public highway to let yourself pass, though doing so carries significant risks.

However, it is highly recommended to **let local authorities or professionals handle the clearing** to avoid accidents, liability for property damage, or issues with timber ownership.

For your specific location, you should follow these steps if you encounter a fallen tree:

- **Assess for Danger:** If the tree is endangering life or poses an immediate threat (e.g., blocking a main road, fallen on a vehicle, or tangled in power lines), dial **999** immediately and ask for the police or Fire and Rescue Service.
- **Contact the Local Council:** If it is obstructing a local road in Biddenden and is not a life-threatening emergency, report it to the **Kent County Council** highways team. You can report it online or call them on **03000 41 81 81** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or **03000 41 91 91** at other times.
- **Private Property:** If the tree has fallen from private land and blocks the public highway, the local council will usually clear the obstruction to make the road safe but will leave the debris on the adjacent property, and may seek to recover removal costs from the private landowner.

8. Lack of Gas /Oil for Heating / Cooking

We are aware that a number of our Parishioners do not have direct Gas or Oil supplies and rely upon their own Gas/Oil cylinders. In these circumstances we would recommend pre winter checks to ensure sufficient supplier and liaison with neighbors in similar situations who might be able to help in times of emergencies.

For general Gas supplies

If your gas supply goes off unexpectedly, call [the National Gas Emergency Service at 0800 111 999](#) immediately. They operate a free, 24-hour helpline and manage the gas pipelines in your area, including the South East of England. Depending on your specific issue, you may need to contact one of the following numbers:

Situation	Who to Contact	Phone Number / Resource
Gas leak, fumes, or loss of supply	National Gas Emergency Service	0800 111 999

What to do before calling

1. **Check for area outages:** Check the [National Gas](#) website to see if there is a known network incident or scheduled maintenance affecting Biddenden and the Ashford area.
2. **Check other appliances:** If your gas is off, check if your electricity is still working. Many modern gas boilers will not ignite without power. If you have a power cut, report it using the Power Cut 105 Tool.
3. **Check your meter:** If you use a prepayment meter, ensure you haven't simply run out of credit.

9. Health Issues

One hopes that previous COVID issues will not be repeated but liaison with our local practices Headcorn/Ivy Court has been established and any emerging issues will be highlighted on our website.

Maintaining personal health and fitness clearly is essential. There are several elements to this. A first step must be to consult the official NHS website for guidance and advice. Caution should be adopted when consulting other sites, whose provenance and legitimacy may not be well-founded.

Parishioners' general practice surgeries are vital sources of information. Online Newsletters from practices, and from the Health Trusts, can be accessed.

The Village of Biddenden does have a defibrillator and this is located at Biddenden Squash Club.

10. Excessive Heat / Cold

We are currently exploring the use of the Church for incidents of extreme heat (as the Church is probably the coolest building in the village) and this is currently with the Church committee to explore this and how the Church might stay open for longer periods.

Please refer to the Biddenden Parish Council website to up to date information

Fire

Kent Fire and Rescue Service has advice and guidance on their website Kent.fire-uk.org on general fire safety. Leaflets can be found in libraries and other Centres.

KFRS strong advice is to have smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors fitted, tested and replaced whenever appropriate. It also provides detailed advice on home safety.

KFRS can also arrange home safety visits to cover safety advice and discuss any personal concerns that you might have. Free home fire safety visits are available for to anyone who:

- **is aged 70 or over**
- **is living with dementia**
- **has a long term health condition**
- **has young children or is pregnant**
- **is a smoker**

These visits may also help householders identify safe escape routes (for both residents and visitors) and fire avoidance tactics.

For general fire prevention tips especially in hotter weather we would recommend the following :-

In the Garden and Outdoors

- **Avoid open fires and BBQs:** Never light bonfires, campfires, or disposable barbecues in dry grassy areas, parks, or woodlands.
- **Safe Grilling:** If you barbecue at home, place it on a flat, non-flammable surface (like concrete or bare soil) well away from sheds, fences, trees, and overhanging branches.
- **Dispose of Ash Correctly:** Let barbecue coals and fire pit ashes cool completely before emptying them onto bare garden soil. Never put hot ashes in a plastic wheelie bin.
- **Discard Litter:** Take all glass bottles and litter home. Sunlight shining through discarded glass can easily start large grass fires.
- **Extinguish Cigarettes:** Make sure cigarettes are completely out before disposal. Never throw them out of car windows, as roadside verges can catch fire in seconds.

Around the House

- **Clear Defensible Space:** Create a safety zone by clearing dead leaves, dry branches, and overgrown foliage from around the perimeter of your house, outbuildings, and gutters.
- **Manage Combustibles:** Move firewood, garden chemicals, and petrol cans away from direct sunlight and away from the walls of your house.
- **Check Electricals:** Hot weather causes electrical cables and appliances to deteriorate faster. Do not overload sockets, and make sure cooling fans and air conditioning units are clean and not blocked.
- **Test Smoke Alarms:** Use the warm weather as a reminder to test your smoke and fire alarms to ensure they are fully operational.

On the Road

- **Vehicle Maintenance:** Ensure your car's coolant and oil levels are topped up to prevent the engine from overheating.
- **Battery Safety:** Do not leave battery-powered devices (like phones, e-cigarettes, or power banks) exposed to direct sunlight or in parked cars where they can overheat and become a fire risk.

The underlying advice in the event of a fire is NOT to take any personal risk and get away from the flames and call 999

Crime

Parishioners who find themselves to be the subject of unwelcome attention they should promptly report this to Kent Police. Dial **999** for emergencies (immediate danger or a crime in progress). For non-emergencies, call **101** or submit a report through the [Kent Police Online Reporting](#) service.

On such occasions, it is essential to make notes of useful information, such as suspects' descriptions, car registration numbers etc. Dashcam, doorbell and security camera footage together with photographs may be highly useful to the police.

Crime prevention

The following are key principles of crime prevention

1. **Target Hardening:** Making physical properties and objects much harder for an offender to access, such as installing robust locks, heavy-duty doors, post code marking and secure safes.
2. **Target Removal:** Concealing or removing potential targets entirely (e.g., parking a car in a garage or keeping valuables out of plain view). In addition use of Faraday pouches for keys that can remotely unlock your car.
3. **Reducing the Means:**
Securing everyday items that could be used to commit a crime, such as locking away ladders, tools, or building materials that could aid a break-in.
4. **Reducing the Pay-Off:** Decreasing the profit an offender can make if a crime succeeds. This includes security marking property, tagging retail items, or securely registering valuables.
5. **Surveillance:** Increasing natural or technical observation to ensure criminals feel witnessed, such as installing quality CCTV, utilizing alarms, or keeping hedges low.
6. **Increasing the Chances of Being Caught:** Implementing deterrents designed specifically to identify and catch offenders in the act or after the fact, such as tracking devices, and effective lighting.
7. **Deflecting Offenders:** Diverting the energy and effort of offenders into other lawful activities, or utilizing tactics (like timer switches on lights) to make homes and businesses look occupied.

Regular advice can be accessed by joining the My Community Voice app. The Parish Magazine publishes helpful monthly advice from the parish's Neighbourhood Watch coordinator.

Warnings, guidance and advice about scams and fraud can be accessed from My Community Voice, by joining the alerts from Which?, and by consulting Citizens Advice

Friends and Family & Neighbours

As already noted, the Council is acutely aware that not all parishioners make use of the Internet for accessing advice, receiving notifications or reporting incidents. The Council is not in a position to support such parishioners individually, and must therefore promote and invite the involvement of those around these parishioners.

We would recommend that all Parishioners obtain and complete the Age UK's Life Book. The ***LifeBook*** is a handy way of recording the practical details of your life, from who insures your car to where you keep important documents. It's also a way of ensuring your loved ones have the details they need if they have to sort something out on your behalf. It is divided into sections to help you organize your information : personal details, life contacts, financial documents, possessions and final wishes. ***Copies can be downloaded from Ageuk.org.uk or can be ordered directly from Advice Line 0800 678 1602***