



Emergency Plan

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED FEBRUARY 2024

NEXT REVIEW FEBRUARY 2026

This plan sets out how Totnes Town Council is likely to respond to various emergencies that the town and community might face.

Introduction

This Plan has been developed to complement the overall risk arrangements, help maintain critical services during and after any major disruption and promote recovery. The Council is often the most accessible tier of local government and has a role as a community leader, and as such would have a key role in helping the Town deal with and recover from a major emergency. The statutory responsibility lies with Devon County Council in conjunction with various other agencies, including the emergency services and South Hams District Council. The Town Council will support the principal authorities in implementing their Major Emergency Plan and make its resources available to them. The Devon Emergency Planning Service plans can be found at these links:

Response Plan - <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/DEPS%20Response%20and%20Recovery%20Plan%20Parts%201%20and%202.pdf>

Recovery Plan - <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/DEPS%20Response%20and%20Recovery%20Plan%20Parts%203%20and%204.pdf>

Objectives

The prime objective for this document is to identify the resources that are available within the town to support the Emergency Services and Principal authorities. The second objective is to assist other agencies to promote the importance of local emergency planning and to identify means of disseminating relevant information to householders and businesses.

Who to Contact

In the case of an emergency the first point of contact is 999. If the emergency is related to a need for access to one of the Town Council buildings, i.e. the Civic Hall or the Guildhall then the points of contact are as follows:

1. The Mayor – postholder changes annually, contact information available on the Town Council website, see <https://www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk/your-council/your-councillors/>
2. The Town Clerk – current postholder Catherine Marlton. Emergency contact information Work – 01803 862147
Home – REDACTED

Out of office hours, the Clerk (or a member of the management team) will contact officers as required. On discovering or being advised of a disaster which might affect business continuity or a major civil emergency, the member of staff will contact the Town Clerk and/or the Mayor.

The Town Clerk will:

- Ensure all members of staff are contacted, advised of the situation and either put on standby or advised of the action required.
- Convene any necessary meetings of staff and/or Members.
- Consider staff welfare issues and take necessary action.
- Advise statutory authorities (e.g. emergency services, HSE etc) and insurance company as necessary.
- Advise the Mayor by phone where possible.

- Advise other Councillors by e-mail.

Communications Keeping residents, local community groups and businesses informed

As appropriate, the Town Council will use its website, social media channels, local media, and relevant email lists to keep residents, local community groups, and businesses regularly informed during a major emergency. This includes where there are weather related issues (for example, when the MET office has issued a red warning for snow, ice, flooding, storms, extreme heat):

- www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk - the website has a banner facility to enable very important messages to stand out on the homepage.
- Facebook, Instagram, X. Please note, Totnes Town Council will also share information into town-wide Facebook group pages, such as The Totnes Post and Totnesians, where appropriate to maximise reach.
- The Town Council holds an email directory of high street businesses in town, which can be used if appropriate to send direct information.
- Councillors will share information directly to their contacts within local community groups.
- If appropriate, information will also be shared via broadcast and digital media including Devon Live, BBC Spotlight, BBC Radio Devon, ITV Westcountry, and South Hams Today.

The Town Mayor and/or Town Clerk are designated as media spokespeople. All interviews with the media should be carried out by them to ensure message consistency.

The Council's Communications Strategy has more detail, including a crisis communications cascade.

Community Preparedness

Link councillors and councillor representatives on outside bodies to liaise with local community organisations to see what processes are in place to identify and support vulnerable people/those in need.

Activating emergency access to the Guildhall or Civic Hall

Access will be granted to the Guildhall or Civic Hall by the Town Clerk or Mayor in the case of an absolute emergency and assuming that a keyholder can get to the building without risk to their safety and remain on site to provide the supervision and security as required.

Defibrillators

The Town Council owns and maintains two defibrillators in the town – outside the Royal Seven Stars Hotel at the bottom of Fore Street and outside the Visitor Information Point at the Civic Hall on the Market Square. Other units are available in the town but community groups need to ensure these are registered and accredited to ensure that the caller can be signposted to the nearest working unit.

Snow and Ice

The Town Council subscribes to Met Office weather updates. In the event of a red alert for snow the Town Council will:

- cancel all public meetings;
- advise staff to remain at home rather than travelling into the office;
- post updates on the website and social media with the latest advice from specialist agencies.

In the event of an amber weather warning or unexpected snowfall the Town Clerk has delegated authority to implement the above actions on a discretionary basis. Councillors and members of staff should not take any risks to travel into the office in the event of severe weather.

If any member of the community wishes to participate in the Snow Warden Scheme please contact the Town Council on 01803 862 147. Further information on the role and responsibilities are found at the following link -

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/communities/opportunities/snow-warden-scheme>

Assistance for Rough Sleepers during cold weather - The Town Council website has contact details for South Hams District Council to get assistance for those living on the streets in cold weather at this link –

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/housing/housing-support/homelessness/rough-sleepers>

Flooding

The Environment Agency has installed new flood defences to high risk areas of the town. They have volunteers to manually open and close the gates based on alerts they send out directly.

The Town Council is subscribed to Environment Agency updates and Met Office severe weather warnings and will publish these on social media to inform the community.

Residents and business owners are encouraged to register for updates on flooding directly at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

Alternatively you can register your details or cancel your account by calling Floodline:
Telephone: 0345 988 1188, 24-hour service

For any serious flooding, or where lives are at risk, please call the emergency services by dialling 999.

Flooding in the road that has been caused by blocked drains or gullies can be reported to Devon County Council Highways on their website.

Pandemic

The Town Council subscribes to NHS and Public Health England updates and in the event of a pandemic will:

- cancel all public meetings;
- advise staff to remain at home rather than travelling into the office;
- post updates on the website and social media with the latest advice from specialist agencies.
- act as a co-ordinator for various community groups who are able to offer practical assistance.

Useful Links

South Hams District Council Emergency Planning information

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/environment-and-nuisance/emergency-planning-and-response/what-councils-role>

Devon Emergency Planning Partnership information

<https://www.depp.org.uk/>