

Town & Parish Council 'Emergency Planning' Conference

22 February 2017
Conference Report

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you to everyone who attended our 26th Town & Parish Council Conference. I am pleased that 80 town / parish council delegates representing 43 Town / Parish Councils attended.

The event was designed in response to your feedback and focussed on 'Emergency Planning'. The event objectives included:

- How to plan for an emergency
- An introduction to writing an emergency plan
- Responding to an emergency and what is involved

This post conference report includes a summary of the presentation, your questions and our responses and a summary of your feedback. The presentations used at the Conference are available to view on the [website](#).

The Conference focused on the importance of parishes having an emergency plan and a network of response volunteers in place in the context of the recent gas outage which affected Ampthill, Maulden and Clophill. Delegates were taken through the emergency plan template and encouraged to complete with their parishes. Completed plans should be sent to Mark Conway, the Council's Emergency Planning Manager.

Prior to the Conference, delegates were able to visit a number of display stands to obtain information about the Cheering Volunteering Awards, road safety awareness; waste reduction and volunteering and funding opportunities. I was very pleased to read your very positive comments about this pre-event activity.

I hope you find this report useful and will share it amongst your councillors. We welcome and value your participation and look forward to further engagement opportunities that will take place with you in 2017.



Councillor Tracey Stock

Deputy Executive Member, Health and Stronger Communities
Central Bedfordshire Council

INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY PLANNING

Risks

Mark described the risks of an emergency occurring in Central Bedfordshire and categorised these as 'very high' or 'high'.

'Very high' risks include:

- Pandemic Human Disease
- Total failure of GB' National Electricity Transmission Network
- Threats e.g. Terrorism

High risks include

- Flooding.
- Severe effusive (gas rich) Volcanic eruption overseas
- Local accident involving transport of hazardous chemicals.
- Fuel disruption due to industrial action

Definition of an emergency

The definition of an emergency is "an event or situation that threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, or to the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK".

Council's responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Council in an emergency are defined under the Civil Contingencies Act. As a Category 1 Responder the Council is required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring;
- put in place emergency plans;
- put in place business continuity management arrangements;
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

Partnership

Mark explained the partnership arrangement between all emergency responders, including the voluntary and community sector. This is the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF).

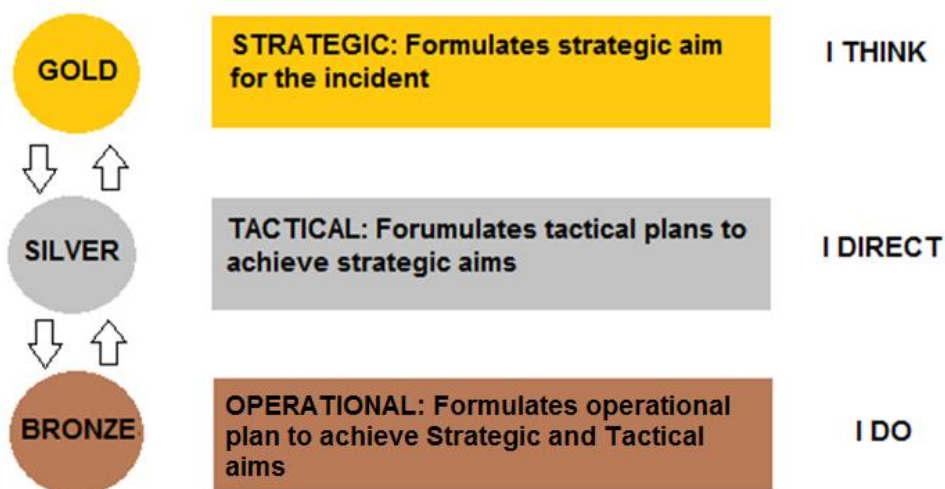
www.bedfordshireprepared.org.uk

BLRF helps to write emergency plans, run exercises and deliver training on a multi-agency basis.

BLEVEC is the partnership for community volunteers who help in emergency planning.

Command and Control in an emergency

Mark emphasised the importance of a clear structure to over see, manage and direct in an emergency. There are clear roles and these are organised as follows:



Town / parish councils should be involved at the Silver and Bronze level.

LESSONS LEARNT

Mark explained that a full 'debrief' had taken place to learn lessons from the recent gas outage that affected communities in Ampthill, Clophill and Maulden. A summary is as follows:

- Town and parish councils and CBC should engage and work together as soon as possible in an incident, linking into to the CBC Duty Officer and possible attendance at the Emergency Control Centre.
- Town and Parish Councils have a big role to play in communicating with their communities through local media – Door to door, Facebook Groups etc.
- Local knowledge is very helpful in the response and having this available can really make a big difference to how we respond.
- Having a Town / Parish Council rep as part of the emergency WhatsApp Group would aid communications.
- Having town and parish council reps as part of the local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) would improve the response and ensure training and ongoing engagement is provided to members
- CBC need better 24/7 emergency contact details for town and parish councils

THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Volunteers from Stotfold, Ampthill and Wilstead talked about their experiences in helping in an emergency. Cllr Mark Smith from Ampthill Town Council emphasised the value of social media to communicate quickly with

residents and other agencies. Cllr Smith also felt that local knowledge and working in partnership in order to help more vulnerable residents was vital.

Cllr David Lloyd from Wilstead explained how local volunteers had helped to identify local risks and hazards and that their emergency plan is a 'living' document and frequently updated. He advised that local communities have a wealth of skills at hand that can be utilised to help in emergency situations.

Cllr Luigi Simone from Stotfold indicated that localised flooding is a key risk in the town. Cllr Simone emphasised the importance of knowing local hazards and risks, categorising them and developing a plan to combat the problems. He explained that local businesses are willing to get involved and provide aid. He explained that it has provided a focus on planning for an emergency and has helped to draw the community together and capitalise on local knowledge particularly about vulnerable residents.

CREATING YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

GROUP EXERCISE

The second half of the Conference focused on what is involved in producing an Emergency Plan and managing a response in an emergency situation. Mark guided delegates through each main section of the emergency plan template enabling delegates to start a plan for their parish. The template plan and guidance is available using the links below:

Template community emergency plan -

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/9hygbsvzsi0jmafj70942w0w9did93jl>

Guidance document to help you complete the template -

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/ah3d2f40200xy8rkd6uss0mntxolusa8>

Completed example -

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/53mbzu0ppz0u8s9wpbj0mgw7y08v9hdv>

Responding to an Emergency

Andrew Stewart outlined an emergency situation scenario and posed a number of questions for delegates to demonstrate how they would respond in an emergency. *Each table gave a response to one of the questions asked and this has been captured below:*

Scenario

- The water supply in your town / parish has suddenly ceased. Around 80% of the area is affected.
- After some investigation it is discovered that the gas supply has also gone off directly affecting 70% of households.
- The utility companies are currently investigating, but it looks as if a burst water main has ruptured a medium pressure gas main.

- The water supply should be restored within 2 days, but the gas supply could take up to 5 days to restore. Multi-agency command and control is currently being activated.
- People need to be careful not to overload the electricity network with the use of electric heaters as this could easily overload and blow the sub-stations causing widespread power outages.
- It's freezing temperatures and forecast around -2 degrees at night over the next week. Snow is forecast for a few days time.

Questions

What would your first actions be as the Town/Parish Council?

- *Contact the Emergency Duty Officer at CBC*
- *Contact Emergency services*
- *Activate local teams*
- *Make vulnerable residents safe*

Note: Follow the activation chart and template actions card in the template plan.

What places in your area could you open up as Assistance Centres for people to attend for information and advice?

- *A suitable building in the centre of the village / town*
- *Local residents with facilities could help / open up rooms etc.*
- *Community or village hall*

Where should an onsite Command Centre for the responders be located?

- *In a building well known and accessible e.g. town / village centre*
- *A community / village hall.*
- *Suitable parking facilities nearby.*

Who in your area could help? What local skills, knowledge and equipment do you have available to assist in the response?

- *Local farmers and other professionals*
- *People with access to e.g. minibuses.*

Note: Local resources are very important and the Council and emergency services do not necessarily know about these, but communities do – the response will always be better working together.

You are approached by the Council and the utility companies to help get local messages out – how could you do this and what methods would you use?

- *Local paper / radio*
- *Community watch groups*
- *Door knocking*
- *Social media –Facebook Pages*
- *Community webpages*

What else could you help with in the response using your local knowledge and skills?

- *Liaise with golf and other sports clubs with pavilions / buildings and hotels or other buildings with accommodation.*
- *Looking after pets*
- *Organising temporary supplies for the Local Assistance Centres and ensuring areas of privacy within Assistance Centres.*

Mark requested that completed plans be emailed to emergency@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

QUESTIONS

A number of questions were asked following the presentations and also submitted on the feedback forms. Answers to both sets of questions have been collated and are listed below.

Questions at the Conference

Cllr Peter Gendell (?) Woburn PC

Q1: How does the work of firefighters responding to an emergency interact with the Control and Command model.

A1: The Fire Service are linked into every level in the command structure at Strategic, Tactical and Operational levels. We use the JESIP Model in response – see <http://www.jesip.org.uk/home>

Cllr Jane Marner Blunham PC

Q2: There have been examples of colleagues giving treatment at an emergency who have then been sued. How is this covered?

A2: All staff and volunteers involved in responding to an emergency are covered by insurance from the tasking body. The [Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015](#) covers good Samaritan acts. More can be read about this here - <https://www.medicalprotection.org/uk/for-members/news/news/2015/06/18/new-legal-test-for-good-samaritan-acts>

Q3: Do health centres and schools have the ability to send text messages to all their patients / pupils giving notice of the emergency?

A3. This is dependent on the school and health centre and the arrangements they have in place. Most schools do now operate a text message alert system and often use Parent Alert - <http://www.parentalert.in/>

Q4 Why is this important?

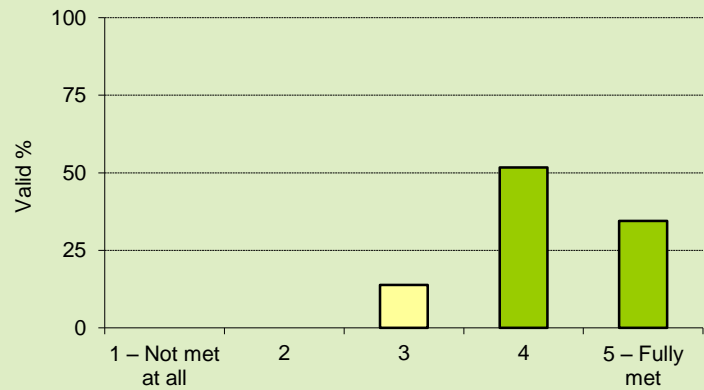
A4. It is important that towns and parishes are aware of risks and have up to date emergency plans in place in order to work with the Council and emergency services to respond effectively and safely to emergencies that could occur.

FEEDBACK ON THE CONFERENCE

Q1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not met and 5 being fully met, please tell us how you feel this event was in meeting the follow objectives

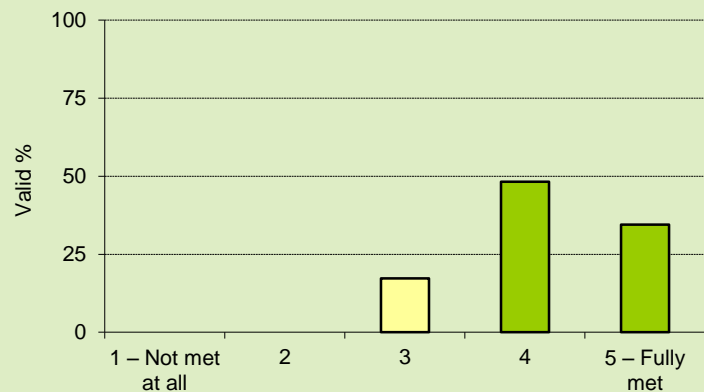
1a. How to plan for an emergency

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	4	13	14
4	15	50	52
5 – Fully met	10	33	34
Total	29	97	



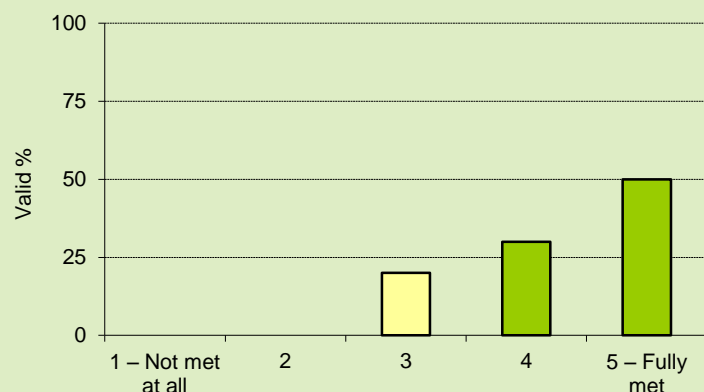
1b. Responding to an emergency and what is involved

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	5	17	17
4	14	47	48
5 – Fully met	10	33	34
Total	29	97	100



1c. An introduction to writing an emergency plan

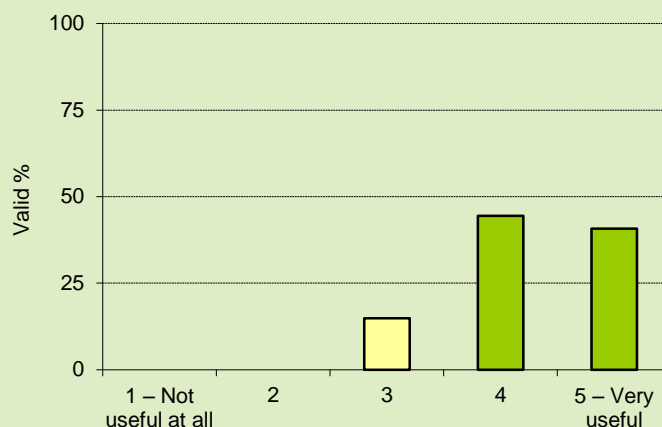
	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	6	20	20
4	9	30	30
5 – Fully met	15	50	50
Total	30	100	100



Q2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not useful and 5 being very useful, please tell us what you thought about the following aspects of this event.

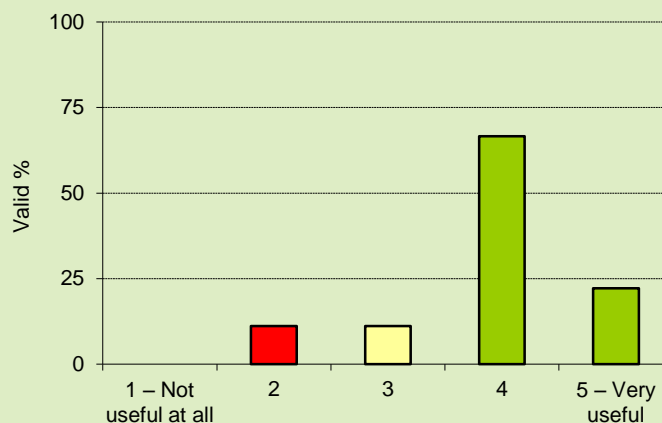
2a. Introduction to emergency management

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	4	13	15
4	12	40	44
5 – Very useful	11	37	41
Total	27	90	100



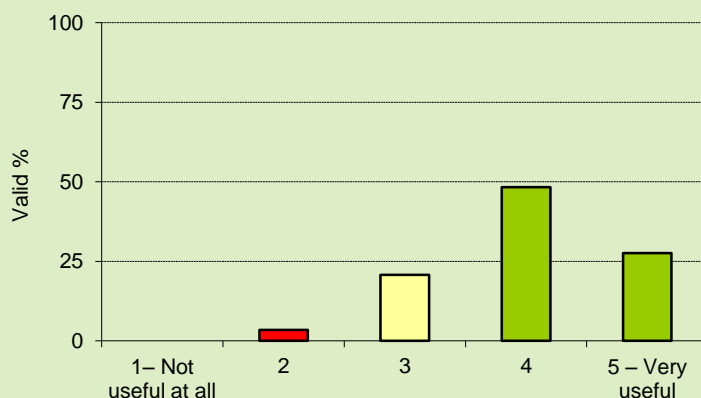
2b. Lessons learnt

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	3	10	11
3	3	10	11
4	18	60	67
5 – Very useful	6	20	22
Total	30	100	111



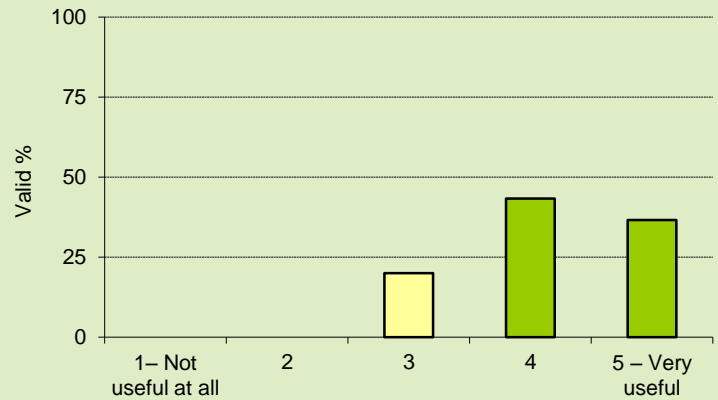
2c. The community response

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	1	3	3
3	6	20	21
4	14	47	48
5 – Very useful	8	27	28
Total	29	97	100



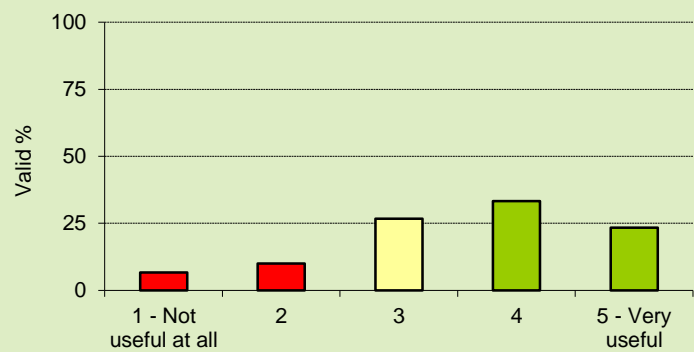
2d. Creating your emergency plan

	Count	%	Valid %
1- Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	6	20	20
4	13	43	43
5 - Very useful	11	37	37
Total	30	100	100



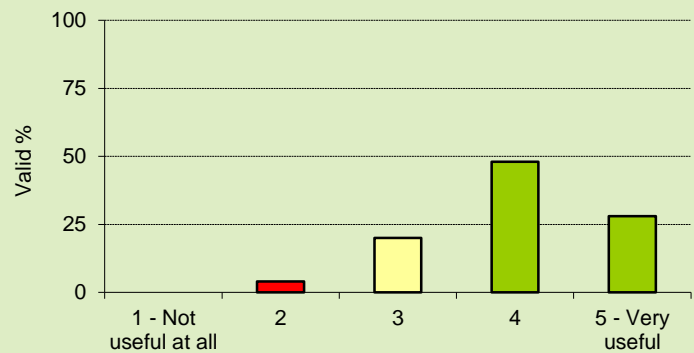
2e. Group exercise

	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Not useful at all	2	7	7
2	3	10	10
3	8	27	27
4	10	33	33
5 - Very useful	7	23	23
Total	30	100	100



2f. Feedback / next steps

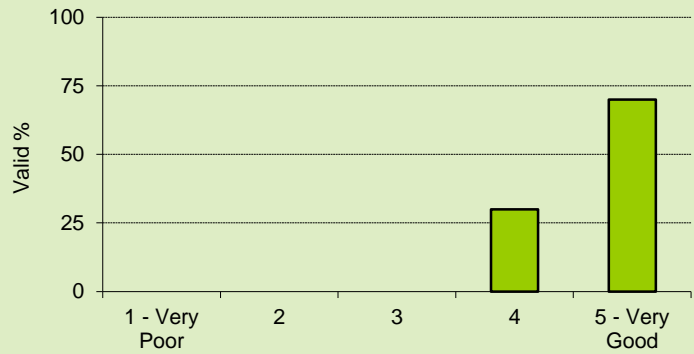
	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	1	3	4
3	5	17	20
4	12	40	48
5 - Very useful	7	23	28
Total	25	83	100



Q3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, please tell us what you thought about the organisation of the event.

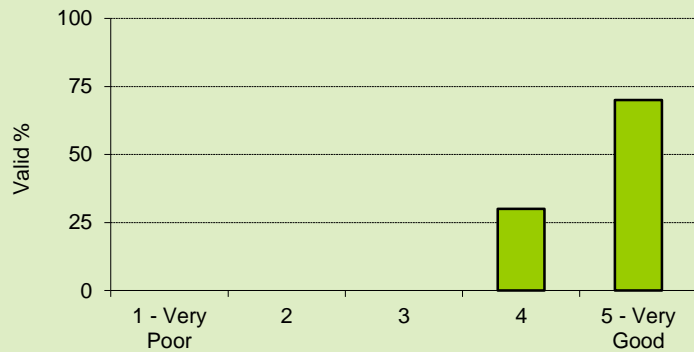
3a. Booking a place

	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Very Poor	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	9	30	30
5 - Very Good	21	70	70
Total	30	100	100



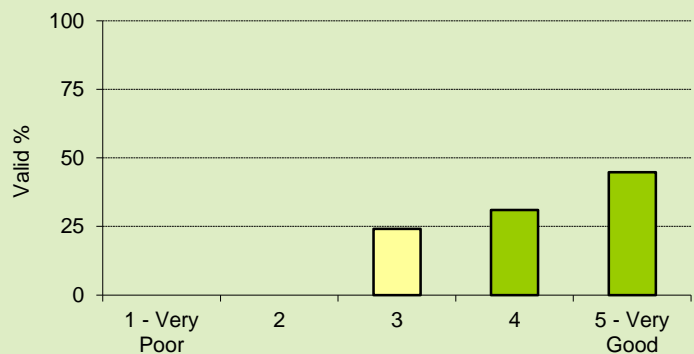
3b. Venue

	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Very Poor	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	9	30	30
5 - Very Good	21	70	70
Total	30	100	100



3c. Catering

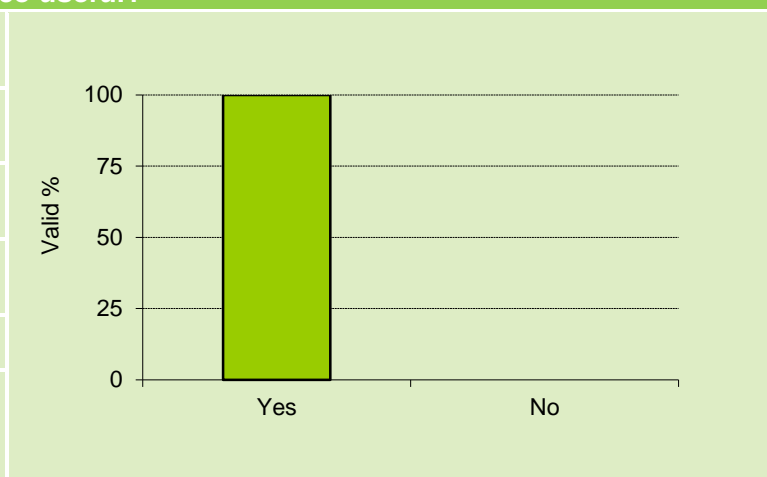
	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Very Poor	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	7	23	24
4	9	30	31
5 - Very Good	13	43	45
Total	29	97	100



Q4. Please tell us what you thought about the following aspects of this event.

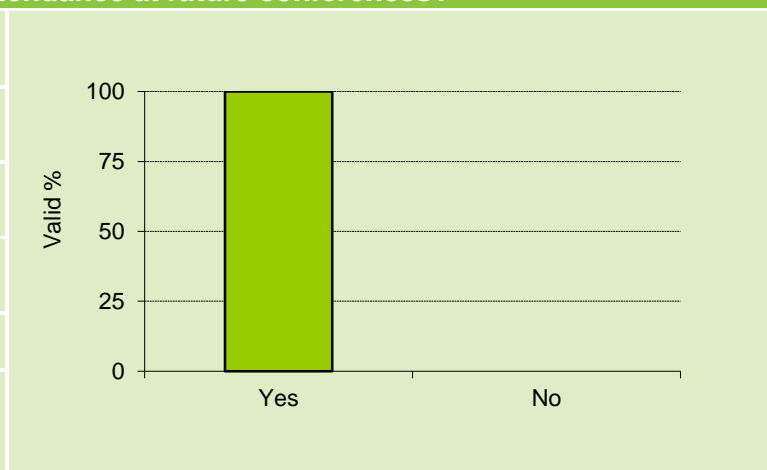
4a. Did you find this conference useful?

	Count	%	Valid %
Yes	24	80	100
No	0	0	0
Total	24	80	100
Missing	6	20	
Total	30	100	



4b. Would you recommend attendance at future conferences?

	Count	%	Valid %
Yes	25	83	100
No	0	0	0
Total	25	83	100
Missing	5	17	
Total	30	100	



What other individuals, groups or organisations would you like to see at future events?

Clophill Parish Council	Invite more than just PC's, e.g. community care groups and / or Neighbourhood Watch.
Sandy Town Council	The way the voluntary sector could help parishes and towns more, the way churches could help more – helpful to parishes.
Shefford Town Council	Fire service (local stations), ambulance and police.
Husborne Crawley Parish Council	Fire, police and ambulance service.
Unknown	Emergency responders, someone with experience of dealing with real emergencies.
Slip End Parish Council	Emergency services
Cllr Susan Goodchild	Voluntary sector – a good opportunity for the voluntary sector to network.

Please use the space below to make any further comments specific to the topic discussed this evening.

Further comments:

Clophill Parish Council	Timekeeping! At times pace was a little slow (the form was pretty self-explanatory to fill in and didn't need 10 minutes of debate). Really well run otherwise – good variety of speakers and all were informative and engaging. Very impressed – have been to less well run professional conferences. *but, overdependence on telecoms and power for communications in emergency. No discernable 'fail to safe' plan.
Sandy Town Council	Microphone system much better.
Amphill Town Council	Very well put together. Hopefully you get plans from all communities.
Langford Parish Council	Liked the stalls with information in the foyer, good idea and informative.
Steppingley Parish Council	It was very informative, but the second half did seem very drawn out. We could have moved quicker through the steps. I think when I see the guidelines it will become clearer. Thank you for taking the time.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	The evening content was useful, however the group exercise was less productive as this topic needs to be discussed within the parish/town councils and local organisations.
Slip End Parish Council	Good but long evening.
Cllr Susan Goodchild	I would like to thanks everyone involved with the planning of the Town and Parish Conference. Extremely inclusive event.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your attendance and participation at this conference. We have listened to your feedback and will take this into account when planning future Conferences.

In addition, you have given suggestions for future agenda items and we will endeavor to respond to this.

We will contact you as soon as possible with details of the next event. In the meantime, please contact Peter Fraser or me if you have any further comments or suggestions: peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Councillor Tracey Stock

Deputy Executive Member, Health and Stronger Communities
Central Bedfordshire Council

A full copy of this report and the workshop presentations can be found on the Council's website:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/councillors/conferences.aspx>