

NORTHUMBERLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

NIGEL FISHER – EMERGENCY REST CENTRES IN VILLAGE HALLS

Emergencies do happen and the Northumberland County Council have plans in place on how they are going to be dealt with. To assess the risk an annual risk assessment is done for the whole of Northumberland. This takes into consideration risks: such as Flooding, Weather, Transport (air, road and rail), and industrial plants (eg Egger), as well as other risks. You can see the current Risk Register on the County Council Website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=304>

Part of the response plans has to be an Evacuation Plan which would have to be carried out in an emergency and this would require availability of premises for use as temporary Reception / Rest Centres to provide safe havens for evacuees.

Away from the urban areas the Northumberland County Council are looking for Village Halls to be available as possible Emergency Rest Centres.

Example – In 2009 in Rothbury, following loss of gas and then electricity supplies, the Jubilee Hall in Rothbury was used as an Emergency Reception Centre and Dr Tomlinson School was established as a Rest Centre during the week of the disruption. This provided a place of safety where anyone affected by the conditions could be housed.

If your village hall would like to register to be an Emergency Rest Centre there are guidance documents on the County Council web site <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=304>

No village hall is too small. Each has the potential to be used.

The County Council do not like to use Primary / First Schools – due to size of the furniture being wrong for adult care; in some cases they may use them as temporary Reception Centres before moving evacuees to more suitable locations.

If your Hall is taken over – the guarantee is that it will be for no more than 48 hours.

The service will bring their own equipment: beds, sleeping bags, fleecy blankets.

They would also look for local volunteers to help run the Centre.

The Service will need contact numbers of key-holders who would be available to open premises at short notice

When a Hall is taken over :

- All expenses are covered
- Insurance is taken out to cover public liability and all insurance risks
- Any damage will be repaired
- Any food used will be replaced
- The service will take away all waste.

Pets are allowed at the centres at the discretion of the manager/staff.

If your Hall wishes to apply to become listed as an Emergency Centre – there is a form to complete which requires basic details of the Hall – Louise Currie has copies of the form.

If your application is accepted – officers will attend to take photographs etc. The agreement will be re-confirmed once per annum.

The service operates and is available 365 days each year and 24 hours each day.