

The work of the Community Recovery Groups

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following the Denbighshire Emergency Recovery Plan two separate Community Recovery Groups (CRG) were immediately established under the management of the Community Engagement Manager, one for St Asaph and one for Ruthin.
- 1.2 The remit of both groups is to reflect community concerns, feelings and initiatives and bring these to the attention of the Corporate Recovery Group. It also has an important role in informing the wider community of discussions and progress and engaging with the community in the recovery process.
- 1.3 Each CRG was supported by a Corporate Director in order that issues could be dealt with as a matter of urgency and actions / progress reported to the Corporate Recovery Group.

2.0 St Asaph Recovery Group

- 2.1 An urgent meeting of this CRG was convened immediately following the emergency with key representatives from the community (City Council, British Red Cross, St Asaph Rotary, DVSC, the Cathedral) as well as key personnel from DCC, NW Police and Natural Resources Wales (NRW and was the Environment Agency). This CRG has met regularly since November with the membership strengthened by 9 residents directly affected by the floods who represent various areas of St Asaph.
- 2.2 Key concerns and issues raised and resolved following the initial flooding:
 - Environmental issues involving the location of skips and the clearing up operation; establishment of the mobile advice centre and publicising its location and support available.
 - Establishment of a Mayoral Fund under the management of the City Council. This fund currently (April 2013) stands at £165k and is expected to increase to £175k in the near future. The first distribution has already taken place and the second phased distribution to residents is due in May.
 - Re location of affected residents and feedback on the use of the Robin Hood Camp in Rhyl.
 - Decisions taken in respect of dealing with the huge task of co-ordinating the tonnage of donated items of varying quality. This became a huge headache for all agencies and was finally resolved with the voluntary sector (and in particular DVSC and

its team of Young Dragons) leading on its eventual disposal with the accrued monies raised donated to the two Mayoral Funds.

- Co-ordinating the difficult task of establishing channels of communication with the re-housed residents. A special edition of City Times with key information proved invaluable and the proactive approach of the City Council became a key factor using its established networks.
- Re-assurance from the police that patrols were deterring any potential looting and rogue traders. NW Police and DCC collaborated in providing mobile CCTV in strategic positions.
- Promoting and supporting a series of drop-in sessions arranged by NRW /DCC.

2.3 Key concerns emerging months after the initial flooding:

- The CRG has been instrumental in recognising that there are now health and welfare issues emerging where many residents are suffering from feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety. Through the auspices of the Cathedral and with the support of key agencies the first Welfare Drop-in has taken place concentrating on supporting those residents feeling vulnerable and isolated with flyers distributed to every affected property in St Asaph and Rhuddlan. Another 'Drop-in' is being arranged for a Saturday morning at the school in lower St Asaph.
- Residents are becoming dismayed at the difficulties in re-insuring their properties. Many are experiencing a significant increase in their premium or a refusal to insure the property. Although this issue is a national rather than just a Denbighshire issue, it has been highlighted to both the Health and Welfare Group and the Corporate Recovery Group.
- Residents are obviously concerned at a potential re-occurrence of the events of the 26 - 27 November and want some reassurance. A number of CRG residents and the City Council have been nominated to represent the wider Group in a briefing session arranged by the Corporate Director (Economic & Community Ambition) and NRW.

2.4 This CRG will continue to meet regularly in order to maintain links with community representatives and ensure the monitoring of emerging health, financial and welfare issues.

3.0 Ruthin Recovery Group

3.1 An urgent meeting was convened the day after the floods in Ruthin with key agencies represented along with the Town Council. This was a key Group for disseminating information and co-ordinating urgent issues emerging from affected residents.

- 3.2 The CRG consists of representatives from DCC, Town Council, NRW, Tai Clwyd, NW Police, Glasdir Residents Association, Taylor Wimpey and DVSC and still meets on a regular basis.
- 3.3 Key concerns and issues raised and resolved following the initial flooding:
- The Corporate Director (Economic & Community Ambition), Corporate Director (Modernisation & Wellbeing) and Community Engagement Manager attended a Ruthin Town Council open meeting immediately after the flood to respond to residents and councillors' concerns.
 - It was identified that there was an immediate need to have a representative voice from the Glasdir estate to engage with the key agencies resulting in the establishment of a Glasdir Residents Association.
 - Environmental issues involving the location of skips and the clearing up operation; establishment of the mobile advice centre and publicising its location and support available.
 - Establishment of a Mayoral Fund under the management of the Town Council. This fund currently (April 2013) stands at £35k with the first distribution already completed and second phased distribution currently in place.
 - Re-assurance from the police that patrols were deterring any potential looting and rogue traders. NW Police and DCC collaborated in providing mobile CCTV in a strategic position.
 - Promoting and supporting a series of drop-in sessions arranged by NRW /DCC
 - Key concern was the need for reassurance that all measures were being taken to reduce the risk of a re-occurrence.
- 3.4 Key concerns emerging months after the initial flooding:
- Residents still have concerns as to any future likelihood of flooding. In order that a regular dialogue exists between DCC / NRW and the Glasdir Residents Association a separate liaison group was formed to feedback on the progress of various reports on the background to the floods. There was also an understandable anger from residents as to the cause of the flood.
 - The CRG regularly discuss any welfare needs emerging, however perhaps due to the demographic nature of the Glasdir residents (fewer elderly people living alone) – the same welfare needs as St Asaph residents (isolation, depression and other health concerns) have not yet materialised. The establishment of a Welfare Drop-in has therefore not been seen by the CRG as necessary – although there is an open

offer to arrange such an event. The Town Council and Glasdir Residents Association are however considering a family fun event.

- The CRG however, in mindful that there will be significant financial pressures on the young families at Glasdir emerging - particularly as two- year introductory mortgage deals are nearing their end and the inevitable high insurance premiums. These issues are being monitored and fed to both the Health & Welfare Group and the Corporate Recovery Group.

3.5 The CRG may in the near future evolve into a more informal forum

4.0 Big Lottery Fund Application

A bid to the above People and Places Panel was submitted by DVSC on behalf of a third sector consortium comprising of DVSC, Vale of Clwyd MIND, Age Concern, Credit Union, Benefits Advice Shop and Care and Repair. This 'Denbighshire Support for Flood Victims' bid has been successful and will have a £141k allocation from the Big Lottery to support various projects from the consortia over a two year period. It will:

- Give people access to advice services, counselling and emotional support to enable them to meet the challenges of everyday life
- Help people to remain as independent as possible in comfort, safety, warmth and security in their own homes by providing small repairs and maintenance, adaptations and gardening services to those affected by flooding to allow them to return to their homes.
- Provide information, advice and support, assist with grant claims and applications to local charities for household items and furniture, assist clients with deposits for tenancies and support with rehoming. Provide low cost/interest free loans to allow people to return to their homes
- To provide advocacy services and welfare advice with issues around housing benefits and council tax and secure benefit payments for people in temporary accommodation.

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