

Towns and villages urged to check on emergency plans

With winter upon us, local villages and towns are reminded about the importance of making sure their community emergency plans are up-to-date.

Steve Clare, East Sussex County Council emergency planning officer, said: "Severe weather emergencies, flu epidemics, as well as the risks to health caused by cold weather, are much more likely this time of year, so we are advising everyone with a community resilience plan to make sure it is up to date.

"Many East Sussex Communities still do not have a Community Resilience plan. These are simple but can be vital, particularly in winter when communities may be cut off or the emergency services are stretched."

The East Sussex Community Resilience Conference learnt that Community Plans had been activated for a number of events over the last year including burst water mains and smoke plumes.

A good community action plan assesses the local risks such as roads vulnerable

to flooding, as well as infrastructure like electricity substations and sewage works. It also identifies where people can be vulnerable such as care homes.

The key part is the Action Plan, identifying what to do and who does it - and drawing up a list of useful resources such as licensed chainsaw operators and four wheel drive volunteer drivers who can be called on to help in a specific emergency.

The National Gas Emergency Network on 0800 111 999 aims to send an engineer to all uncontrolled gas escapes within one hour.

Contact 0800 085 1674 or visit www.warmeastsussex.org.uk for a Winter Home Check from East Sussex County Council.

To register for the free Sussex cold alert service contact 01273 481692 or visit www.coldalert.info.

For more information contact the East Sussex Emergency Planning team on 01323 747090, or email emergency.planning@eastsussex.gov.uk.