

Willoughby Flood Action Plan - Part 1

July 2026

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Introduction

A number of residents volunteered to become flood wardens and to develop a new flood action plan in a community survey in July 2022. The Flood Action Group (FLAG) was established and held its first meeting in February 2023. Since then a great deal of work has been carried out by volunteers in the parish, in collaboration with Warwickshire County Council, to mitigate the impact of flooding in Willoughby.

As a result of the work done over the past three years and described in Part 2. of the Flood Action Plan, Willoughby has not flooded for eighteen months. This has been an outstanding achievement as, historically, the village has regularly flooded during persistent heavy rain and severe thunderstorms.

The work of everyone who has contributed deserves our appreciation and thanks and hopefully residents will, over time, find the environment in Willoughby significantly improved as a result of their actions.

Purpose of the Flood Action Plan

Part 1 provides information about

1. the main causes of flooding in Willoughby and the potential impact on roads and properties
2. the responsibilities of residents, designated flood wardens and other agencies when flooding is imminent or occurring
3. emergency centres/places of safety
4. communication amongst flood wardens and with residents, organisations in the village and other agencies

Part 2 provides information about

1. measures taken to reduce the impact of flood events
2. adequacy of the sewerage system

1. Main causes of flooding in Willoughby and the potential impact

Pluvial – flooding due to excess rainfall on the catchment area. In Willoughby, this is the most frequent cause of flooding. Prolonged heavy rainfall over several days will result in the Willoughby Brook overtopping its banks causing flooding to the lower part of Main Street. Restrictions caused by culverts and bridges increase this effect. Thunderstorms give rise to flash flooding which causes water accumulation along the entire length of Main Street. Drains and the sewers are overloaded and water cannot escape rapidly into the brook.

Fluvial – where rivers, the sea, and other large bodies of water flood overland; this includes canals such as the Oxford canal. This type of flooding is much more severe and results in additional water entering the village from the canal as a result of the faulty or incorrect operation of canal levels, overtopping, or a breach of the canal wall. Fortunately, such occurrences are much rarer.

See Appendix A. Map showing how floodwater comes off the fields into the village and the areas where the flow of water is unrestricted or, conversely, restrictions occur or are likely to occur.

Impact of flooding

Willoughby has always been at risk of flooding and is generally limited to the area at the lower part of Main Street and at the junction with Lower Street and Moor Lane. Severe flooding rarely happens and, when it does, the cause is attributable to ingress of canal water from the Oxford Canal.

See Appendix B: Impact of flooding on residents in Willoughby for more information.

Source	Area	At Risk	Potential Impact
Brook running along Main Street and runoff from surrounding fields	Main Street, Moor Lane and Lower Street	Access road through Willoughby to nearby villages Some residential properties on Main Street, Lower Street and Moor Lane The Rose Inn	Limited access to the village. No access to neighbouring villages Flooding to residential properties No access for vehicles
Pond on Lower Street	Lower Street and Brooks Close	Some residential properties on Lower Street and Brooks Close	Flooding threat to residential properties
Old Station Drain running to rear of properties to south of Main Street carrying water from Oxford Canal overflow	Risk to some properties south of Main Street which otherwise would be unaffected.	Additional risk to:- Access road through Willoughby to neighbouring villages Some residential properties on Main Street/ Lower Street and Moor Lane The Rose Inn	Limited access to the village and no access to neighbouring villages Flooding to residential properties No access for vehicles

See Appendix C. Photographs of flooding in recent years

2. Responsibilities of residents, flood wardens and other agencies when flooding is imminent or occurring

a. Residents

- When you renew your insurance policy each year, ensure that it is adequate for flood damage.
- Check weather forecasts and sign up to receive flood alerts and warnings.

For any sources of flooding, upon receiving an alert and **knowing the risks in your area** - take the relevant steps below to stay safe whilst protecting yourself and your property:

- Move valuable items upstairs and put flood protection measures in place.
- Secure any outside items that may cause further damage.

- Move vehicles to higher ground, but in a place which is unlikely to hinder emergency vehicles or be a nuisance to local residents.
- Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies.
- Do not drink water from the mains supply - it may be contaminated.
- Tune into local media for updates and follow advice from the emergency services
- Do not try to walk through flood water, it may be deeper than appears or be concealing dangerous obstacles.
- Avoid driving through flood water; you may be putting yourself and others at risk.
- Drink bottled water until assured the mains is free from contamination.

If flood water enters your property and life is at risk, call 999.

See Appendix D. Flooding Leaflet for Residents for more information; and/or go to the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Resilience Team website

cswprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding/advice-during-flooding

b. Flood Wardens

Local residents have volunteered to be designated flood wardens. Their responsibilities are outlined below:

- Monitor local conditions and where necessary report to the Local Authority.
- Be familiar with those people and properties at risk.
- Establish communication systems with people and properties known to be at risk.
- Visit people at risk and ensure warnings have been received.
- Assist or call for assistance for those who may be struggling to carry out actions to safeguard themselves or their property.
- Develop communications links with residents, local groups, Parish Council etc.
- Be prepared to assist authority with road closure and erect warning signs.
- Be able to advise on flood protective measures such as threshold barriers, sand or gel bags etc.
- Set up local patrols during flooding and when thought to be imminent.
- The levels of flooding in Willoughby are such that wheeled transport can be used to rescue and convey people and materials. Flood wardens should be aware of those who have access to tractors, winch equipment and four wheel drives.
- At no time should a flood warden put themselves at risk, for example, do not enter the water, do not attempt to clear obstructions during flooding.
- Always wear a high vis tabard when acting as a flood warden.
- Be courteous and respectful to drivers of vehicles and avoid all confrontation.
- Wash thoroughly after contact with flood water.

c. Other Agencies

As well as the action that residents and flood wardens can take, as outlined above, there are various agencies who have a role to play in the event of serious flooding.

See Appendix E. The roles and responsibilities of other agencies when flooding occurs

3. Emergency centres/places of safety

Borough and district councils are responsible for setting up a central rest centre during an emergency. However, it may be necessary to set up a temporary place of safety within the community e.g. for visitors or for people evacuated from their homes. This should rarely be necessary in Willoughby, as a result of flooding, but it is important to have the provision in place just in case it is needed.

In our community, the emergency centre and place of safety will be Willoughby Village Hall.

Contacts: Joss Ray - 01788 891317 (Keyholder)

Karen Skipp - 01788 890525 (Booking Secretary - can advise on security code)

The village hall has Wi-fi, a computer, an overhead projector and a large screen. Heating in the main hall is gas and in the smaller committee room it is electric. The kitchen has a large cooker, a fridge and a plentiful supply of crockery and cutlery. The seating capacity is 120.

In the event that it is required, the centre would be administered by the Parish Council in conjunction with the Village Hall Management Committee.

4. Communication - the Environment Agency, flood wardens, residents, organisations in the village and other agencies

a. The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency provides flood maps for both pluvial and fluvial flooding in the village which show the general disposition of flood water but not necessarily the susceptibility of particular properties to flooding. Residents can access the Environment Agency's online facility to find out the current situation with regard to flooding in the area and also contact their 24 hour floodline service.

'Check for Flooding' Service at www.gov.uk/check-flooding

Floodline Telephone: 0345 988 1188 Textphone: 0345 602 6340

b. Communication amongst flood wardens

The main form of communication is a Whatsapp group for all members of the Flood Action Group so that even members who are not designated wardens can step in, if needed. As well as information from the Environment Agency, flood wardens will use their considerable local knowledge to decide whether or not there is a realistic probability of flooding.

c. Communication with residents in properties that may be at risk

Flood wardens have identified residents in properties which may be at risk of flooding or where access may be difficult. Residents have been asked if they would like support, what kind of support they would like and whether or not they wish to give their preferred contact details to receive alerts and to contact wardens e.g. phone, text, email, Whatsapp, visit.

d. Communication with residents in the wider parish

Willoughby Monthly Facebook - the administrator will post agreed alerts when flooding is imminent or when it is occurring.

Flood wardens will be highly visible in the event of flooding and will help residents who might wish for support.

e. Communication with Parish Councillors and adjacent Parish Clerks

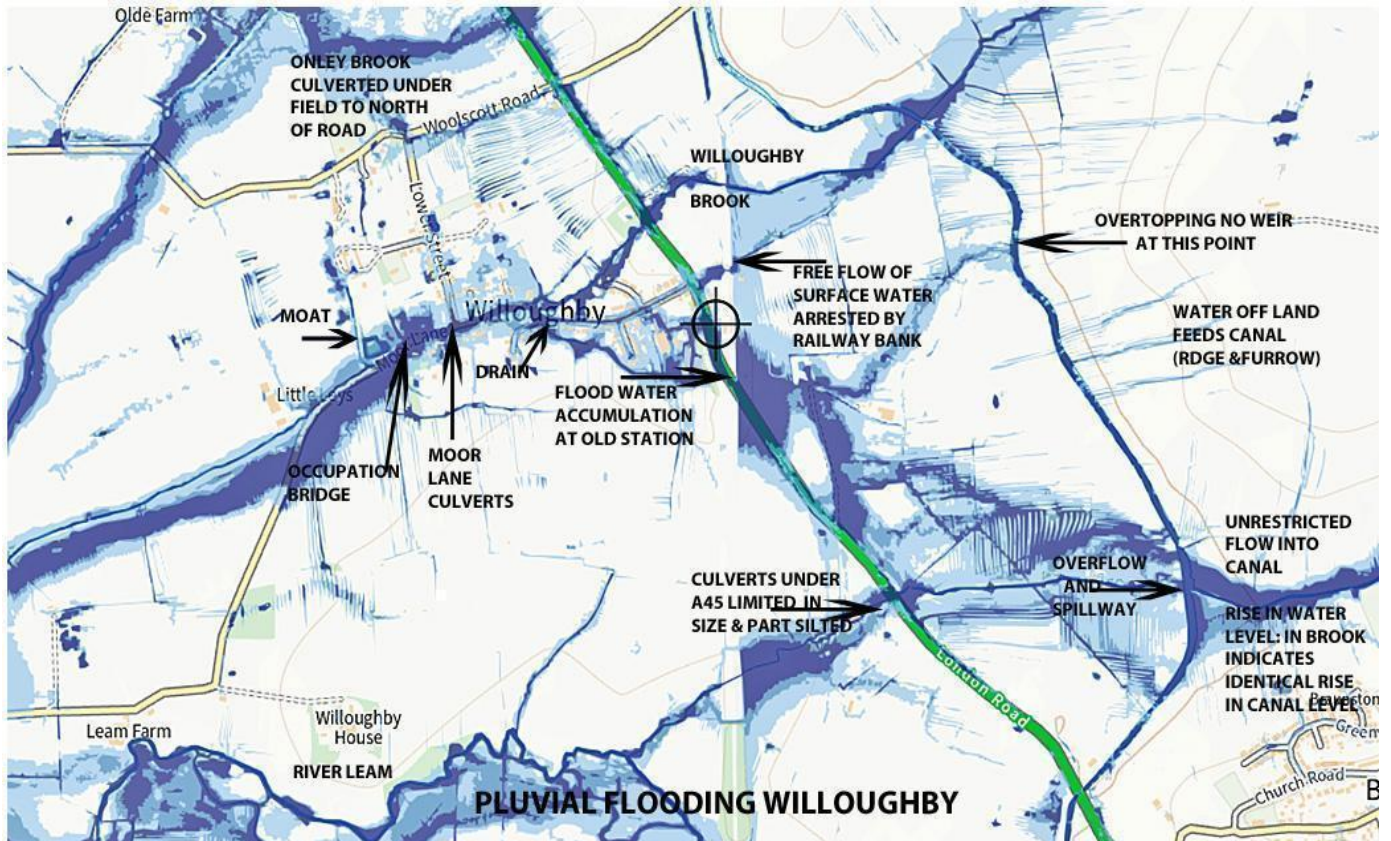
A Willoughby parish councillor is a member of the Flood Action Group and provides liaison between FLAG and the council.

Parish councillors will be aware that flooding is imminent or happening and will do all they can to assist flood wardens and residents. In addition, it may be useful to contact the Clerks of neighbouring parishes so that they are aware of the situation in Willoughby e.g. that the roads through the village are impassable. Willoughby's Parish Clerk or the Chair will make this contact.

See Appendix F. Contact details for Councillors and Clerks

Appendix A.

Map showing how floodwater comes off the fields into the village and the areas where the flow of water is unrestricted or, conversely, restrictions occur or are likely to occur



Appendix B. Impact of flooding on residents in Willoughby

Flooding in Willoughby is generally limited to the area at the lower end of Main Street. Serious flooding rarely happens and, when it does, the cause is attributable to ingress of canal water from the Oxford Canal.

The most serious flooding recorded resulted from the catastrophic failure of the canal in 1947, causing it to empty through the village. This caused flooding of properties in Main Street and Lower Street. The worst that can be expected is a depth of water of the order of 600mm on the roadway in the lower regions of Main Street. Such an incident, although unpleasant, will not result in a raging torrent in the village. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that any significant flooding will result in swiftly moving water along the line of the village stream itself. More than 50% of flood related deaths in this country are due to someone driving or walking into floodwater.

- 150mm (6 inches) of fast-moving water can knock adults off their feet and sweep them away, potentially into deeper water.
- 300mm (12 inches) of moving water can float a small car.
- 450- 600mm (18-24 inches) of moving water can carry away larger vehicles including vans and SUVs.

If you come to an area that is covered by water, you may not know its depth or condition of the road or ground underneath. This is especially true in darkness. Be safe – any time you are fronted with a flooded area with which you are unfamiliar - **don't drown**.

One of the problems created by flooding in Willoughby is access to the village. Flooding, as a result of prolonged rainfall covering a wide local area, results in roads into the village becoming impassable. When this happens during the day this can create a problem for many residents returning from work etc. Residents who are out of the village will need to know what routes into the village are still passable. For instance the Leam Bridge at Sawbridge quickly becomes impassable for vehicles returning from the West as does the A45 at the old station bridge, if the canal tops its banks. The crossroads at the bottom of Longdown Lane has been known to be a problem in some circumstances.

Cars entering the village may have to be parked up in safe places when normal access to properties is not possible due to floodwater. (This may affect most properties in Main Street below the village car park.)

Flooding in the village creates an inconvenience to most residents, there being few properties that are at risk of flooding under the most severe conditions. Those that are affected will not be subject to life threatening situations whilst remaining in their homes and will only need to evacuate, if power is unavailable for a significant time or conditions are unpleasant.

(Electrical note:- Distribution boards are generally high enough to be unaffected by floodwater and circuits, which have individually tripped or caused a total board trip, due to part of that circuit being affected by moisture, should be left isolated. This will normally allow lights to be used together with any socket outlets on unaffected circuits. Any electrical appliance which has been in water must be unplugged, whilst the power is isolated, and not used again until it has been PAT tested.

Bert Ogle
Chair, Willoughby Flood Action Group

October 2023

Appendix C. Photographs of flooding in Willoughby



Appendix D. Flooding leaflet for residents - What to do before, during and after flooding

This leaflet has been prepared by the Willoughby Flood Action Group to inform residents about what they can do in the event of flooding. The information is adapted from guidance provided by the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) Resilience Team

www.cswprepared.org.uk/hazard-advice/flooding/advice-during-flooding

1. ADVICE DURING FLOODING

REMEMBER, ALWAYS STAY SAFE in an immediate flood emergency or, where there is a risk to life, call 999.

If you become aware of imminent flooding in your area and knowing the risks to your property – take the following steps to stay safe and protect yourself and your property:

- Stay informed by emergency services and flood wardens, and follow their advice.
- Move valuable items upstairs, raise furniture and appliances which cannot be moved upstairs.
- Put flood protection measures in place e.g. gel bags, sand bags, door barriers.
- Secure any outside items that may cause further damage or float away.
- Turn off utilities to parts of the property that may be flooded and do not drink water from the mains supply, if the pressure has dropped - it may be contaminated. Drink bottled water until assured the mains is free from contamination.
- Keep up to date with alerts and forecasts.
- Do not try to walk through flood water, it may be deeper than appears or be concealing dangerous obstacles.
- Avoid driving through flood water; you may be putting yourself and others at risk. Move vehicles at risk of standing in floodwater to a safe place where they do not hinder emergency vehicles.

2. TAKING STEPS TO PREPARE FOR FLOODING

- Determine whether your home is in an area likely to be flooded. If so, check you have appropriate insurance cover for your property and vehicle.
- Consider investing in flood defence products to protect your home.
- Keep a supply of food and bottled water in the house in case you are unable to get to the shops during a flood.
- If your home is likely to flood, identify which items you will wish to move to a high level and furniture and appliances you would like to move above water level, together with the means of doing it e.g. using blocks or bricks.
- Be aware of which roads are likely to flood and plan alternative routes home to avoid them.
- Have a communication plan with the rest of your family. There is nowhere in the village where you will become absolutely stranded but your vehicles may be unable to leave your premises. However, if the area is heavily flooded, it would be unwise to make any unnecessary journeys.

3. ADVICE ON RECOVERING FROM FLOODING

- Assume floodwater has been contaminated with sewage and avoid contact wherever possible by use of disposable gloves.

- It is important to stop harmful germs that might be present in floodwater from spreading to food. Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all potentially contaminated surfaces and items is advised. Any contaminated food must be thrown away. If a freezer has been without power for long enough to allow the contents to start to thaw, all such food must be discarded.
- Flooding presents a number of hazards to utilities in the home. Follow [electric](#) and [gas](#) safety advice before switching them back on.
- Contact your insurer if you have not done so already and let them know the situation, they will advise you of the next steps to take in restoring your home and belongings.
- Report when your property has flooded as this helps Warwickshire County Council investigate why the flood has occurred and look for methods to mitigate the risk from happening in the future, if possible. www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reportit

Flood barriers for door

A few residents may wish to purchase removable barriers for their front or back doors. There are lots of options. The links below show examples of the types of barriers available. Both websites have videos explaining how their barriers work.

[Floodshield Door Barrier | Award Winning Flood protection](#)

[Floodgate - Protecting Doorways from Flood Risk](#)

Electrical Safety

1. If entering property in darkness after flooding when items may have been moved around, use a torch. Under no circumstances use a naked flame as means of illumination.
2. Switch off the electricity supply at the fuse box, if it is safe to do so. If there is evidence of water inside the fuse box or if there are signs of arcing or overheating, seek professional advice. Do not attempt to reinstate electrical circuits that have tripped out until professional advice has been sought.
3. Unplug damaged electrical appliances and move all portable ones away from the area affected by flooding.
4. Do not use any mains powered electrical appliances in areas affected by flooding until advised by a competent person that it is safe to do so.

Advice from Gas Safe Register

1. Contact your gas supplier so they can advise you of the general situation in the area.
2. Get in touch with a Gas Safe registered engineer before turning the gas supply back on. They will make sure the installation pipework is not filled with water. If it is, this must be removed from the supply before the gas appliances can be re-checked, confirmed as safe, and used as normal.
3. Ensure any electrical supply to a gas appliance is isolated before allowing mains electrical power to be switched back on. Although a gas appliance may not have been submerged it may have increased condensation that could lead to a fault. If petrol or diesel driven pumps and generators are used to clear flood waters ensure there is sufficient ventilation to prevent build up of carbon monoxide from exhaust gases. Adequate ventilation must be ensured if using bottle gas heaters for drying out.

Appendix E. The role and responsibilities of other agencies when flooding occurs

The Emergency Services will normally provide most of the initial response. They will be supported by the local authorities (Borough and County Councils), Environment Agency, utility companies (gas, water, electricity and telecoms) and voluntary organisations.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

Phone 999 for an emergency or Warwickshire Police Headquarters (01926 415000)

- Inform other emergency services about the incident
- Co-ordinate the emergency services and other organisations during the response phase
- Protect and preserve the scene
- Investigate the incident alongside other investigative organisations
- Collect and pass on information about casualties
- Identify those involved
- Restore stability with the aim of restoring normality

THE ROLE OF THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Phone 999 for an emergency or Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Services (01926 423231)

- Inform other emergency services about the incident
- Rescue
- Respond to all emergency incidents as required
- Assist the populace where a need is identified and the use of Fire Service personnel and equipment is relevant
- Tackle fires or chemicals which have been spilt and other dangerous situations
- Make sure all personnel involved in the rescue work are safe
- Gather information and carry out hazard assessments
- Help ambulance service get live casualties away from the scene
- Help Police recover bodies
- Restore stability with the aim of restoring normality

THE ROLE OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE

Phone 999 for an emergency or Warwickshire Ambulance Service (01926 881331)

- Inform other emergency services about the incident
- Provide a focal point for all medical resources
- Identify and contact the appropriate receiving hospitals
- Set up a casualty clearing station
- Prioritise casualties so that their injuries can be treated
- Prioritise which casualties must be evacuated using appropriate transport
- Restore stability with the aim of restoring normality

THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

24 hour public line (0800 807060) or Floodline (0845 988 1188)

- Issue Flood Warnings
- Receive and record details of flooding incidents
- Monitor the situation and advise other organisations
- Deal with emergency repairs and blockages on main rivers, adopted critical watercourses and their own structures
- Respond to pollution incidents
- Advise on waste disposal issues

**THE ROLE OF WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(01926 410410)**

- Coordinate emergency arrangements and voluntary agency support
- Support the emergency services and district/borough councils.
- Help people in distress e.g. through the provision of a trauma support service.
- Maintain safe conditions on the roads excluding those managed by the Highways Agency or private roads
- Put flood warning signs on the highway
- Organise road closures and traffic diversions
- Clear blockages on highway drainage systems
- Clear roadside gullies
- Clear blocked ordinary watercourses
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the highway where there is a failure of the highway drainage system

**THE ROLE OF RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL
(01788 533533)**

- Co-ordinating role for emergencies in their own area as a key responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Support emergency services
- Initiate emergency accommodation plan
- Emergency assistance e.g. provision of sandbags, emergency accommodation, feeding
- Environmental health issues - pollution and public health issues
- Warn and inform the public regarding emergencies
- Emergency planning support to the Parish Council

**THE ROLE OF WILLOUGHBY PARISH COUNCIL
(07855 325314 – Maggie Beech, Chair)**

- Assist Rugby Borough Council to warn and inform the public regarding emergencies at local level
- Pass information regarding local issues and needs to key responders via the Borough Council
- Administer the emergency place of safety at the Village Hall in conjunction with the Management Committee
- Establishment of a Flood Action Group (FLAG)
- Publishing of information about the impact of flooding in Willoughby and measures to take should serious flooding occur
- Publishing and updating of a Flood Action Plan developed with members of FLAG
- Flood warning dissemination (by local agreement with the Environment Agency)
- Appointment and support of 'flood wardens' for local areas prone to flooding
- Identification of vulnerable groups – e.g. elderly or disabled - who may need support

**THE ROLE OF SEVERN TRENT WATER
(0800 783 4444)**

- Emergency over pumping or tankering at sewage pumping stations
- Clearing blockages in public sewers
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the public water mains or discharges from the public sewerage systems

UTILITIES COMPANIES

Gas (National Grid) - (0800 111999) 24 hours

Electricity (Western Power) - (0800 328 1111) 24 hours

BT (British Telecom) - (0800 800 150) 24 hours

- Attend to emergencies relating to their service at properties putting life at risk as a result of flooding
- Attend to flooding emergencies at their own serviced installations

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (REST CENTRES)

(In the event of people being made homeless or needing shelter)

The borough/district councils in Warwickshire have responsibility for opening and managing rest centres, supported by Warwickshire County Council's Services for Families and voluntary organisations. Rugby Rugby Borough Council (or its agent) will arrange transport to take evacuees to a rest centre where they will be given practical and emotional support.

The local Primary Care Trust will provide medical support and access to pharmacy services.

Warwickshire County Council's Child Protection Unit will support Rugby Borough Council and assist with arranging transport for evacuees to rest centres as required. While at the rest centre, the police and local authorities will gather specific information, which will be recorded on rest centre registration forms. Social Services (Services for Families) are responsible for making sure that this process is carried out and that an initial assessment of each individual is made to identify any extra support that may be needed. The police will either fax or take the forms to the Casualty Bureau, if invoked, to be processed. In Willoughby, the Village Hall, Main Street will be used as a rest centre.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE CASUALTY BUREAU

Often during major incidents the police will set up a Casualty Bureau to specifically deal with missing persons, survivors, evacuees and witnesses involved, or believed to have been involved, in the incident. It is not a general information bureau and is designed to register information and details rather than provide general information on an incident.

The police will provide a number of telephone lines, but depending on the volume of calls, you may experience a delay in getting through. Make a note of the reference number given and quote this when speaking to staff at the Casualty Bureau.

When casualties or survivors are identified, the enquirer is told as soon as practicable following their call, but bear in mind that this can take a while. If you have contacted the Casualty Bureau number to report a missing person and then subsequently locate them, make sure that you call the Casualty Bureau back to let them know. This will allow the police and other organisations to focus on finding those people that are still missing. The Casualty Bureau telephone number will be different for every incident. If one has been established, the number will appear on the homepage of its website; it will also be broadcast on news bulletins.

Appendix F. Contact details for Councillors and Clerks

A. Willoughby Parish Councillors and Clerk

Jo Jarman (Clerk)	07809 197817	clerk@willoughby-pc.gov.uk
Maggie Beech (Chair)	07855 325314	maggie.beech@willoughby-pc.gov.uk
Grahame Ash	07946 251455	grahame.ash@willoughby-pc.gov.uk
Rod Honess	01788 313691 07780 958080	rod.honess@willoughby-pc.gov.uk
Malcolm Lewis	07340 664610	malcolm.lewis@willoughby-pc.gov.uk
Stuart Sheppard	01788 890399	stuart.sheppard@willoughby-pc.gov.uk

B. Borough and County Councillors

Dale Keeling	Rugby Borough Council	07895 360442 dale.keeling@rugby.gov.uk
Dale Keeling	Warwickshire County Council	07895 360442 dalekeeling@warwickshire.gov.uk

C. Adjacent Parish Clerks

Jayne Moore	Grandborough	07510 123953 clerk@grandboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk
Katrina Jones	Barby and Onley	07864 579068 clerk@barbyandonleyparishcouncil.co.uk
Cynthia Ondeng	Dunchurch	01788 817550 clerk@dunchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk
Steven Rolt	Braunston	0800 002 9783 (Freephone) clerk@braunstonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Karen Payne	Wolfhampcote	07539 627632 clerk@wolfhampcote-pc.gov.uk

D. Councils

Warwickshire County Council	01926 410410
Rugby Borough Council	01788 533533
Emergency Management Centre	01926 412719 (when operational)