We've now only have eight spaces left for communities to join Pathfinder II! However, the good news is that we have funding from the Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) to work with another 30 communities between 2019-2021.

The next Flood Warden training is going to be in March 2018.

In this issue you can learn about the health impacts of flood water, investigate water safety courses available from the Royal Life Saving Society and find your New Year’s resolution with one of our volunteering opportunities. Steve Barber, one of our volunteer Reception Centre Managers and Chair of the Emergency Feeding Group, tells us what it was like when he was called out to help flooded residents and our own Jo Maddams has advice on how to be prepared this winter.

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Pathfinder Team! We have really enjoyed working with all the communities over the last year and are looking forward to an even more flood resilient 2018!

**WHAT’S NEW?**

We've now only have eight spaces left for communities to join Pathfinder II! However, the good news is that we have funding from the Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) to work with another 30 communities between 2019-2021.

The next Flood Warden training is going to be in March 2018.

In this issue you can learn about the health impacts of flood water, investigate water safety courses available from the Royal Life Saving Society and find your New Year’s resolution with one of our volunteering opportunities. Steve Barber, one of our volunteer Reception Centre Managers and Chair of the Emergency Feeding Group, tells us what it was like when he was called out to help flooded residents and our own Jo Maddams has advice on how to be prepared this winter.

**NEW YEAR, NEW VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

What’s your New Year’s resolution? Have you thought about volunteering in emergency planning?

When there’s an emergency, such as a major flood, power loss or extreme weather, the Northamptonshire County Council Emergency Planning Team works with the emergency services and other agencies in the county to keep people safe and put things right as quickly as possible.

We need volunteers to help us mobilise communities quickly, organise help, and prevent situations worsening and we have a group of trained volunteers that we rely on to help us respond effectively.

You can make a real difference in how people cope with an emergency and learn a lot of new skills along the way! There are monthly training and social events for our volunteers on topics such as map reading, assessment of hazards and emotional support. There are opportunities to join in with large multiagency emergency planning exercises and smaller table top exercises.

There are a range of roles available from supporting evacuated people in reception centres to helping our team make sure that emergency response guidance reflects the need of your faith. Check out your options at: [www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/fire-safety-and-emergencies/emergencies/Pages/volunteering-in-emergency-planning.aspx](http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/fire-safety-and-emergencies/emergencies/Pages/volunteering-in-emergency-planning.aspx)

Keep reading to see what a real life situation is like and the difference you could make.
“IT’S ALL HAPPENING OUT THERE…” by STEVE BARBER, VOLUNTEER RECEPTION CENTRE MANAGER

Picture the scene. I am a crash investigator and I am sitting at my computer happily constructing a map showing collisions within a certain part of Northampton town for a developer who is trying to decide what type of entrance they need for their new estate. Outside it is raining. Hard.

The phone rings, “Hi Steve its Jo. They have got flooding in Yelvertoft and Fire and Rescue are evacuating people. Can you go out and evaluate the situation?”

This is it. My moment. The event I have been training for as a Volunteer Reception Centre Manager. Despite having been a police officer for 27 years in the dim and distance past, you get out of the habit of coping with the unknown, and I am scared witless, but I’m going!

So why do it? Because there are vulnerable people out there who need help in all types of situations, and in the first instance, before the great social welfare machine swings into action, we as volunteers are the front line in giving these vulnerable people what they need most. Shelter, food, compassion and order into what can be a very stressful situation. As a volunteer, you don’t need to be a highly trained, highly skilled front line technician, you just need to have a big dollop of common sense, the ability to work in a logical manner, to be able to work in a team and think on your feet, and to care about your neighbours. Northamptonshire County Council’s Emergency Planning Team will give you the training you need. The more of you out there that are available to assist, the quicker we can bring calm into a situation.

And Yelvertoft? When I arrived the Fire Ground Commander gave me a first class briefing, to the extent that I am sure I knew as much as he did. The centre of the village was a raging torrent, but of the twelve families evacuated only five persons were left to be dealt with, and they were very snugly ensconced in…… the pub. So why move them? The pub was happy to for them to be there, Red Cross turned up shortly after me along with a manager of many years standing, Bob Spearman, who was the back up if I needed him. Working with Fire and Rescue we managed to get medication for two elderly brothers, sorted all the paperwork, and of the five I had left I only had to start the process of temporary rehousing for the two brothers, before handing it over to the “Professionals”.

Job done. And very satisfying for me to have done my bit.
**HEALTH IMPACTS OF FLOOD WATER**

**IMMEDIATE HAZARDS**

We might sound like a broken record but DO NOT enter floodwater! The water may look shallow but only 15 cm of fast flowing water can knock you off your feet and prevent you from regaining your footing. Hiding under the water could be hazards such as open manholes, sharp items and raised drain covers and tripping or getting your foot stuck could be very bad news. Water levels can change very quickly so be aware of the situation around you and make sure you can easily get to safety if water levels rise.

Only drive through floodwater if you know that it is not too deep - usually this would mean no more than halfway up your car's wheels. Do not drive through fast-moving water as your car could easily be swept away. If you are driving and become stuck in floodwater, stay in the car and telephone 999 for help rather than try to get out.

There is information on water safety courses from the Royal Life Saving Society on the next page!

Listen to the advice of the numpties!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Clq8elpeo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Clq8elpeo)

60cm (2ft) OF STANDING WATER CAN FLOAT YOUR CAR
30cm (1ft) OF FAST FLOWING WATER COULD BE ENOUGH TO MOVE THE AVERAGE FAMILY CAR

**HYPOTHERMIA**

Hypothermia is caused by getting too cold and your normal body temperature of 37°C (98.6°F) dropping below 35°C (95°F). It is most common in cold conditions but can occur in mild weather, particularly if you get wet, do not dry off soon enough and there is a cool wind. Make sure you are dressed appropriately, drink plenty of fluids and eat regularly. Put an extra coat, water and food in your car in case you get caught away from home!

**CONTAMINATION AND DISEASE**

Infection from floods in the UK is rare but it is still important to take steps to prevent any unnecessary additional health problems. Any floodwater can carry dangerous bacteria that could cause disease; from drains and sewers in urban areas and from animal waste in rural areas.

When cleaning up after a flood, waterproof gloves, boots and overalls are a must. All cuts and sores need to be covered and you may wish to use a face mask to avoid any nasty splashes. If you come into contact with floodwater wash thoroughly with hot soapy clean water. If clean water is not available, wet wipes or hand sanitising gel can be a temporary cleaning solution. All affected items should be disinfected and food should be thrown away. Wash clothes, toys and soft furnishings with detergent on a hot cycle (60°C). Do not turn on electrics that have got wet until they've been checked by an electrician.
MENTAL HEALTH

A flood is a distressing event which can have a major effect on your life once the floodwaters have receded. It is important to not underestimate this and remember that it is normal to feel tired or anxious and have difficulty sleeping at this time. Support from family, friends and the community will be invaluable but if you feel concerned about your mental health you should contact your GP for advice or call the NHS on 111.

MORE INFORMATION

www.gov.uk/government/collections/flooding-health-guidance-and-

WANT TO LEARN MORE, BECOME MORE RESILIENT OR BE A FLOOD RESPONDER? INVESTIGATE THE TRAINING AVAILABLE FROM RLSS UK

by Adrian Lole, Technical Director

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is a charity dedicated to drowning prevention. RLSS UK has a network of volunteers who can support the development of local resilience within local communities.

Perhaps best known for their work training lifeguards RLSS UK is helping to reduce the number of drownings by helping to reduce risk, especially at inland open water sites.

RLSS UK CAN HELP COMMUNITIES:

- Assess hazards and risk in their area (centred on water hazards, but also include emergency First Aid)
- Advise on hazard management/risk reduction
- Help develop structures to “manage risk locally”. This could be by training flood responders but equally it could mean helping organise a local awareness campaign, work in schools etc. Usually it will mean linking to the existing local authority wider formal “resilience arrangements”.
- Co-ordinate training to help communities respond to residual risk
- Helping to identify and attract local funding to support resilience arrangements

RLSS UK TRAINING:

- Save a Life Series: Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, AED (defibrillator) training
- Emergency First Aid at Work- EFAW
- Open Water Lifeguard either as an addition to Pool Lifeguard or as a new qualification.

If your group would like help with any of the above, please contact our local Community Drowning Prevention Co-ordinator JoThompson@rlss.org.uk
BE PREPARED THIS WINTER
by JOANNE MADDAMS, EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER

It may be cold outside, but winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year for you and your family.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF:

- Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks.
- Aim to include at least five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your five a day.
- Stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy.
- Exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter.
- If possible, try to move around at least once an hour but remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans.
- Wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good at maintaining body heat.
- Wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls.
- Make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out.
- Check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier.

LOOK AFTER OTHERS:

- Check on vulnerable neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY AND FLOOD PLANS:

KEEP IN THE WARM BY:
- Fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors.
- Making sure you have loft and cavity wall insulation
- Insulating your hot water cylinder and pipes.
- Drawing your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms.
- Make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
- There are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It’s worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in.

WATCH THE WEATHER:
Keep an eye on the weather through www.floodtoolkit.com/warnings/

MET OFFICE WEATHER WARNINGS:
www.metoffice.gov.uk

FLOOD WARNINGS FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:
https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings?location=Northamptonshire

COLD WEATHER PLAN FOR ENGLAND:
The Cold Weather Plan for England is a framework intended to protect the population from harm to health during cold weather. It aims to prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather in England by alerting people to the negative health effects of cold weather, and enabling them to prepare and respond appropriately.

For the full plan please go to -

GOODBYE FROM NANCY
Some of you already know that January will bring a big change for me- I will be leaving the team to start a new adventure in New Zealand. This is something I’ve always wanted to do and am very excited about, but I am also really sad to be leaving Pathfinder II. I have had a great time working on the project and have loved working with you all.

Danielle will be joining the team in the New Year so the project will be in good hands.

IDEAS FOR NEXT TIME?
If you have any articles you would like to be included in the next issue, or topics that you would like us to cover please send them to jmaddams@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Don’t forget to join our Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/northantspathfinder/
Visit our website: www.floodtoolkit.com/pathfinder2/