

## RESILIENCE – ARE YOU PREPARED?

It is undeniable that the climate is changing and because of this we need to be able to adapt to the extreme weather conditions that we are going to see more and more of. Our area is predicted to get drier hotter summers and wetter more tropical like rain events in winter. In this area are used to high winds but these are set to increase in the future causing a bigger impact. Here are the weather events we have had in the last 8 years and what we have learnt.



\*On December 29/30<sup>th</sup> 2015 we had storm Frank where it was thought that a once in a 100-year event flooded parts of the north east including Ballater, Braemar, Stonehaven Kemnay, Inverurie, Inch, Premnay and Leslie. Flood risks in the areas were looked at and flood prevention schemes implemented in some areas. Fubar News on Facebook became the place to find out what the local situation was as local residents reported the fast-moving conditions as they occurred.

\*In 2018 in February we had the Beast from the East and this was followed by a long dry summer causing a drought. Private water supplies dried up and the public mains water systems were under pressure. The Scottish Government set up a scheme to provide bottled water to help with the drinking water shortage. We had a wildfire on Bennachie 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and another one at Pitfichie Forest. There are now wildfire warnings issued by the Fire Brigade and many places now ban fires and BBQ's being used due to this high risk.

\*In 2020 after a dry summer with some drought conditions we had a months' worth of rain fall in 24 hours on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. This was the second large rainfall event in 4 years but luckily it was after a very dry summer. Maybe it wasn't a once in 100 years frequency we were looking at after all!

\*On 26/27<sup>th</sup> November 2021 we had storm Arwen which massively affected on our area. Trees, even whole forests were blown down; roads were blocked; power cuts for days, even over a week ensued due to the unprecedented level of damage Arwen caused. This was the first time we realised we would lose mobile reception communications over the whole area as the mobile phone masts had very little resilience when the power went out. Landlines worked but you needed an old fashioned analogue plug-in phone to work. The power and communications were out for over a week in the area. Rest Centres we set up to help people without power, hot food or ways of charging phones or torches.

\*On 28<sup>th</sup>/29 January 2022 Storm Malik caused further damage. Again, power and mobile communications were lost.

\*On 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 Storm Corrie on the back of Storm Malik caused even further damage with power and mobile reception communications being lost again. Storm Corrie again showed that these storms were not just a once in a 100-year event but would happen more frequently. We also learnt that if you can get power to your broadband router and can use Wi-Fi calling you can make phone calls. (See Telecoms and Power Cuts)

\*On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Storm Otto resulted in power cuts and again a loss of mobile communications. To further compound the issue there were faults on the landlines which meant this was not working either. Lack of Communications is a major issue that needs to be resolved as it hampers everything.

\*June 2023 was our hottest on record. On September 5<sup>th</sup> 2023 there was a wildfire on Millstone Hill as September had the highest temperatures for that month in 25 years.

\*On October 19-20<sup>th</sup> 2023 Storm Babet produced over a third of the years rainfall total within a week causing issues with flooding on the roads. The Gadie burst its banks at Premnay. The Don and Dee also burst their banks. We were lucky that this occurred after a dry September and the water levels were very low.

As you can see extremes of weather are getting more common. So what can we do about it?

## ARE YOU RESILIENT?

### Can you survive without any help for 3 days?

What do we need to do to become more resilient?



**KEEP CALM**

**AND**

**BE**

**RESILIENT**

1. Listen to or sign up for any weather alerts which are amber or red. Sites to look at are: -

Met Office

[Insch \(Aberdeenshire\) weather - Met Office](#)

Aberdeenshire Council

[Aberdeenshire Council | Aberdeen | Facebook](#)

SEPA

[Flooding | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

[Water Scarcity | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

SSEN

[Power Track \(ssen.co.uk\)](#)

[Planned power cuts - SSEN](#)

North East Police

[Police Scotland North East | Facebook](#)

NHS Grampian

[NHS Grampian | Facebook](#)

Travel Scotland

[Traffic Scotland | Trunk road traffic updates & route planner](#)

Ready Scotland

[Ready Scotland | Facebook](#)

2. Charge up all mobile phones, chargeable torches, UPS and power packs if you have them when an amber or red alert is issued in case there is a power cut. Ensure you have enough petrol/diesel/electric charge in your car to be able to travel if you need to evacuate.
3. Ensure you have enough food, water, medicine, toiletries, nappies, baby formula, pet food to last at least 3 days in case it is not safe to travel. Hot water bottles, blankets and thermos flasks are handy and can be filled if the weather conditions are worsening.
4. If you are in a vulnerable group, or someone you know is, sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR). It's a free, UK wide service that helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra needs in the event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption. [The PSR - The Priority Services Register \(PSR\) is a free UK wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity or gas supply - PSR](#)
5. Know how to switch off your water and electricity in case of a flood.
6. Have an emergency action plan and go over this with your family and have an emergency grab bag made up when these alerts are issued.
7. Listen to local Radio. If you have internet/mobile communications see: -

Bennachie Community Council Facebook Page; Aberdeenshire Council Facebook page or website  
Fubar News Facebook Page and Local Facebook Pages: -

Bennachie Community Council	<a href="#">Bennachie Community Council   Facebook</a>	Pitcaple	<a href="#">Durno Residents   Facebook</a>
Culsamond/Fisherford area	<a href="#">Fisherford Friends   Facebook</a>	Premnay	<a href="#">(1) Premnay Page   Facebook</a>
Insch	<a href="#">(1) Insch Community Group   Facebook</a>	Old Rayne	<a href="#">(1) Old Rayne Community Association   Facebook</a>
Oyne Community Association	<a href="#">(1) Oyne village chat   Facebook</a> <a href="#">Oyne Community Association   Facebook</a>	Wartle	<a href="#">(1) Wartle Community Association   Facebook</a> <a href="#">Wartle Community Group   Facebook</a>
Chapel of Garioch	<a href="#">Chapel Of Garioch Info Page   Facebook</a>	Aberdeenshire Council	Aberdeenshire Council <a href="#">Facebook</a>

As we are a rural community it's good to look out for your neighbours especially if they are vulnerable or live alone.

Other helpful things to have: -

- Camper gas cooking stove with gas
- Fuel for wood burner/open fire with fireguard
- Generator, and ensure your fuel (petrol/diesel) is always useable and stored safely
- Gas heater, and fuel (When using gas indoors ensure there is proper ventilation to stop a build-up of carbon monoxide. For more information on staying safe during a power cut please see [Heating and Gas - Home Fire Safety \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#))
- Tins of easy to heat food in the house (soup, lentils, beans), as well as Cuppa Soups and Pot Noodles
- Warm clothes – hats/scarves/gloves/coats/boots
- Have your contact details ready to display in your window in case you are required by the emergency services to leave your home
- You could also consider making an inventory and note the location of valuable/important household items

At the moment the BCC is trying to see if we can identify possible local rest centres which can be used if people need to evacuate their homes. The plan is to apply for grants to obtain an independent power supply to these centres so they will have power in an emergency. We are also looking at how to communicate when the power goes out. As we know we lose the mobile network when the power goes down. However, if you can get power to your Broadband router you can still access the internet. We are also looking at providing the rest centres with power and broadband so that people can call from there.

## PHONES AND MOBILES IN POWER CUTS

Power cuts have shown a big issue with the resilience of our communication structures. We have found that if you can get power to your router you can get the internet. Here is information from BT about connecting a battery back-up unit to your broadband router to give you approx. 1 hour of service in a power cut. [Digital Voice: Will my service work in a power cut? | BT Help](#)

If your phone and your mobile contract allows you to make phone calls over the Wi-Fi and you have power to your router you can set this up by following this video. [How to set up Wi-Fi Calling on your phone - YouTube](#). This will allow you to make phone calls using the internet.

Landlines are also in the process of changing and **Ofcom** has given out the following information about the changes to your phone network systems. Landline phone calls have traditionally been delivered over the old telephone network – this is known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). BT has taken the decision to **retire the PSTN by December 2025** and other providers plan to follow



a broadly similar timescale. This means that in future, **landline calls will be delivered over digital technology** called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), which uses a broadband connection.

### Why is it happening?

The equipment used in the PSTN was developed and installed in the UK in the 1980s, and is becoming harder and more expensive to maintain. At the same time, telecoms providers are investing in new systems and networks such as full-fibre technology. So, broadband and phone companies have decided to switch off the old network and deliver landline calls over new digital technology to make sure that our phone services continue into the future.

### When is it happening?

Some of this migration to VoIP is already happening for some customers, such as people who have upgraded their home phone and broadband package, or who have moved house. Your landline provider will contact you to let you know when the process to migrate from your old landline to your new telephone service will apply to you.

### What do I need to do?

You don't need to do anything until your provider tells you your telephone service is changing, or until you decide to change your telephone service. Once a home phone service is moved from PSTN to VoIP, the phone will generally work in the same way as it always has, but it will need to be plugged into a broadband router instead of into the phone socket on your wall. If you need any new equipment - for example, a new router – or if you need a new broadband service installed, your provider should arrange this. It's important you talk to your provider about how the service will work for you.

This change will affect other devices that rely on a phone line, such as some fire and burglar alarm systems and telecare devices. So, you should mention those devices to your provider and check if these need to be replaced or reconfigured to continue working.

### Do I have to have broadband to get the new landline service?

Once the PSTN is switched off, customers who wish to continue having a landline phone, and do not already have broadband, will generally need to have a suitable connection – this is the case even if they don't use a broadband service. We expect that providers will have a range of options for people in this situation, so customers should not be forced to take out a high-speed broadband package if they do not want to.

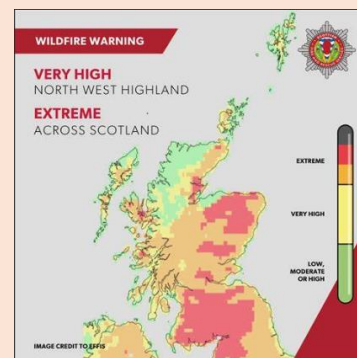
### Will VoIP phones work in a power cut?

Unlike traditional phones, a phone connected to a broadband router will not work in a power cut, as the router gets its power from the mains.

If you rely on your landline - for example, you don't have a mobile phone, you're unable to use a mobile phone or you don't have mobile signal inside your home - your provider must make sure you are able to contact the emergency services during a power cut. This could be in the form of battery back-up so your landline will continue to work, or giving you a basic mobile phone to use in this situation.

## DROUGHTS / EXCESSIVE HEAT/ WILDFIRES

This is something we are just starting to see occur in the last few years and is something we will have to learn to adapt to. In June 2023 a new Scottish record of 30.7C was recorded in Dumfries and Galloway. We have a mixture of Private Water Supplies and Scottish Water mains water supplies in the area. If a private water supply dries up contact Aberdeenshire Council's Private Water Supply Team [Private water supplies - Aberdeenshire Council](#) to see if there is a Government Scheme operating and what they can do to help you. With a lot of forested areas and areas open to the public wildfires is one thing we need to be prepared for. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service now





produce information about wildfires [Wildfires | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk) and also warnings.

## INFORMATION ON FLOODING

The Gadie, Urie, Shevock and Valentine water ways all run through our area and have the potential to cause flooding. When the ground water level is high, we get water running off the fields onto the roads and causing issues with transport.



If your home is in a flood area see Flood RE which is a joint initiative between the Government and insurers. Its aim is to make the flood part of your insurance more affordable. [Flood Re - A flood re-insurance scheme](#) There is also a build back better scheme they offer.

To get warnings of flooding sign up to SEPA flood warnings [Flooding Sign Up – SEPA Floodline](https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodingsignup/) <https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodingsignup/>

The nearest place to pick up sandbags is Inverurie. We have a back-up stock of sandbags at Premnay and Insch which are two of the main vulnerable sites in the area. Check the Bennachie Community Facebook page to see when these are being used.

To get the most information about Flooding see <https://scottishfloodforum.org> [The Scottish Flood Forum - Supporting Flood Risk Communities](https://scottishfloodforum.org) The Scottish Flood Forum is a charitable organisation which supports individuals and communities at risk of flooding and that have flooded. They specialise in flood recovery and resilience – and have many years experience in this area. Aberdeenshire Council can also offer some flood protection measures at cost price. See [Flood protection products - Aberdeenshire Council](#) or [SFF-Flood-Protection-Guide-Web-min.pdf \(scottishfloodforum.org\)](#).

### Always prioritise the safety of people in your household over possessions and:

Your local authority and other agencies will be responding to the flood event. If you want further information about what is happening in your area, contact your local authority.

Tune into your local radio station, ideally using a battery or wind up radio

If you feel unsafe and need evacuated call 999

999

Fit any property level protection measures you have such as:

- Flood gates
- Air brick covers
- Sandbags or alternative barriers
- Toilet bungs
- Any other flood products

If you have time, and it is safe to do so – move your car to higher ground

Fold and roll up anything onto higher ground (or upper floors of your home), including photos, valuables and medicines

If you have an Emergency Flood Kit make sure you have it with you

Make sure everything that is of importance is secured (jewellery, documents, pets, and other valuables)

If you have one, plug in an analogue phone and charge your mobile phone (power failure stops digital phones working)

Turn off your gas and electricity supplies

**Follow instructions from the Police and the Emergency Services.**

# DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN?

**IF YOU OR YOUR PROPERTY ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999 /112**

1. If a major emergency happens it may be some time before help arrives. It's very important that you and your family get together to prepare. Agree a plan in advance with those in your home. Complete it together and keep it safe in case you need to use it. If the emergency means it is not safe to go out, the advice is usually to:

**GO IN** Go indoors and close all windows/doors

**STAY IN** Stay indoors until given the all clear

**TUNE IN** Tune in to local radio, TV or the Internet



**Local Radio Stations** (you can do this in the car and it may be possible to charge your phone in your car).

Northsound 1: 96.9 FM

Northsound 2: 1035 kHz

Original 106: 106.8 or 106.3FM

BBC Radio Scotland: 92 – 95FM 810 MW

2. If you have to leave your home, get out, stay out, and take others with you.

3. Agree with your household 2 meeting places or friends to stay with, one near home and one further away, in case you can't get home.

Family Meeting Place	
Community Hub/ Second Meeting Place	

4. Your Contacts. If you have a mobile phone, make sure you add the contact details of a key contact person, your neighbours, school and / or work contacts, doctors, vets, child minders, plumber, electrician, fuel provider etc. Where possible back these up on the internet and note your internet/ email access details. If you don't have a mobile phone or internet access, make a list and attach it to this plan.

5. Useful contact numbers:

Police, Ambulance, Fire brigade, Coast Guard or Mountain Rescue	Emergency 999 or 112	Insch Health Centre	0345 337 6310
Police	Non-emergency 101	Wilson Chemist Insch	01464 820266
NHS	111	Inverurie Health Centre	0345 337 9911
SEPA Floodline	0345 988 1188	Wills Chemist, High Street, Inverurie	01467 620475
SSE	105	Insurance	
Scottish Water	0800 0778 778	Childcare	
Aberdeenshire Council during office hours	Roads and Landscape 0345 608 1205	Vet	
Plumber		Work/School	

## DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY KIT IN A WATERPROOF BAG?

- ✓ A battery-operated torch and spare batteries/charged battery pack (or a wind-up torch)
- ✓ A battery-operated radio and spare batteries (or a wind-up radio)
- ✓ A mobile phone charger
- ✓ Any essential medication, some toiletries, wet wipes, toilet roll, towel and a first aid kit
- ✓ Three days' supply of bottled water and ready to eat food (that won't go off)
- ✓ Copies of important documents e.g., insurance policies, birth certificates
- ✓ Thermos Flask, Blankets and hot water bottle
- ✓ Pencil, paper, a penknife and a whistle
- ✓ Spare keys to your home and car
- ✓ Spare glasses or contact lenses
- ✓ Pet supplies
- ✓ Formula/baby food/Nappies
- ✓ Putty or a repair clamp for fixing burst pipes.
- ✓ Change of Clothes
- ✓ Emergency Cash as ATM's or card machines may not be working
- ✓ If flooding is a possibility also add wellington boots, rubber gloves, waterproof clothing and camera to record any damage for insurers.

