

Extreme Events – Devon’s response to severe weather

Speaker profiles

Brian Smith, member of DfT Winter Resilience Review team



Brian Smith joined Cambridgeshire County Council in 1983, and following several senior corporate roles, was appointed Director of the newly-formed Department of Environment & Transport in 1996. It established a strong national reputation across the breadth of its responsibilities. Highlights were the approach to its planning responsibilities and integrated transport policies, and a number of national and European awards were won.

Brian chaired the National Travelwise Association for 3 years until 2002 and played a leading role in regional planning as Chairman of the Technical Advisory Group. He chaired the CSS transport and Environment Committee for 3 years until 2007, and in June 2008 became President of CSS (now ADEPT), a position held for one year. In July 2009, he received a lifetime contribution to local transport award at the National Transport Awards. He stepped down from his role of Executive Director, Environment Services at Cambridgeshire at the end of March 2010, and is now a management and transport consultant.

Superintendent Tim Swarbrick, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary



Tim Swarbrick is a Superintendent with the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, he is currently deployed within the Operations Department with responsibilities for Roads Policing, Armed Response capability, the Force Driving School and the Tactical Aid Group.

He has 32 years policing experience in two Forces which includes the management of a number of major and critical incidents. Examples include the flooding of Boscastle, the grounding of the Napoli, the blizzard conditions on Bodmin Moor, the Exeter restaurant bomb and the fuel protests. All these incidents required a multi agency response and were managed using the Gold, Silver and Bronze structure, which is now commonly understood by partners, the military and other public bodies.

Nigel Dyson, Highways Agency



Nigel is a chartered civil engineer with over twenty years experience in public and private sector highways maintenance management.

He has worked for the Highways Agency (HA) for ten years and is currently Route Performance Manager for HA Area 1, with responsibility for ensuring that its term maintenance contractor properly maintains the availability and fitness for purpose of the A30 and A38 west of Exeter.

Chris Cranston B.Sc (Hons) CEng MIET, Devon County Council



Chris joined Devon County Council in 1992 after spending 10 years with Marconi, Plessey and Siemens developing state-of-the-art electronics equipment. He has been responsible for the development and operation of the Highway Operations Control Centre. This has included the development of winter, weather and traffic systems to keep Devon amongst the leading authorities in the UK in these areas.

Chris has been involved with winter service at a national level through chairmanship of the Vaisala User Group, speaking at national conferences and reviewing the winter section of Well-maintained Highways. He has also worked closely with the Met Office to improve road weather information systems.

Chris has been leading Devon County Council's highway response to the severe snow events over the past two years and reviewing its winter service provision.

Adele Needham, Environment Agency



Adele Needham is currently on assignment as an Emergency Planning Officer. When in her substantive post, Adele works in the Devon Flood Incident Management Team where for many years, her work has focused on helping and encouraging communities to become more flood resilient.

Within the last 18 months Adele has led a series of Emergency Planning Sessions for Parish Councils throughout Devon. These events were held in partnership with Devon County Council, local district councils, the police, fire service and the British Red Cross and were designed to provide an opportunity for attendees to learn how to prepare their communities for all types of emergencies.

Adele has also worked with schools, care homes, businesses and groups to assist with the development of their flood plans. Her work has included the development of a template and information packs to assist groups create their own flood plans.

Richard Horne BA, MBA Devon County Council



Richard Horne has had a varied career working in roles in both the public and private sectors. He joined Devon County Council in 1999, initially leading the implementation of the Best Value initiative. He also worked on other central Government initiatives, such as e-Government and Performance Improvement, before becoming the County Council's Emergency Planning Manager in 2005.

Since joining emergency planning Richard has led the County Council's emergency response to significant incidents such as the Napoli, the Giraffe restaurant terrorist attack in Exeter City Centre, the Haldon Hill severe weather incidents of 2009 and 2010, as well as numerous other smaller events. He leads a small team of 5 emergency planning officers in Devon, where the county emergency planning function remains separate from the Devon districts. He also leads the Devon and Cornwall LRF Humanitarian Assistance Sub-Group.

Graham Kerridge, British Red Cross



Graham joined British Red Cross in 2002. He recently took over the appointment of Senior Service Manager for Emergency Planning and Response for the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and the Channel Islands.

He sees his role as developing strong links with Local Authorities and Emergency Services.

Rob Varley, Operations & Services Director, Met Office



As Operations and Services Director, Rob is responsible for the end-to-end process for the production and delivery of data and services to Met Office customers. This includes weather, climate and ocean observations, forecasting and the delivery of operational services for customers and the public in the UK and throughout the world.

As a member of the Met Office Board he also plays a leading role in the strategic management of the organisation, including leading on Corporate Responsibility, helping to ensure that the Met Office meets its objectives in a sustainable way and acts in a positive manner in its dealings with staff, customers, suppliers and the wider community.

Since the move to Exeter in 2003 he has worked mainly with public sector customers, helping the UK to manage the risks and exploit the opportunities associated with our changing weather and climate.