

Resilience Matters

Issue 23, Summer 2014

The newsletter of the Herts Local Authority Resilience Partnership

Emergency Reception Centre Live Exercise



Recently North Herts District Council (NHDC) ran a successful live emergency reception centre exercise, named 'Exercise Westmill'. The aim was 'to practise the NHDC and local multi-agency live response to setting up, operating and decommissioning a reception centre'.

The exercise, which was planned over many months, was directed by Paula Busby, HCC Resilience Officer, under the local authority resilience partnership.

The exercise took place at the Westmill Community Centre in Hitchin, who kindly agreed to support the event with the use of their premises, as a centre that could well be used in any local emergency response. It proved to be a very valuable experience and a great opportunity to put all the resilience plans and staff training into a live rehearsal.

The multi-agency support to NHDC staff 'players' was provided by the British Red Cross, Royal Voluntary Service, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust, and the Police.

Some 'evacuees' were provided by NHDC, alongside a number of willing volunteers from the Westmill centre. Each evacuee had a role profile to 'play' on the day, with these profiles providing information to exercise players for registration and to mimic other issues that may occur in a real reception centre. On the day, they were all excellent and gave the exercise a very realistic feel.



Overall, the half day exercise ran very smoothly and gave NHDC reception centre staff and players a real insight into how a centre should be set up, operated, and the complications that can arise from the registration and welfare needs process. All multi-agency players commented on the usefulness of the event in practising their response.

At the end of the exercise, a debrief was held for all those involved. Feedback from this was excellent, with staff players and evacuees commenting that the event was well organised, and 'a real eye opener to how things happen'. Raising awareness and working with other organisations was also highly praised. Evacuees felt that they were very well looked after and NHDC reception centre staff were friendly, helpful, calm, keen, and comforting.

The learning identified during the exercise is being incorporated into the review of the NHDC reception centre plan, to be launched later this year.

Hertfordshire residents invited to flood recovery drop-in sessions

In April, Hertfordshire residents affected by the recent flooding were invited to attend two public flood surgeries, hosted by the Environment Agency, to share their experiences and learn about flood recovery work taking place in the area.

The flood surgeries were informal drop-in sessions designed for members of the public to ask questions, receive support, and take away advice and information.

The events were held in Puckeridge and Little Hadham and were supported by the Lead Local Flood Authority, Hertfordshire County Council. There were also representatives from East Hertfordshire Council, Standon Parish Council and Hertfordshire Police.

At each venue the Environment Agency and local partners had tables and stands with maps and information detailing the impact of the recent flooding and what recovery work was taking place.

The sessions helped people understand their flood risk and how they can prepare themselves in future, such as signing up to the Environment Agency's free flood warning service and preparing a flood plan.



Lorelie Aylward, Flood and Coastal Risk Advisor, at the Environment Agency said:

"We are working to support those who have been affected by the recent flooding by listening to their experiences and addressing their concerns. This information is incredibly valuable and will help inform our future work. By working with the community and local partners, we can work collaboratively to deliver more effective community resilience in the future and provide greater access to resources, support and information".



Terry Douris, Cabinet Member for Highways at Hertfordshire County Council, said:

"There are lessons to learn from the impact of the exceptional weather and how authorities responded. We will look at what we might do differently and how we might enhance our immediate response, routine maintenance work and our long term investments. These meetings are a positive step in addressing the concerns of local people and a step towards supporting residents in the future."

Both surgeries were well attended and residents were keen to share their experiences and congratulate the Environment Agency on an excellent initiative.

Resilience Direct replaces the NRE



The National Resilience Extranet (NRE) has recently been replaced by ResilienceDirect, which is an online private 'network' which enables civil protection practitioners to work together across geographical and organisational boundaries.

The website helps organisations to fulfil their duties to prepare for and respond to emergencies through common working practices and ensuring that key information is readily and consistently available to users.

Local Resilience Forum (LRF) members can find the latest and most up to date copy of all the LRF's plans in the Hertfordshire Resilience file store which is part of the planning section. The Gateway Bulletin that used to be on the NRE can be found in the Civil Contingencies Secretariat section.

ResilienceDirect is available for use by all Category 1 and 2 Responders, government departments and agencies, and other key organisations in the UK resilience community.

Any organisation that had a current NRE licence at the end of March should have been transferred. However, because the licence arrangements are different anybody in those organisations can now sign up free of charge.

Any organisation that did not have an up to date NRE licence will be able to sign up and to register individual users.

Prospective users should contact the ResilienceDirect team on ResilienceDirect@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

Or if you require any further information, please contact Easher Hill, the administrator for Hertfordshire Resilience at: easher.hill@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Safer Streets campaign

Lucky residents of one Hertford street picked up lots of helpful and useful advice when the Safer Streets team came to visit. Fire, Police, HCC's Trading Standards and Resilience Team, East Herts Council and Neighbourhood Watch called on 80 homes along Tamworth Rd.

The team talked to people about any safety concerns and offered tips on how to stay safe at home and while out and about.

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Watch Commander Julian Stanley said,

"We made sure people felt safe in their home and checked if there was anything we could do. For example for those people that didn't have smoke detectors, we fitted them there and then."

"We had a very good response from people. They welcomed the fact that all the different organisations were working together."

HCC's Senior Resilience Officer, Jim Farrier said, *"It was a very useful event. We were able to give residents our Ready For Anything information; helping them to be better prepared for emergencies."*

Spotlight (Floodlight) on St Albans



Paul Blande became St Albans City and District Council's Emergency Planning Officer in September 2013, taking on the mantle from Ian Skelt. Paul brings 25 years worth of front line experience of dealing with emergencies from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

From his St. Albans office, Paul talked candidly about his new job.

"My first impressions of the job was how unusual it was to have the opportunity for a proper hand over, Ian's was very comprehensive! Having worked in the local authority fire service I thought that district life would be similar, however I now know that working in the district poses unique challenges. For example, the first Incident Management Team (IMT) training exercise I participated in involved a virtual IMT meeting by teleconference to a "real time" scenario.

Ironically one of the first tasks I had to manage was the district's response to the fire fighter strike, visiting all the properties on our risk register to ensure they were aware and fully prepared.

Since then I have worked on disaster recovery for the council helping to test our "back up" arrangements and that all our critically identified services could access their documents and programmes. Also, with help from the HCC Resilience Team, a successful emergency planning table top exercise tested the emergency plan, and highlighted links between the plan and other functions such as the Incident Control Centre, reception centres and our multi-agency partners. (More on Exercise TLEKS on the next page.)

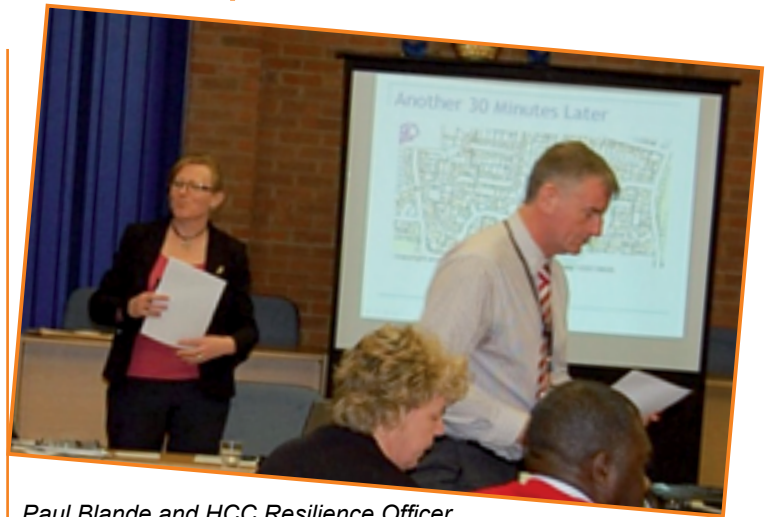
Things haven't slowed down, in February I spent many hours on the phone and making site visits to parts of the district affected by the flooding. A post incident debrief highlighted how well officers of the district managed but the work is still ongoing with numerous returns to government for the repair and renew grant and business support scheme. This year will see us focussing on training to ensure CCA compliance and in response to our most recent audit. We will be holding a live reception centre exercise in October, and are currently supporting Public Service Students from Oaklands College with emergency planning taster sessions. Autumn will see work with the town and parish councils. I never realised how busy I would be!"

SADC Exercise TLEKS

Earlier this year, St Albans City & District Council held Exercise TLEKS*, an ambitious table top exercise which tested the Emergency Plan alongside the Reception Centre Plan. The scenario was based around an aircraft incident on the outskirts of Wheathampstead.

Exercise play included holding an Incident Management Team meeting, running an Incident Control Centre, managing the incident and opening a reception centre all at the same time. This was achieved with help from a multi agency table of professional friends from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary.

The scenario involved aircraft wreckage falling on the village affecting housing, roads and a county maintained school. Houses needed to be evacuated and the school needed to be closed, while the plane itself caused a few other difficulties such as aviation fuel contamination and fire and other unidentified chemicals.



Paul Blande and HCC Resilience Officer Sarah Baker run the exercise.

Having an exercise where all aspects of incident management were active at the same time highlighted where the emergency plan and reception centre plan align with each other, how the ICC would run and where the information flowed between the Incident Management Team, Incident Control Centre, and multi agency partners.

All in all, it proved to be an effective exercise that certainly helped to keep St Albans prepared as the following week it all got tested for real with the flooding across the district!

** Why was it TLEKS? The original exercise was planned by current SADC Emergency Planning Officer Paul Blande's 'predecessor Ian SKELT and it was thought a fitting way to recognise Ian's work in the district.*

Volunteers Event - Capabilities in an Emergency



An event showcasing Hertfordshire Volunteers was held at the start of National Volunteer's Week in June. The event was organised by Hertfordshire Resilience and held at the Fire and Rescue Training Centre in Stevenage.

Stands and displays from 12 voluntary groups showed how they can support the emergency response in Hertfordshire. Over 20 volunteers from these organisations kindly gave up their time to spend the day demonstrating the range of skills, equipment and resources that they can provide. The event was well attended by staff from a wide variety of organisations.

The weather was kind and a number of organisations were able to hold their displays outdoors; including

- RAYNET were well represented and were able to show a wide variety of modern communication equipment;
- British Red Cross brought an Emergency Support Vehicle which is deployed to incidents to assist evacuees until alternative accommodation can be found;
- St John Ambulance brought a very impressive 4x4 ambulance which is deployed at incidents and events throughout the County;
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Volunteers gave very interesting presentations on their capabilities to assist;
- Hertfordshire 4x4 Response rely on their own vehicles to assist at events and incidents - towing stranded vehicles at the Herts County show was their latest call out!;
- Hertfordshire Boat Rescue and Hertfordshire Canoe Lifeguards both brought boats, kayaks and a lot of their equipment that is used for water rescue.

Indoor stands giving information about their organisations response capabilities included Victim Support; Midshires Urban Rescue; Royal Voluntary Service; and Hertfordshire Resilience.

Attendees were able to find out a lot about these organisations and how they can help the emergency response. In particular, some of the less well known organisations were able to raise their profile and showcase their capabilities.

The event received very positive feedback and was such a success that we have been asked to provide a similar event next year. If you were unable to attend this time, make a note to attend next year's event which will be bigger and better!



Social Care Response Officers trained for Emergencies

Social care staff from the County Council met at the Apsley site recently for a resilience training session run by the HCC Resilience Team. The council's Social Care Response Officers (SCROs) were updated about how resilience works within HCC and on a multi-agency level, and took part in a mini-exercise which allowed them to talk through some emergency scenarios that they could find themselves involved in.

Nominated by HCC's Children's Services and Health & Community Services departments, the SCROs are responsible for co-ordinating any social care response during an incident.

The SCROs would normally assist in the response to an emergency in the county by working at a local authority reception centre, run by the district/borough council to provide temporary shelter for those involved in the incident.



Typically the SCROs role at the reception centre includes:

- Coordination and provision of welfare support;
- Assessing immediate social care requirements and identifying vulnerable people; and
- Coordinating the provision of comforting/after-care support.

SCROs work alongside other multi-agency partners at the reception centre, such as the Red Cross, Royal Voluntary Service and other voluntary agencies, as well as NHS staff, and council staff.

A number of social care staff are trained for this role across the organisation and they are split across four specific areas of the county:

- Broxbourne, East Herts & Royston
- Dacorum, Watford & Three Rivers
- North Herts, Stevenage & Welwyn Hatfield
- St Albans & Hertsmere

Further training sessions are due to take place in the coming months.

For more information, please contact **Alan Kirton**, HCC Resilience Officer
alan.kirton@hertfordshire.gov.uk



Dont forget to follow us on Twitter

A new way of finding out what is going on in the world of emergency planning is to look at the HCC Resilience Team's new Twitter account.

The team tweets regularly about work that it is undertaking, such as events, training and exercising, and community resilience projects. We also share information from other resilience partner agencies, along with photographs and weblinks.

The account can also be utilised for keeping updated during an incident.

To see what the team has been tweeting, or to follow the account, look at www.twitter.com/hccresilience



Animal Welfare in Emergencies



As mentioned in the previous issue (Winter 2013), last year the Hertfordshire Resilience Management Group commissioned a new task and finish group to look at the care of pets in an emergency.

The aim of the Animal Welfare Task and Finish Group was 'to review and improve multi-agency arrangements to care for pets in an emergency through the identification of gaps in current capability and the sharing of good practice.'

The group was Chaired and supported by the HCC Resilience Team and had multi-agency membership, with appropriate specialists from resilience planning and animal welfare.

One of the four key objectives of the project was to provide pet owners with useful information to encourage them to be better prepared in caring for their pets in an emergency. To this end, pet guidance has been produced, which now forms part of the Hertfordshire 'Ready for Anything' campaign.

The guidance 'How to Care for your Pets in an Emergency' is shown on the following pages. It can be printed off and folded into a useful leaflet, with space to add information relevant to your pet. The guidance is also available at www.hertsdirect.org/resilience

The Animal Welfare Task & Finish Group has now been formally decommissioned. Thank you to all those agencies who gave up their time to be involved in the group. For further information on this project, please contact the HCC Resilience Team resilience.team@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Make a pet plan

now...

Things to think about:

1 Safer at home

If it is safe to do so, your pets may be happier left at home in a familiar environment.

Food, water and litter facilities for several days should be left accessible for your pet.

If your home or garden is at risk of flooding, consider moving your pets to higher ground.

Owners are responsible for ensuring that their pets are left in a safe and secure place.

2 Preparing your pet for evacuation

In some emergencies it may be necessary for the emergency services to evacuate you from your home for safety, with little or no notice.

The more you can do in advance to be prepared, the better the experience will be for you and your pets.

Plan ahead where you might go and consider alternative accommodation for your pets. Ideally this could be a relative or friend, local kennels or catteries, or a pet friendly hotel or bed and breakfast.

- For dogs, consider including a basket muzzle that fits your dog, as even the gentlest of animals can become aggressive when distressed by an emergency situation.

3 Pet Emergency Kit

What does your pet need in an emergency? Consider putting together an emergency kit:

- Collar and lead.
- Secure and labelled pet carrier.
- Proof of ownership and vaccination documents.
- Microchip details.
- Emergency contact list, to include details for your vet.
- Pet first aid kit.
- A record of any regular pet medication.
- Familiar items e.g. toy or blanket.
- Pet food.
- Sanitation – pet litter, litter box and poop bags.

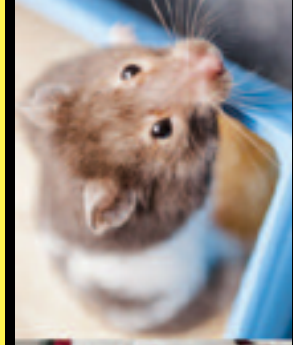
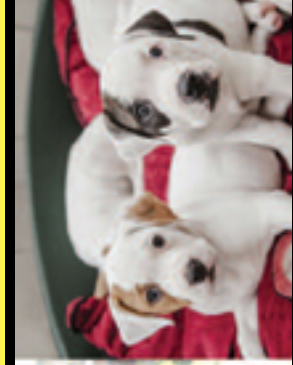
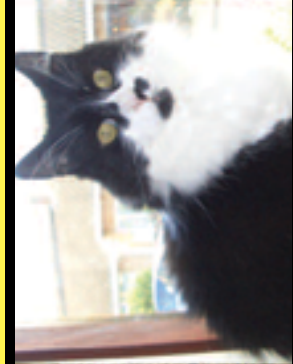
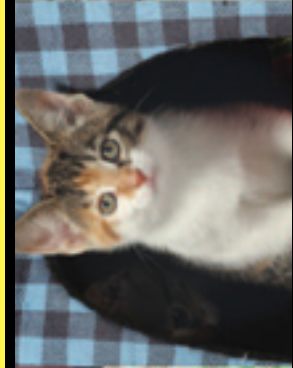
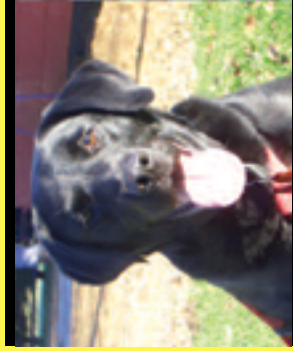
4 Identification and proof of ownership

Make sure your pet is micro-chipped for easy identification. This can be undertaken by any vet or animal welfare organisation.

Keep a note of the microchip number in your pet emergency kit and ensure your contact details are kept up to date. Other forms of identification should include collar tags.

With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected. If you take the time to prepare, your pets will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry.

Take the time now to get yourself and your pets ready.



Useful Information

You can find more information and tips online at www.hertsdirect.org/readyforanything

Useful information can also be found at:

- www.redcross.org.uk/prepare
- www.preparingforemergencies.co.uk
- www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodsoutheast or call **Floodline on 0845 988 1188**
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk or call **0845 46 47**
- www.herts.police.uk or telephone **101**
- www.rspca.org.uk or call **RSPCA 24-hour cruelty line 0300 1234 999**



Hertfordshire is a safe county but it can still experience situations that disrupt our daily lives. The good news is that there are simple things you can do to make sure you and your pets are ready to deal with an emergency, particularly if you think ahead and make some plans.

Checklist

- Prepare your pet plan and ensure your family is aware of it.
- Make sure your animal is identifiable.
- Keep a record of your pet's regular medication.
- Check with the Environment Agency to see if your area is at risk from flooding and consider registering for the Flood Alert service.

Add here any contact numbers, addresses or details relevant to your pet.

Vet's Contact Number:

Microchip Number:

Medication:

Local kennels or catteries:

Other:

Keep your plan updated and in a safe place.

Are you...
Ready
for
Anything!
HERTFORDSHIRE RESILIENCE



How to care for
your pets in an
emergency

New Team Member



My name is **Jenny Watson** and I'm the newest addition to the County Council's Resilience Team having joined at the end of April 2014.

I come straight out of university, with still another three months until I graduate from Kingston University where I have been studying for an MSc in Hazards and Disaster Management. Through this, I have learnt about a wide range of topics such as understanding the actual nature of risk, vulnerability and resilience. I have also gained further insight into the insurance and reinsurance business, the practicalities of catastrophe modelling and the challenges associated with emerging response planning. The scope of specialised and technical knowledge that I have gained has helped me to understand and appreciate more fully, the principles of integrated emergency management. I am currently working towards completing my dissertation which is deliberately relevant to my new role as a Resilience Officer, focusing on flooding in Hertfordshire and how future planning and response arrangements can be strengthened and implemented by the County Council.

During summer 2013, after I graduated with a BSc in Geography from University of Leicester, and prior to undertaking my postgraduate studies, I obtained work experience in the

Emergency Planning Department at Cambridge City Council. Whilst there, I was responsible for merging their Rest Centre Plan, Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan as well as their Friends and Family Reception Centre Plan with the aim of making a more concise and usable document. The knowledge I gained during my placement has already proved invaluable for my work at HCC and I look forward to developing my understanding further with each new challenge. I'm especially excited to be given the chance to put the theoretical understanding I have acquired to use in practical situations.

In my spare time I enjoy exercising; with running, cycling and yoga real passions of mine. I offset all the good these hobbies do me though when I explore my other interest which is baking. I love experimenting with new flavours and decorations – something which will be put to the test when I bake my sister's wedding cake in November!



District/Borough Council Staff Training

Resilience Training Prospectus for 2014/15. The prospectus has been developed and produced for the district and borough councils, working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, for the training of staff to respond to civil emergencies.

The tables below detail the courses coming up for 2014.

Training Courses – September 2014

Course	Venue	Date	Time
Emergency Response in Practice	Bulbourne Room, Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH	Tuesday 9 th September 2014	09.30 – 12.30
Reception Centre Awareness	Committee Room 1, North Herts District Council, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth SG6 3JF	Wednesday 24 th September 2014	09.30 – 12.30

Training Courses – October 2014

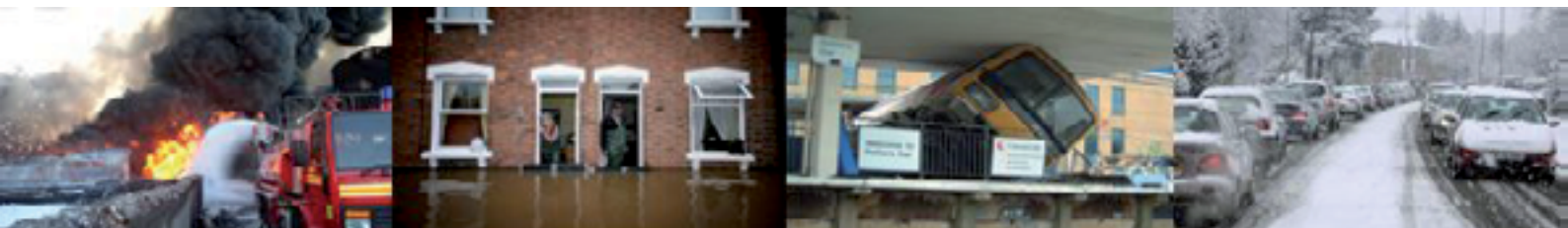
Course	Venue	Date	Time
Loggist Training	Bulbourne Room, Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH	Tuesday 7 th October 2014	09.30 – 12.30
Introduction to Business Continuity	Bulbourne Room, Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH	Tuesday 14 th October 2014	09.30 – 12.30
Reception Centre Manager	Lecture Room 5, HFRS Training Centre, Longfield, Hitchin Road, Stevenage SG1 4AE	Thursday 16 th October 2014	09.30 – 12.30
Silver Liaison Officer	Lecture Room 5, HFRS Training Centre, Longfield, Hitchin Road, Stevenage SG1 4AE	Tuesday 21 st October 2014	09.30 – 12.30

Training Courses – November 2014

Course	Venue	Date	Time
Business Continuity in Practice	Bulbourne Room, Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH	Tuesday 18 th November 2014	09.30 – 12.30

Staff who would like to book a free place on any of the courses should contact their respective Emergency Planning / Resilience Officer or email us at: resilience.team@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Resilience Team



- Provides professional support and response arrangements across HCC departments so that the Authority meets its statutory duties as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Provides a traded service to partner District and Borough Councils to assist them in the preparation and maintenance of emergency plans.
- Ensures that HCC can fully play its part in a multi-agency, major incident response as well as continuing to deliver critical services during times of disruption.
- Direct work with communities is done under the "Hertfordshire Resilience" banner - the County's Local Resilience Forum. The Resilience team provide the secretariat function which also drives forward multi-agency, major incident response plans, co-ordinates and develops training and exercising arrangements and facilitates the strong partnerships which have stood the county well in responding to a number of high profile major incidents over the years.

The Resilience Team is part of the HCC department of Community Protection. The Chief Fire Officer, Roy Wilsher is the Director of Community Protection.

The Community Protection Directorate has four areas;

- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS)
- Trading Standards
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU)
- Resilience

**For more information on
Community Protection, please visit**

**[http://www.hertsdirect.org/
services/commsafe/commprotect/](http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/commsafe/commprotect/)**

Contact Us:

HCC Resilience Team

Community Protection, County Hall , Pegs Lane , Hertford SG13 8DE

Tel: **01992 555961**

Email: **resilience.team@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

Issue 24 - Winter 2014

The next edition of this newsletter will be available in Winter 2014.

