

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MARKET STALL

Jane Langley,

Joint Community Resilience Co-Ordinator, North Yarmouth,

Chair of Joint Meeting of Co-Ordinators and Chairs of Great Yarmouth Resilience Groups.

Great Yarmouth is essentially a sand spit with a very long sea-front and has always been, and still is, subject to flooding. It is at the confluence of the rivers Yare and Bure where they empty the Broads into the sea.

The Great Yarmouth community resilience volunteers have run stalls distributing educational material and information, mostly in the centre of town, for the last three years. When considering how to target the population with messages on preparing for all types of emergency, it is inevitable that flooding is what interests them most, so this topic is used to capture interest and get people to stop at the table.

When the stall is outdoors we have the use of the local Neighbourhood Management Team tent, with a table and some chairs. Leaflets from



many different agencies are available; the NHS, Environment Agency, British Red Cross, Norfolk Resilience Forum, Utilities (water, sewage, electricity), Great Yarmouth Borough Council, the National Flood Forum, to name but a few. Examples of air brick covers,

floodgates and sand bag substitutes are eagerly examined. We have become adept at preventing the wind from re-distributing the literature throughout the market!

Most stalls have been sited in the market square or in Market Gates Shopping Centre to take advantage of the increased footfall on Wednesday market days. The mornings are generally better attended than the afternoons. At different times the British Red Cross, Environment Agency and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency have set



up next to our stall and provided added attraction. Volunteers staff the stall on a rota and there are usually at least 4 people present. We have also been invited to “set up shop” at events such as the GY High School fete, South Yarmouth Community Fair and other community events.

We developed strategies to engage shoppers in conversation and found that actively handing people a general leaflet, detailing how to prepare for different emergencies, was more productive than waiting for them to approach the table. Because Yarmouth is a tourist town, we sometimes found that we were talking to visitors from other parts of the country, which made for discussions of hazards local to them and perhaps spread the resilience message wider. The anniversary of the 1953 East Coast floods provided a great opportunity and some old photographs attracted many to the stall and provoked interesting reminiscences from the older citizens.



It is difficult to measure how effective our efforts are in raising awareness of resilience issues. During one session we noted that we had, between us, spoken to over 100 people. We try to answer queries or point people towards suitable sources of information. We hope that some of the leaflets are read and do not get trashed immediately! We anticipate that by repeating the stall at least twice a year, together with social media posts and other small local events, we are gradually achieving a higher profile and encouraging personal emergency preparedness.

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