



Datchworth Parish Council Briefing Note

Agenda item Completion and adoption of Parish Council Emergency Plan	Date 19 January 2026
	Committee/ Working Group/Councillors Cllr Perry Cllr Norman

Why

During the week beginning 5 January 2026, especially on 9th and 10th, areas of Datchworth were without a mains gas supply. In particular, Bury Lane, Foldingshott, Raffin Green Lane, Raffin Close/Park, School Lane were without mains gas for approx. 48 hours. Whilst this might not seem a long time it occurred during the cold and wet winter period and many residents were left not knowing what was happening and when the supply would be reconnected. Elderly residents would have been cold, may not have been able to cook hot food, could not have hot water etc.

Cadent, the gas utility company, attended to address the problem but were inefficient in communicating information to residents in a consistent manner. Heaters were allegedly available but who from and where, no-one really knew. Cadent Customer Services Dept closed at 5.00pm on the Friday and did not re-open until 9.00am Monday. Comments and requests for information abounded on Datchworth Community Facebook pages. Cadent engineers visited properties to turn off mains gas taps. They had to visit again to turn them back on and check boilers once the supply was reconnected. Some people knew they were coming, some did not.

This incident could have been handled much better and communication much improved. DPC had no official presence and could not convey definitive information to residents. We are sure this would have been helpful.

We could face similar circumstances as they are in Kent regarding water shortages. We need to be prepared!!



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How (including Time and Money)

The draft Emergency Plan requires completing and adopting. The Plan should include sections on how DPC will respond to Utilities “outages” by, as example, communicating fact checked information to residents via the DPC website/social media pages, liaising with the Utilities Lead Engineer/Customer Services about support services, risk factors, vulnerable residents etc etc.

A small Working Group should be convened to co-ordinate responses, information and importantly, formal contact with the Utilities Company. Vulnerable residents’ safety must be checked wherever possible.

A register of key telephone numbers needs to be available for all utility companies.

DPC should ask utility companies to share with them all residents listed on the Priority Services Register so we can assist in checking welfare.

No additional DPC costs are anticipated for DPC other than Clerk’s time in compiling the Emergency Plan document and uploading to the website etc.

Councillors’ time is voluntary in respect of meetings and research time.

Attached are two documents:

DPC Emergency Plan dated 2024 – does not appear to be on the DPC website

Draft Emergency Plan

When

At Full Council meeting on 27 January 2026.