**Date: 09/11/2020**

**Duration:** 51:00

**Interviewer:** \*Project introduction\*

**Participant:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** So… okay, so my first question is what’s the name of your group?

**Participant:** Well that actually is not a simple question.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Participant:** Urm, it started off as being the [GROUP NAME]. Because I live in a village called [VILLAGE NAME 1] and I got asked to coordinate a response for the village. But [VILLAGE NAME 1] is right next doors to another village called [VILLAGE NAME 2]. And they really operate as one village. Urm… but we are in two different county councils and two different parish councils, urm, so… [VILLAGE NAME 2] Parish Council was going to do something themselves whilst [VILLAGE NAME 1] Parish Council wanted me to do something as a community group. But we knew it, they basically had to work together. Urm… so the group across both villages has no one name, except in the main public facing part of it which is a helpline. And we just call the [NAME OF HELPLINE].

**Interviewer:** Okay. And when did it start?

**Participant:** Urr… just before lockdown.

**Interviewer:** Okay, before lockdown.

**Participant:** Yeah, the week before lockdown.

**Interviewer:** And… who was involved? How did it start?

**Participant:** Urm, it was fairly multi-pronged through the village. There was one lady who works with [ORGANISATION NAME], who… urm… has a lot of Facebook followers who put out a message on there saying, “come on let’s see if we can get some volunteers going for every road in the villages.” At the same time urm some people in the village had rung me and said would I put together and emergency response, because I… used to be on the parish council I used to chair the parish council and when I was doing that I … urr, put together and emergency plan for flooding, because we had the river [NAME OF RIVER] going through. Urm… so, this other lady [GROUP MEMBER NAME] was doing something through Facebook, I put together something through the various county, county and parish councils. And urm… obviously we were talking together. And we also brought in urm a local charity, a very new charity, but their express purpose it to look after urm, vulnerable adults.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, these three different areas in the village started bubbling to the surface and basically, we tried to bring it all together and work together.

**Interviewer:** To what? What was the aim of the group? In that moment when you created.

**Participant:** Urm, to make sure no one in the village was… urr, lacked support from anything that was COVID related, or any impact on their life that was caused by COVID.

**Interviewer:** Has anything changed since the group started?

**Participant:** Urm… well I think, as with most groups starting, it went with, and especially with three groups all trying to do the same thing, urm, it went through a period of, of forming, storming, norming, all those normal, urm, things. And now it’s, most people are working together very well. The urr, purpose of the organisation is still the same. Urm… and we’ve just got a bit more refined in what we’re doing. We’re, we’ve done a survey we’ve worked out what we can do better. Urm, so as we’re going into the second lockdown, we’re trying to improve what we did before.

**Interviewer:** Okay, in what way?

**Participant:** Urm, well we’ve got, I mean [VILLAGE NAME 2] has about three and half thousand people and [VILLAGE NAME 1] about a thousand. So, four and half thousand people that we’re looking after. Urm, and… one of the major bits of feedback, I mean basically, everyone said it was done very well. Urm… but looking at those little things that were brought up, people didn’t know… urr where the information as coming from or, they just sort of heard it by word of mouth or or… urm, we don’t have one village magazine of anything of that nature that goes out regularly enough, so some people got it on Facebook, some people got it off off the electronic medium called Genie which is our local, local urm contact point, some people got it from word of mouth, some people got it through telephone from neighbours. So, wetried to put together a more cohesive method of communication.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so at the moment what is the situation with the group?

**Participant:** In what regard? I mean, it’s fully operational, it’s urm providing services to people.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so it’s pretty much the same as in the beginning?

**Participant:** Urr, yeah. Urr we had a little bit of a lull between lockdowns, but now we’re back up to full operations again.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay. You mentioned that you had a role in the parish councils, so you have any previous experiences experience organising groups like this?

**Participant:** Well I was [POSITION WITHIN COUNCIL] of the parish council; I am a trustee and used to chair urr one of the conservation charities in the village. I’ve lived in the village, on and off for fifty years. Urm, and… I’ve run my own business, I work in rural, sustainable development, urm… I’ve work in developing countries doing a lot of community development work. So… guess I had a few things that people thought, “oh she could do it.”

**Interviewer:** And what was your motivation? Why did you get involved?

**Participant:** Urm… probably because I was asked.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And I mean one of the other volunteer roles that I’ve done for many years, is I work as a community first responder with the ambulance service. Urm… one of my strengths is working in an emergency. Is if there’s a crisis, I’ll fix it. Urm… so… I suppose everyone has a slightly urm… self-purpose. And if I think I can be useful in an emergency then I think I’ve got the role. Urm… I prefer to stay out of things once they’re… long term management isn’t for me. But emergency situations I’m quite good at.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, it’s you know, played to my own strengths.

**Interviewer:** And what is your role in the group?

**Participant:** I, well, I’m technically called a coordinator, and I run it. I I I’ve put together the plans and urm obviously you work together with a massive team getting them to do it. Urm… but yeah. I’ve headed it up.

**Interviewer:** And how does it the activity you do in the group relates with other parts of your life?

**Participant:** \*Laughs\* Well, as I say, I used to [DESCRIPTION OF PAST OCCUPATION], so its… urr within my skill level, I also did a PhD in [FIELD OF STUDY] so… urm. …So, it’s an area that I’m sort of familiar with. Urr, but the rest of my life well actually I would normally be out in [COUNTRY NAME 1] working with our charity, we have a family charity, so… urr doesn’t sort of connect with that, it stopped me doing… well COVID has stopped us. But, yeah, the rest of my life, my poor old husband has had to sit in the background because this has taken over sort of twenty-four hours a day.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Participant:** Yeah. It’s been a lot of work.

**Interviewer:** So, do you feel that tit takes a lot of time and effort from you?

**Participant:** Urr… much more so… for the first lockdown. But yes, yes. It was seven days a week.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Everyday, long hours.

**Interviewer:** And how about emotional effort also?

**Participant:** Urm… I thrive on doing things like this, so it wasn’t too bad. The only thing that I did find frustrating, urm… was I suppose you’d call it stakeholder management. Dealing with egos. I spent a lot of time dealing with egos.

**Interviewer:** Even in this project? In this group?

**Participant:** Yeah absolutely. More so at the beginning, you know, when people are… jockeying to see, you know, who’s more important that who.

**Interviewer:** And how did you manage that?

**Participant:** Urm… just a lot of talking to people and trying to make them realise what the purpose of it was and, urm… that there isn’t a, any individual that’s more important that anyone else. And that, it’s about… the end user, it’s about the person that needs help. And making sure that they get the best result. So, it’s just talking to people.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urr, can you tell me a little bit about the things, the kind of things that urr the group urr still do, urm, for example what kind of activities are the group doing?

**Participant:** Okay, so we have a central helpline, we set up a central phone number that anyone could call. And urm… urr it’s a lot of back stuff that went with it, databases and all sorts so we would have a call log. We trained people to be good helpline phone answerers so they had safeguarding training and induction training about confidentiality, they were all DBS checked. So, all of those things we still had to do, but they were in the background to get this helpline going. We then had people training as phone buddies. So, if people felt they were feeling a bit isolated we would give them a phone buddy to regularly stay in contact with them. If people were a little more, urr emotionally upset we had some training councillors who were working on a volunteer basis with us. Urm, we also linked in with the clergy because they also have a set urm, demographic of people. Urm, so we could either provide them pastoral care or councillor care, or just phone buddy care. We put together urr packages of support for people who couldn’t get ion to the internet or needed IT support. So, we had IT buddies. We had… a minimum of three people per road in every road in the village, every road and street, urm and being rural we strayed quite a long way. Urm… and they would do shopping pharmacy pick-ups, walk the dog, put the bins out, take post to the post office, things like that.

Urm, we had a major problem with our pharmacy in the village we only had one pharmacy, and they couldn’t cope with the urm, number of people queuing and that was causing a lot of friction in the village. So, we put together a system where by people could ring the helpline and say, “I need my medication picked up.” I would communicate with the pharmacist every evening with a full list of all the medications that were needed for the next day, he could make sure they were got ready, and then we could send one person in to pick them up and deliver them. O if they weren’t going to be ready, urm we could go back to the resident and if it was urgent either get their script taken somewhere else or, if it was there was supply issue we could explain things or we could go back to the GPs and urr get them to prescribe something different. So, we managed to put in a pharmacy system so that the queues disappeared which urr made life an awful lot easier. Especially when street champions were going down there to pick up medication for someone else, they were standing two hours in a queue and then getting to the front to find there was no medication ready. So, that system worked. And that was one of our most used… urm, interventions.

Urm… what else do we do? We’ve urm, got various grants of people, urm parish council, district councils, the lottery, urm, so we’ve got hardship grants. We did the pick ups and deliveries for the foodbank. Urm, people that were getting food because they were shielded. At the very beginning, if the cancelled the food parcels they urm, lost their priority slot in the supermarket as well. So, we had some people that were getting the food parcels, didn’t want to cancel them but didn’t need them. And so, we were re-distributing them to people that were short of food. Urm, we… had a, a group of volunteers that sprung up put of nowhere, urm… that started cooking cakes for key workers so that all the key workers in the village got cake delivered to them regularly.

Urm, we when, if people were isolating or just elderly and needed help, urr we would help them get onto social services. If social services couldn’t do anything which Is what we often found, urm, we had a band of people that were – they were actually the community first responders that had full PPE and also basic lifting skills and things. They would go in and help people with things like, if they needed a bed moved from one, from upstairs to downstairs. Urm, because they could no longer get up their stairs and they had no family to help them. So, we’d go in and do things like that. We would manage… we had… quite a few safeguarding issues that we were able to escalate, urr we would, people that were illiterate, helping them get onto universal credits. So, I mean, basically, we we if someone rang us with a problem, we would sort it as best we could, or put them onto someone who could sort it. And then stay in touch with them to make sure it was sorted. Urm… so some of the things we didn’t put together as packages. But the problem came, so we delt with them.

**Interviewer:** And how often do people in the group do these things that you just mentioned?

**Participant:** Urm, these sort of things that fall more sort of social service-y type things?

**Interviewer:** No, all of them?

**Participant:** Oh, every day.

**Interviewer:** Every day?

**Participant:** Everyday, yeah. There’s shopping and pharmacy pick ups happening every day.

**Interviewer:** Even during the summer?

**Participant:** After lockdown it was much fewer. But there was some-it was the more vulnerable during that time because we had found out and done things for them during lockdown and then when lockdown eased you couldn’t just drop them. You couldn’t say, “right, on you – look after yourself now.” Urm, so… people that hadn’t been able to go shopping and now could, all of the – the easy things sort of disappeared. But the very hard things that more vulnerable people, they stayed, and we had to keep on looking after them. So, we’re actually looking at creating a sustainable solution for them for the longer term.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so you are discussing that at the moment.

**Participant:** Yes, because it’s just highlighted the holes in social services and the health service, that you know, unfortunately not, not everything can be paid for. Urm… and there are holes and it’s highlighted them.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And how many people are in the group?

**Participant:** Urm… well we… during the first lockdown we had two hundred and fifty volunteers that were street champions.

**Interviewer:** Three hundred? Okay.

**Participant:** Two hundred and fifty, they were doing the shopping and the pharmacy and they, and we had another fifty who were DBS checked, induction trained, safeguard trained.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and all of them were active helpers.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And in terms of resources, what kind of resources do the group have?

**Participant:** \*Laughs\*

**Interviewer:** If any.

**Participant:** Us! We have us.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant: U**rm, no, the parish councils urr…paid for the phone app at five weeks per week per app to allow the phone lines wo work. And the paid for the DBS checks. Urm… they paid for some PPE… urr… but the rest is, is just volunteers, just do it. You know, everybody pays their own petrol to go to the foodbank, or, you know, whatever.

**Interviewer:** Mmm-hmm, any particular skills that people in the group have?

**Participant:** I think you can find any skill and every skill in any community. Urr if we – I mean the one thing that we lacked was urm… marketing type communications skills. Which, but other than that, and… you know, we had nurses and web designers and – people just come out of the woodwork. Especially when they’re on furlough and can’t work. I think it would have been very different if urm… people were having to work. And you know, we’ve got far fewer volunteers for this second lockdown.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And did you have access to funds, any kind of funds? No?

**Participant:** No, just what I said from the parish councils.

**Interviewer:** Nothing else, no?

**Participant:** No, we applied for and got some lottery funds, urr… which came through ai think in July.

**Interviewer:** In July, okay. And how did you get people involved?

**Participant:** Urm… we just used every sort of communication that we could find social media. Urm… phone a friend, you know. I suppose, you know, myself and one other lady… that were on the coordinating group had pretty wide networks within the village. Because like I said my family have lived here over fifty years. She’s lived here about thirty. So, urm, you know, we’re talking about a population of about five thousand.

**Interviewer:** Five thousand, okay.

**Participant:** So… urr… we were able just to get the message out.

**Interviewer:** Mmm-hmm, okay. You had the Facebook and…

**Participant:** There was a Facebook site, there was urr… an electronic urr… magazine that goes out every fortnight that, I mean it’s got a subscriber list of about twelve hundred, so that got to those people. Urm… through the parish council websites, urm… and then you know literally just friends telling friends, telling friends.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm, and how did you coordinate the help, how did you coordinate the group?

**Participant:** Urr through the helpline.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Urr, so… residents would ring in, urr, the helpline volunteers would contact me, I would allocate a volunteer with the right skills, kept a database of all the skills. The database actually was urm, put together and owned by the parish council so that it was GDPR compliant. And…urm… actually the parish council also did the risk assessments so that all the volunteers were covered by parish council insurance. Urm… but yeah, it was basically just the central coordination coming back through the helpline.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… is the group part of any national network?

**Participant:** No.

**Interviewer:** In con- were you in contact with other groups, besides those that you mentioned that started.

**Participant:** Outside of the village, urm we… sort of – we were in contact with the county council support hubs. Urm… but no, no one else.

**Interviewer:** How was the relationships with the council for example?

**Participant:** Urm, it’s pretty good… it’s, it started off with them saying no to everything.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And then realising that actually they couldn’t do it all. And then they realised that there were some local groups that were actually doing quite well. And they started working with us much better. But to start with they were trying to put it all together for themselves. And, you know, it dawned on them that [DISTRICT NAME] is a massive rural area. And they couldn’t, they couldn’t cover the local areas in the same way.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, they, after that realisation hit, they stated working well with us.

**Interviewer:** Hmmm-hmm, when was that, when they?

**Participant:** Urm, about…probably… May/June.

**Interviewer:** So, a few months, a few weeks, after.

**Participant:** Yeah, well, yeah. We… lockdown started 23rd March so yeah, probably May or June.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and since then, they keep, urm…

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay, any other local charity or official bodies that you are connected to?

**Participant:** Not really, no.

**Interviewer:** And has you r group tried to get official recognition, for example by becoming a company or a charity?

**Participant:** urm… no. Although right from the start we tried, we did link in with this charity in the village and our idea is that… we will hand it as a package through to this charity to maintain going forward. So, if there’s any – once this pandemic is over, if there are any village emergency the systems and process are all still in place within this charity in the village.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what’s the name of the charity just to-?

**Participant:** Urm, it’s called [CHARITY NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… and just to, going back to something that I forget to ask you, urr, but why did, why don’t you have connection with other groups and organisations? Urm, did you thought about that?

**Participant:** Frankly we were too busy sorting out urm, putting in support locally to worry about whether we need to grow ourselves as an organisation. We just wanted to do the job. We see that we’re here for a purpose and then we go again. We’re not trying to build an organisation for the hell of it.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah, I see. So, you talk a bit about your own motivations for getting involved, or why did you start to get involved. And how about other motivations. Why do you, why other participants got involved in your opinion?

**Participant:** Well, I think, I think there was a ground swell of… people just wanting to help each other. I mean this is a very cohesive community. Urm… and-

**Interviewer:** Why? Did you say that sorry?

**Participant:** I don’t know. It’s rural, urm… we are used to looking after ourselves. Urr, we have a lot of things going on in the village, there’s always events and clubs and you know, it’s a very very active community. And always has been. Urm, so it didn’t surprise me in the least that people wanted to get involved.

**Interviewer:** Okay. But why, so… something else maybe?

**Participant:** No, it’s just a sense of community. It’s you know, we… I don’t know. It’s just a very friendly community.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… okay so now I want to ask about any problems you or the group have encountered in the process. You mentioned that the involvement in the group meant a lot of time and effort for you, did you think that for the others was the same?

**Participant:** Urm, certainly, there, there were three of us that urr… bore the brunt of putting all of this together. And… the three of us worked our tails off. And… I think… if we weren’t the personalities we were, it wouldn’t have got done. But the volunteers that were doing shopping and pick ups and that sort of thing – they certainly didn’t work the sort of hours. Urm, you know, they could be called on one or twice a week. Urm… but and even, and some people complained that they didn’t do enough., They didn’t have enough to do. you know we had more volunteers than we had jobs. Urm… you know… it’s its funny because like the parish council clerks had their pay increase during the lockdown, in case they had to work some extra hours. Urr, now clerks aren’t paid a huge amount, but… at, when the survey was put together after the end of the first lockdown, serval people turned around and said, “yes, but what if we’d had to pay you three for all the work you had done? Urm, there’s no way we could have afforded it.” Urm… but if you had paid us, you wouldn’t have got those sorts of hours out of us. Because if you’re paid, you’re paid, you’re paid for a certain number of hours and you can’t pay some someone to work all hours – I mean I got calls at three o’clock in the morning. Urm… and, also if they’d paid my daily consulting rate, they certainly wouldn’t have afford it. But it was, it… because we were all lockdown, because we couldn’t work, some of us were on furlough so there was some money coming in, you were just free and able to do it. But if you’d had to pay for it to be done, a) you would have needed a department of people, and b) it would have been very expensive.

**Interviewer:** And have people drop out of your group?

**Participant:** Urm, certainly some of the shopping and and pharmacy volunteers have dropped out of the second lockdown. And because they’ve had to go back to work, or they’re having to take kids to school. You know, they’re they’re lives are sort of back to normal even though we’re in lockdown.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Nothing related with the activities or the job that they they were doing?

**Participant:** No, no. I think they would have preferred to be doing it. \*Laughs\*

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Participant:** Well rather than trying to work from home, get kids to school, you know.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I see. Urm, any other problems that have affected the group?

**Participant:** Lack of data.

**Interviewer:** Lack of data, okay. In what sense?

**Participant:** Well, urm… knowing who is vulnerable, getting messages to the very vulnerable when you’re not told who they are. You are sort of starting from a point where you had one hand tied behind your back. So… you sort of had to dig these people out of the woodwork. Urm… now some, some of them came to us when it was too late. You know, they’d had to call 999 because the situation had got so bad. Because they didn’t know help was there. If I know GDPR is there to protect us and all of the rest of it. But… urm, the people who are shielding and the people who are on the extremely vulnerable list of social services, it would have been helpful to know who they are.

**Interviewer:** So, but you didn’t –

**Participant:** Because we could have prevented a lot of bad things happening.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what kind of things did you do to try to solve that, or-?

**Participant:** Urm, basically with our street volunteers we, we just kept on pushing the message that if you’re in the slightest bit worried about anyone in your neighbourhood, let us know. Urm….

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** But even so, you know, people did slip through the cracks to start with.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and you mentioned before some communication issues, was this a problem that you faced during the process?

**Participant:** Well only in that there is no one single method of communicating with everyone across both villages. So, we couldn’t – other than a letter drop. And… there’s only so many times you can ask volunteers to go and letter drop even, you know, five thousand houses.

**Interviewer:** Five thousand, okay.

**Participant:** Urm… so, yeah, we’re working on a cascade system now. But it would have been useful if that had been in place to start with.

**Interviewer:** Cascade system, what do you mean?

**Participant:** Yeah, so, if I’ve got a message to send to all five thousand people, I tell twenty, each of them twenty tell another twenty, so everyone only has twenty people to deal with.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And so on until we hit every house.

**Interviewer:** And you are working on that now?

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Interesting. So, you change also some ways of working coordinating, organising. Urm, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

**Participant:** Well, urm, the communication is the main way that we have changed. I mean, what else have we changed. Urm… I mean, the two villages at the parish council level, to start with, one parish council, their purpose was to make sure that no one suffered any impact, any adverse effects from wither COVID or the impacts of COVID. Whereas the other parish council only went as far as urr, from COVID, not the impacts of COVID. So, for example, if someone, they’re, they’re interpretation of that was, say if someone gets COVID we’ll help them. But the first council it was well if someone is having to lockdown and is having mental health problems – that’s an impact of COVID. So, there was slightly different interpretations of the responsibilities of parish councils. And… over the course of time we’ve now managed to get them to meet more in the middle. Actually, more towards the side of impacts of COVID.

**Interviewer:** Urm, what kind of things have you done that might have helped keep the group going?

**Participant:** Urm, for example the helpline people who probably were the busiest of the volunteers, we would have a weekly get together with them, on Zoom, not physically. And let them share experiences – so they had a really high degree of camaraderie. Urm, we also had urr, urr an group called the communications group which was a, a cross village group, urm, that we put together to try to get over this lack of communication problem that we have in the village. And that sort of became more a cross-village advisory group. Urm, and I think that level of communication, the the bringing people together and just letting them share the good and the bad and urm… helped keep people together.

**Interviewer:** Did you have meetings? Urm, with the volunteers for example?

**Participant:** not the large group of them, just just these small groups like the helpline volunteers would meet. Or the people that were dealing with bereavement we would meet and discuss those issues.

**Interviewer:** Urm, any other activities or things that you have done that you remember?

**Participant:** Urm… lets have a little look. What else are we doing?

**Interviewer:** Reviewing, giving feedback for example of the things that you did?

**Participant:** Well we’ve done, we did a big survey.

**Interviewer:** Yes, okay.

**Participant:** And we’ve published some of the findings from that in various different media. So, we’ve we’ve put an article in the local [NAME OF NEWS OUTLET]for example that will come out week after next. So yes, we fed back the results of the survey, urm –

**Interviewer:** Okay. Why did you do the survey? Because I saw that you, you sent me you sent John those files and I would like to know a bit more about that. Why did you do that? Urm-.

**Participant:** Probably because I’ve got PhD and you think to yourself, if I’ve done something, I’ve got to measure how well it went.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what did you find?

**Participant:** You know you just, you do something, and you want to know what could have gone, what could have gone better.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And were any of the things that you did strategic or just ad-hoc?

**Participant:** No, no, I mean, the… right from the very start, we tried to take a strategic view of the whole thing.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Urm, so the things I’ve been talking about have come from a strategic look at what’s going on and where. I mean we had one chap in the village who worked all, with me the whole way, who’s an ex-[OCCUPATION]. Who was just brilliant at interpreting the legislation. Urm… so, we’ve… really tried to say right in front of what’s going on. Urm, to keep that strategic view. So, the emergency response group, through the lockdown was meeting every week, to deal with the strategic things. The operation flowed flowed from that the whole time.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… and, have you learnt something from coordinating this group?

**Participant:** Yeah, never to do it again. \*Laughs\*

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Participant:** It has been so much work, *so* much work. I say that, I’m just at that stage in my life now where I’m wanting to retire. Urm… in fact I was going to retire this year and then this happened. And so, I’m suddenly working twice as hard as I’ve worked for ages. Urm… no it’s I mean it has been rewarding but it has been a lot of work. And the biggest lesson is that the parish councils *should* have had emergency plans in place before this happened. I mean so should the national government come to that. They, they they did not have proper planning in place, they did not have the PPE in there, you know, all those things that we… now know. Urm… when I was on the parish council five years ago, we put together a flood emergency plan and that was supposed to be the first part of further emergency plans. Neither parish councils went ahead and went any further. It’s appalling, they should have done. Every parish across the country should have had emergency plans in place. If they had, we would have dealt with this so much better and more consistency across the country. I mean, I know, my mother-in-law, she’s in a place, there’s been no help. You know, no local community assistance and you know, she looks at what’s going on here and just thinks, “wow,” you know, “why isn’t’ that happening around me?” I mean that’s the biggest lesson its, it’s the politicians whether they’re in Westminster or in county or parish councils need to wake themselves up and start planning ahead.

**Interviewer:** And you think that is possible?

**Participant:** \*Laughs\* It’s possible. Whether it’s *probable,* I don’t know. Urm… I hope so, I hope so. And they’ve also *got* to sort out data. They’ve got to sort out the legislation so that in an emergency situation the data can flow better.

**Interviewer:** And from the survey, the survey that you did, what kind of lessons or… have you …?

**Participant:** It was mainly the operational lessons.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** I mean we we we learnt about, urm, a more strategic lesson about the cross village working. I mean, this is quite a… unusual situation to be working across two parishes, two councils, and one of those councils is a district council, one is a unitary authority under county council. So, it’s… urm… and it’s about the stakeholder management of all of that. So, we learnt some lessons on that, urr at the more strategic level and the data, obviously.

But the operational level, I mean basically, if we just did what we did before, the people in the village would be so happy. So, the lessons we learnt at the operational level are really icing on the cake. It’s just improving things.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** I mean, one of the things that came out strongly in the survey was even the people that didn’t need our services, felt less vulnerable and less scared, just knowing it was there. Urm… so….

**Interviewer:** That’s very useful.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And how do you see the future of this group?

**Participant:** Well hopefully we get a vaccine, and we can all go back to our normal lives!

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** This group will exist in it’s current form. We want to be able to, and we’re working on building the capacity of this local charity so the systems and process stay in place, the parish councils can buy into it and there will be an emergency plan there for the future. But it can just be moth balled within the charity.

**Interviewer:** And you are starting to do things to -?

**Participant:** Yes, urm, I’m working with urm… a paid consultant – someone else being paid, hum – to… build the capacity of this charity so that they can take on that role.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay. And how do you see your role in the group in the future? Or in the project that will be?

**Participant:** Well once, once the charity can take it over… I’m going back to doing my own life.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** You know, as I said at the beginning, you know, one of my strengths is working in an emergency situation. The on-going management of it, that’s for someone else. I’ll get you through a crisis, you know I didn’t sign up for the next five years.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I understand. Well, I don’t think I have any more questions, thank you. You were very clear and straight forward so this is this is really good. Is there anything that you’d like to add?

**Participant:** … Urm, no I just think I’m fortunate in that this is a, such a robust community that we live in. Urm… people want to help each other, and everybody knows everybody. Urm, well not everybody, but you know. It is cohesive.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And, you know, I’ve got a lot of experience in working in rural communities – I would not like to do it in a town. Urm, but yeah – I think rural communities do have a certain something that you don’t get in towns.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and it was important for your situation?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah I think so.

**[Debriefing]**

**[End of Interview]**