**Date: 28/09/2020**

**Duration:**

* **Part One:** 01:00:12
* **Part Two:** 00:18:40
* **Total:** 01:18:52

**Transcript:**

**Part One:**

**Interviewer:** *Project Introduction.*

So just some background questions first, so, what is the name of your group?

**Participant:** Okay, it’s called the [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** Mmh-hmm, and when did the group start?

**Participant:** Well… about three years – initially it actually did start in 2015, what had happened, we’re a relatively small village, probably about a thousand people, and we’re on the, I don’t know where you live yourself, but we’re on the, on the estuary of the [RIVER NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And in some very bad weather in 2015, urm, a local distribution, urr, electricity centre was flooded, so the village was without power for a day or two, and one of the villagers decided that it would be the right time to gather a group of people together in case the same thing happened in the future.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** But nobody anticipated something like COVID-19, of course, when this was set up. It was set up in case, maybe there was flooding, and people couldn’t get in and out of the village, maybe there’s a power cut, this sort of thing.

**Interviewer:** I see. So, it was in the wake of the floods?

**Participant:** It was.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So, the aim of the group was basically, at that time, to be prepared for any future disasters or –

**Participant:** Exactly, exactly, I think the term we’d use would be ‘resilience’ – so, the village could be resilient if, for example, emergency services couldn’t get here at any time.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** So, stop me if I go on a bit, there are… there are usually about seven of us, we, we’re just called co-ordinators, but one of the team had set up a, a… a training, a brief training document so that we were all reasonably familiarised with things like health and safety, things like… like, the vulnerability of certain people and what we did was, we’d written a plan (I can let you have the plan if you wish at any time, I can e-mail it to you).

**Interviewer:** Mmm-hmm.

**Participant:** And that plan lists people who’d be prepared to help if there was a problem in the village, it lists the resources that we have bought and stored in two different places. And these resources will be things like, high-vis, torches, we have a generator in case the power goes out and we can set that up in a local community hall, and that would charge batteries, it would provide lighting, it would mean that we could run out PCs and what not – if there were a problem. We’re not, we would not try to do the job of the emergency services, we would be… we would be available to help out, if emergency services for some reason couldn’t get here.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** Then, of course, earlier this year, along came a virus which locked the village down.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** And so, we met as a group… well, we met… basically we spoke online and we, we decided between ourselves, how best we could try and help anybody who was vulnerable in the village, okay?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, what happened in the end is the village was divided up into blocks and while we did a walk during the day, whether it was people walking dogs or, for example myself or myself and my wife walking, we had certain roads that we would walk along and we could make sure - or at least, keep our eyes open – in case somebody came to a window, put a sign in the window to say that they needed something.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant:** And we did that for some months until the strict lockdown was raised.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I see. So, was that just the co-ordinators who did that or did you recruit - ?

**Participant:** No, no, umm, that’s a good question, there are seven co-ordinators, I think about six of us did that because one was working full time – I only work a little bit at the moment, and there was between twelve and fifteen volunteers who helped. So, basically what happened it, the twelve or fifteen – right I’ll start again. The, urm, the, the six or seven volunteers would have parts of the village that was designated to themselves, that could then be divided up so that volunteers, just out for a walk or dog walking, each day, would then text the co-ordinator to say “all okay.” And I set up a WhatsApp group and the seven co-ordinators reported back every day so we knew things were okay.

**Interviewer:** Right, so there was a sort of chain of command as it were.

**Participant:** That’s right, yeah. Yeah.

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

**Participant:** Well the group well… I think as a village, the communication is pretty good anyway and we’re fairly resilient, we have urm… there are quite a few people who have skills that could be drawn upon if there were to be a major problem. A lot of those are people like farmers who tend to be… nothing fazes a farmer, you know if there was a flood they tend to be – you know they get in their tractor and they drive through it, if a tree comes down, they get out their chainsaws and they… you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant:** So, farmers are very resilient. So, we have, obviously we’re very friendly with a lot of the farmers in the area. Urm… we have lists of other people, if for example there was a problem, who we could ring or we could call on to say, “x needs doing.” But, but basically… when the strict lockdown was lifted, we decided there was no real need to continue with what we did. So, what we’re doing at the moment, we’re just, we’re alert, of anyone were to contact us and say, you know, something like even, “I need some shopping,” somebody would do it for them.

Also, attached to us, urm, in the urr, in the [TOWN NAME] area we have what is called the [TOWN NAME] Food Bank, if anyone was, is really struggling. And our local vicar would be the initial point of contact if somebody needed help in that way, along with one of other co-ordinators. There are designated people. I don’ t actually think they were called upon although I have seen the foodbank van in our village a few times. But, relatively speaking, we’re quite lucky here. So, co-ordinators, plus the vicar, and there is one other fellow, urr, urr, called [ORGANISER NAME] who started the whole thing off, and he, he, he’s very much a king-pin in everything that goes on. Okay?

**Interviewer:** Right, right, right. And he’s throughout, he’s been there throughout?

**Participant:** Sorry, say that again [INTERVIEWER NAME]?

**Interviewer:** He’s been there throughout, is that right?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, I mean, he and I basically, I mean, it’s obviously quite amusing really, he says “this is what we should do [PARTICIPANT NAME], why don’t you do it?” \*Laughs\* And I say, “why don’t you do it?” No, no, we work well together, we’re quite friendly.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, so basically, we also, we communicate with the civil contingencies, urm, sections of the city council, of [CITY NAME 1] City Council. And they are, they are led by a very, very capable fella called [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME], so communication’s always good.

**Interviewer:** Okay, fantastic. So, has your group grown or declined over the course of the lockdown?

**Participant:** Well, it’s grown in terms of volunteers, but it’s stayed the same in terms of co-ordinators because we don’t want it to be an unwieldy group. And obviously, our role, nobody, as I said earlier on, nobody anticipated this kind of use, urr, for a group like this.

And there is something else that I think is probably pertinent to your study, and that is that we have – I don’t really do Facebook, but we have a very, very strong community Facebook, urr, in the village which is called, you could probably look at it, it’s called ‘[FACEBOOK GROUP NAME]’. And urm, the two, the two people who run that have also been key to various things that have gone on in the village and everybody has communicated through the. So, if we wanted to put out information, we would put it on the Parish Council website, but we would also send a copy to the lady who runs ‘[FACEBOOK GROUP NAME]’ Facebook. So, for example, that might be, urm… it might give relevant telephone numbers if people needed help or support in anyway. It would remind us that the emergency group was there if people needed to contact us.

Urm, but also, things like, within the village, urm, irrespective of the emergency group, somebody arranged for a fish van to deliver each week - that’s been very popular; somebody has arranged for pop up food like fish and chips, pizzas, drinks, coffee, a couple of times a month - that’s been very popular; one lady has arranged for fruit and vegetables deliveries to the village, and she’s co-ordinated it, it’s arrived in a central area and people have been designated time to collect there, urr, their food; urm, grocery deliveries; many collections, urm, for charities such as the [TOWN NAME] Food Bank and animal support groups. Urm, earlier in the, in the, in the emergency, groups – including the volunteers – and including one of the coordinators were making scrubs and masks and what not; other people made masks and sold them and the money’s gone to charity. So, it’s been quite a dynamic… urr, group, quite a dynamic village, not just the group, we’re only a few people doing the odd thing.

And we haven’t really been called on to do very much at all. Urr, some, a little bit of shopping, one lady reported a blocked drain, and somebody went and helped her. One lady reported a broken phone, somebody went and helped her. Very recently, the neighbour, actually a neighbour of [ORGANISER NAME]’s, asked him to get some, urm, groceries and when he went around he couldn’t raise her so in the end we actually contacted the police and they contacted the ambulance and she was in the house but she wasn’t very well.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant:** So, people keep an eye on each other, basically, without being too noisy.

**Interviewer:** Right. So, what’s the situation with your group currently?

**Participant:** Okay, \*clears throat\* excuse me, just a frog in my throat \*clears throat\*. We, we, urm, we… communicated via e-mail and we \*clears throat\* decided we don’t really need a meeting as in a Zoom meeting – I may go get myself a drink of water in a minute rather than – urm, and we don’t – it’s been decided, we work, we work as a team, so it’s been decided that we don’t at the moment need to recommence these walks, daily walks. But what we do need to do is just to be aware in case anybody had a particular need.

**Interviewer:** So, are the volunteers on stand-by as it were?

**Participant:** they’re always on standby and basically what happens is, I will be, I will be the point of contact for the coordinators and [ORGANISER NAME] will be the point of contact for the volunteers. So, \*clears throat\* he’s contacted them and said, we, you know, “do what you like, and if there’s anything report back, but don’t feel that you need to do this every single day.”

**Interviewer:** Mmm, understood, understood. So, now moving on to your own, kind of, background, when did you become involved in the group?

**Participant:** Okay, I think I probably became involved, I could go back, I could go back through my diaries and what not, it must’ve been about three years ago, so the group had already formed, I’ve only lived in the village some seven years so I didn’t know people very well, well I didn’t at that time. And [ORGANISER NAME] actually approached my wife and said, would see fancy being a part of the group, and she didn’t want to be. So, second best, he said to me, would I fancy being a part of the group? And the, the, the, the hidden agenda there, he didn’t really want me to be a part of the group, he wanted me to run the group. \*laughs\*. So, I became, the group – for political reasons the group did not have a chairperson.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, I became the secretary, but I ran the meetings and I also become the treasurer, so I was the person who ordered and maintain – and I maintain along with another person – all of the, urm, the things like the generator, electrical system if we need them in the community hall, urm, all of the, you know, things like, you know, first aid kits, batteries, lamps, torches, all of the kinds of the things that we thought the group might at one time need.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, basically, I suppose, I’m the dogsbody.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** Yeah. But it’s okay, we get on well.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And when was that? That was a few years ago?

**Participant:** Yeah a few – two or three years ago.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm, so has that role changed at all then?

**Participant:** Not really, no. Well I, I, in terms of, when I became the ‘secretary’ (in inverted commas), I didn’t realise I was also, basically going to be the chair of the group and I didn’t also realise that I would be persuaded to be the treasurer as well, you know, I suppose ‘mug’ was written on my face, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and why did you get involved, I mean, you know?

**Participant:** I think really because – wherever I’ve lived in the past, I’ve been involved, even through work I’ve been involved in community networks, in the last house we lived which was in the outskirts of [CITY NAME 2] we had a small community group there, that, that just sort of… you know, if things needed doing in the area, like if a park needed cleaning up, football posts putting up, we would be able to contact the council or contact local firms. So, I’ve always I suppose had an ear to the ground, maybe I suppose been a bit noisy you could say.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. Sure, sure, so how does how what you do with the group relate to other parts of your life?

**Participant:** Urm… I suppose it’s just made; it’s made us be a little bit more aware of the needs that people around us may have. I mean some people are very private, they don’t want anybody prying into their lives, but then, urm, if we, if we were aware of somebody who needed help, we would do what we could within our own remit, we don’t want to step on anybody’s toes. If it’s a health matter, we’d contact an ambulance, if it’s a security matter we’d contact the police. But if there are little things that could be done, just to help people out, then that would be our role.

**Interviewer:** And how do you fit what you do with the group into your daily life? Does it take up time, or-?

**Participant:** Yeah, but, but I’m almost retired. My background was teaching I was a deputy in a high school, but for some years (after I took early retirement), I worked for what’s called the Hospital Home Teaching Agency, so that means if somebody’s unwell, maybe had an operation, and cannot go to school, I would go to their home and teach them. Well, as it is now, because of the spread of COVID-19, any work like that that we’ve done, I’ve done as we are doing it now, via Teams or Zoom. And so, I only do a few hours of that a week. So, it doesn’t impact, I’m virtually retired so I’m quite happy to have something like this to keep my brain active.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, sure, sure. What sort of geographical areas does the group cover then, basically? Just the whole of the village?

**Participant:** Okay, we are, we cover the whole of the area that is known as [VILLAGE NAME 1]. I can send you, I can send you, I can e-mail you a plan and on that there are maps that you can look at, if that would help, [INTERVIEWER NAME]? Yeah?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, go for it, go for it!

**Participant:** And I can even e-mail you our… urr, the, the, for example, when we, when we initially started this, we, we, had published or we, we had published, or we had an A4 sheet, which gave our information on it. And on one side of that A4 sheet was a large ‘H’ for help, and this, one of the, we actually used the locals scout group, these were laminated and one of these was delivered to every house in the village, so they knew, for example – we’re talking three years ago, four years ago now, they knew that if they needed help, they could place this in a window that was seen from the street, and anybody – a neighbour – could go up and knock on the door and say, “are you okay?” Now nobody here has really used those, but they’re there if people need them.

And at the beginning of the pandemic, the beginning of the lockdown, urm, one or two of the people in the group felt that we should… urm do a mailshot to every house in the village. Personally, I felt that that would be counter-productive because we were supposed not to be going to every house in the village. We were supposed to be minimising transmission of the virus. But when things settled down, a couple do of months ago, we actually did, urm, prepare an information sheet and put it through every house in the village, do I can let you have things like that, if you want to look at them.

**Interviewer:** That’s okay, I think, we don’t need that.

**Participant:** Okay, you don’t need that.

**Interviewer:** But it’s very interesting that you did give them an information sheet. And what did it say? What did that information sheet say?

**Participant:** Okay, bear with me, I’m just going to minimise this screen and I’m going to urm… see if I can urr… bear with me… are you still there?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant:** Good. Where are we now? Okay… right… I’m just opening a word document so that. I’m not sure if… I can’t remember if I can share the screen with you or not, but I’ll read through it anyway and if you wish, if you wish to have a copy you can let me know.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** Ah, here we are. Okay, it basically, we sent it out in July, and it says, urm: ‘[VILLAGE NAME 1] Emergency Plan, COVID-19, for the past three months volunteers have covered every street in [VILLAGE NAME 1],’ etc. etc. ‘Generally, although there have been exceptions, we’ve fared well here, so far.’ It lists what people in the village have been doing, like collecting food for food bank, animal welfare, scrubs, masks, fruit, veg, food, fish, flour, milk, other deliveries. We’ve put, ‘the daily checks have stopped for now, but the [GROUP NAME] will continue monitoring the situation.’ Urm, I’ve… on that, we’ve gave them information that people could use, ah, at a city level, reminding us of the contacts of [ORGANISER NAME], myself, and the local vicar. It reminded people that [CITY NAME 1] Council had been very proactive - I’ve a lot of time for [CITY NAME 1] Council. Gave them a website address and telephone number there for people, businesses, the food team urrrrr… etc, etc, etc, etc, and said to people, urr, ‘should you have a ‘H’ sign – should you *not* have one, let us know and we’ll get you one, think of others, stay alert, stay safe.’

**Interviewer:** Sure, and so, you said that it hadn’t actually been used that much, the group. The things that had been used were just a few cases, was it, so shopping, urm, sorting out, kind of, utilities at home –

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a kind of thing that people would do as neighbours and friends anyway, whether there was an emergency group or not, really.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So, how regularly were these kind of things done, would you say?

**Participant:** Well, as and when. Maybe, right at the beginning one or two people said, “listen, I need this, I need that.” But, generally speaking, in the village, most people know each other, and the village Facebook page was very, very vibrant, so people communicated with each other through that. Rather than through us. The vicar was proactive as well; she urm… she and I communicated regularly. Urr, I think, generally speaking, we’ve been very lucky, the village does have a primary school, which is open again now, urm, but I think a couple of classes at the moment are home because there has been reports of the teachers having symptoms so they’ve had to, urr, but they’re working in bubbles so they’ve sent certain children home for the time being. Generally speaking, as a, as a group of people, we just like to be aware if anybody has a specific need that we can help them with, without being, you know, patronising in anyway, just to let them know that there is somebody, whether it’s a neighbour or a friend.

So, to come back to this person [ORGANISER NAME], the old – elderly lady who was not well near him, it turns out she had pneumonia so she was taken to hospital, they looked after her pet, which was a parrot, while she was in hospital – a parrot! So, someone had to go in and feed this creature every day. And I think now, basically, her next-door neighbour, is just keeping an eye on her. Like any neighbour would, not necessarily like, like an emergency group would do, just like how any friend or relative would do. Because the lady has no relatives of her own. But these are the sorts of things that are happening. We’re aware of one other person who is urm, urm, doesn’t like to communicate with people, and I think, one of his neighbours, in, without being too noisy, was going to contact social services just say, “are you aware of person x, that he’s vulnerable and he’s not communicating with anybody.” So, these, these, those, that’s one of the volunteers not one of the co-ordinators. So that’s, these are the things that we’re involved with.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so, you were saying that you had like, torches and things like that. What other kind of resources do you have?

**Participant:** Right, well, of course none of this was in connection with COVID-19. We have, what we have, is we, we, we have a system of logging in the err, if there were to be an emergency in the village what would happen would be, initially there would open up the memorial hall, which is our village hall. Some years ago when there was a power outage, before this group was formed, the village hall just opened up anyway, and ladies of the Women’s Union provided hot drinks and food for people if people wanted to drop in, so these are the kinds of things that would happen.

So, we have, we have urm, high vis jackets; we have first aid kits; there are three defibrillators in the village that are nothing to do with us, but we’re aware of them; we have torches; flasks; and we, for example, if there were to be a problem within the village and someone was stuck in their house, we could bring the, maybe you know, hot drinks this sort of thing. We have radios; we have, urm, plug in phones in case the phone system goes down, so many of us having hands free phone systems in our houses, one of the first thing that happened after the initial power outage, is that, urm, I went to a local shop and bought in a plug in phone that we hadn’t had in many years – so that we could still use the phone. We also had, urm, radio communication with the urm, the city council if we need it. So, we have urm, walkie-talkie – I can’t remember even the name of, the name of the thing– but it’s on our list of equipment, when I send you our plan, it has a list of equipment on it.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure, fantastic. And are there any particular skills that people in the group have?

**Participant:** Well I think, one of the things, one of the people in the group is a retired urm… first responder, he was ah, he was a paramedic, urm, he hadn’t been called upon to use those skills, but they’re there. Other people have said that, “should it be needed, I have a tractor, a van, urr, a chainsaw, I’m able to do x, y, z.” So, there’s - people have offered their services, should they ever be needed.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** One thing, kind of, when I mentioned farms before, a flood sometime after this it didn’t impact on anybody, but it meant getting to one of two of the buildings was very difficult, without even being asked, one of the farmers, just literally cleared the drain. This kind of thing, that these people, kind of, do. So, we didn’t even need to get the local council out, it was done before they could have got here. So, I think, if you were to ask umm, the civil contingency people, the things that are important are communication – so, for example, we as a village…, we will use other peoples plans to make our own, rather than reinventing the wheel , and they will use ours and we’ll go and talk to them if we need to, so we’ve been out to other villages to talk about, or, or not necessarily other villages, but community groups to talk about the way it works for us. Urr, we’re not, we’re not, we’re not, we’re not going to try and tell people what to do but we’ll say, “if it helps, have a look at our plan if you can use it, use it, if I t can help you in any way.”

Urm, communication is vital then, and I think, I used the term before: resilience, is vital. Communication, information being spread, and resilience.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic, and now moving on to, kind of, issues in your organising. So how did you get the volunteers involved when you first started?

**Participant:** Okay, urm, really, urr, I think that, that, in terms of volunteers, you often do not get volunteers as such, you ask people, “do you fancy doing this?”

**Interviewer:** Yup.

**Participant:** Or it’s word of mouth mostly. Using, urr, using the internet, using social media is great in certain respects, urm, but, if you want someone to do a job, the easiest thing to do, is ask them.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** So this other fella [ORGANISER NAME] who’s name I’ve mentioned a few times, he is not, he is not shy of going to somebody and saying, “hey, give, give me your name, give me your phone number, and if we need you, we’ll give you a ring.” So, he’s been very proactive in encouraging, shall we say, without pulling people’s arms up their back, encouraging – and people have come forward, when we’ve had meetings to explain what we’re doing, they have said, “here’s my name, here’s my number, I don’t want to be a coordinator, but if you need us, contact us.” So, some volunteers, some word of mouth invitation.

**Interviewer:** Sure, and how did you get the original coordinators, how did that-?

**Participant:** Well, once again, urm, before even my involvement in the village, when the power had gone off back in 2015, this fella [ORGANISER NAME], suggested that there be a local meeting at the community hall which he chaired, and he asked for volunteers and got I think about five people to form a core group – planning group. And I was then co-opted onto that I, I imagine about a year later.

**Interviewer:** I see. Urm, so you said the, there was a WhatsApp group and there was also an associated Facebook group that you liked to post on, but that’s not run by you, though, is that correct?

**Participant:** No, no, the Facebook group is run by two ladies in the village and has been for some time, now, I’m a great user of social media but Facebook tends to be… I would look at things, but I won’t comment, because it can be a bit invidious, I think. You know, people say, “did you see that so-and-so driving down our road at such-a-speed, if I get my hands on his neck,” you know these are the types of things that went on.

**Interviewer:** Wow.

**Participant:** You’ll be aware of this, more than I am.

**Interviewer:** I’ve never seen anything like that.

**Participant:** Someone of your age – yeah. So I tend to only use it if I want something put on Facebook, rather than using Facebook directly, I will e-mail the, the lady or the ladies who run it and they will post it for me.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure.

**Participant:** So, I only look – and I don’t mean I stalk people, I just look to see what is happening.

So, we use the parish council website, all this information is up on their website, there is a parish council notice board but that’s a bit like going to a school notice board when you’re fifteen and having a look to see what’s happening. It’s not very much used, but we have information on there. And when we, when we first started deciding to, deciding to, to, have, let’s say – I wouldn’t use the term if I was writing it down, patrols of the village it’s just walking around keeping your eyes open, I started a WhatsApp group, so I formed the WhatsApp group so that people would have a regular way of just every evening clicking on it and just saying, “all okay, all okay, all okay, all okay.” And I would say, “thanks all, goodnight,” and that’s basically it.

**Interviewer:** Sure. Urm, fantastic. And is it part of a more national group, then, or is it purely limited to [VILLAGE NAME 1]?

**Participant:** Well, what, it’s its, in terms, rather than national, I think most cities or county councils will have civil contingencies officers. Okay?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** And so, these civil contingencies officers will encourage local groups, urr, to, to be aware of what’s happening in their, in their areas.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant:** So, we’re not run by them, but we do communicate with them. If they’re putting on any training, we would quite often go along to the training. Urm –

**Interviewer:** Is the civil contingencies officers, just to be clear, they’re hired by the local –

**Participant:** They will be council officers.

**Interviewer:** Council officers.

**Participant:** So, so, if, if you needed, one person it might be worth you speaking to for your study is a man called [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME], who is the civil contingencies officer for [CITY NAME 1] County Council.

**Interviewer:** Right, right, right.

**Participant:** So, basically, he would have an office in [CITY NAME 1] and an office in [TOWN NAME] and he would join us sometimes if we were having meetings, he would invite us to come and present what we do at other people’s meetings, and he, he’s a real force for bringing all the good working practices that are in the area together. Yeah, so urr, he’s a kingpin there.

**Interviewer:** Nice. So, urr, are you connected to any other support groups, locally?

**Participant:** Only, only in that urm… if there are, if there have been meetings of other villages for example and they have said , “you’ve done this already, would you like to come along and talk to us?” We’ve done that. Or, if there have been local \*clears throat\* urr, how can I put this? Urr… local training, for example for flood defences, we have urr, we’ve taken part in those. Every, urr, urr, every now and again the city will urm… they haven’t done this since the lockdown – the city will put on, they will have, for example, a practice run in case there was to be a major emergency. And we’ve been invited to come along and be a part of those groups.

**Interviewer:** Sure. So, you seem to have a good relationship with the local council.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any relationship with the local resilience forum?

**Participant:** Local…?

**Interviewer:** Resilience forum.

**Participant:** Urm, personally I don’t. The local flood forum – one of our members does.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So that is a local resilience forum, as such. One of our, one of our urm, one of our group, urr, will, is, contributes to the local flood resilience group.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. Okay.

**Participant:** Living at the end of an estuary we have to be aware of that. We, we, where we live here, there, there’s a part of the village I haven’t really mentioned the, I don’t know where you’re based yourself?

**Interviewer:** Urm, I’m in [CITY NAME 3] at the moment.

**Participant:** Right, okay, well, [LANDMARK NAME] and everything like that, okay. So, at the end of our river, at the end of our village there is a spit of land that is called [VILLAGE NAME 2]. And they, they are very vulnerable in terms of tides and weather. But they have their own group, although they are part of [VILLAGE NAME 1], they have their own planning group, and they are also a very, very resilient, small group of some sixty or seventy people, living on this spit of land that is cut off twice a day by the tide. Depending on how high the tide is, there is a causeway to drive over, urr, I’ve got good friends over there, so we communicate with them, regularly, but they have their own very specific needs and they have their own ways of dealing with things. For example, they even have their own… urr… small firefighting group.

**Interviewer:** Wow.

**Participant:** So, everything in that village, it, which is a part of our village, will have, they know each other intimately, they know how best to defend themselves from the sea and from weather. Some of them are fishermen, fishermen and fisher ladies, urr, so they are also, very like farmers – a very resilient group. But because they can be cut off from the tide they also have for example, radio communications, the same as we do, urm, and they, they have a network of people within in their group who – and they have their own firefighting equipment which they have, have a, a practice, a run through every now and again so that, if they were to be cut off, they could look after themselves until such times as the tide went down and the emergency services got there. So that’s called [VILLAGE NAME 2] and they also, if you need to, I can give you the contact of somebody on the [VILLAGE NAME 2] emergency group as well should you need it.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure, yeah. And fin – do you have any relationships with say, other official bodies?

**Participant:** Urm, only in terms of… we had a… basically we were, we were advised, when we started the group – I’m just trying to remember the name of the group, it’s in our plan, there was a fundraising group that was able to allocate money to support groups like ours. So, we put forward a plan, a presentation for what we needed, and they supplied the funds.

**Interviewer:** Was that like a charity? Or was that -?

**Participant:** Yeah, do you know, let me urm… let me once again, try and find the name of that group. Because it’s also a group that you yourself may well….

**Interviewer:** Definitely.

**Participant:** Here we go, let me just… may be able to help you in terms of – let me go into this, urm. I’m just going into the plan. Here we go. Urm, I don’t think you can see my – can you see my screen?

**Interviewer:** Yes. Well, I can see you, but I can’t see the screen.

**Participant:** You can’t see the screen, well, shall I share the screen with you or are you not bothered?

**Interviewer:** I’m not massively bothered; I’m just interested in whether they were charity or –

**Participant:** Yeah, bear with me, I know that I offered a vote of thanks in our, in our document… \*humming\*, sorry about this [INTERVIEWER NAME].

**Interviewer:** No worries, no worries. Thanks for taking the time.

**Participant:** That’s alright, as you can probably see, I quite enjoy… So, you, are you a student or an academic at the moment?

**Interviewer:** I’m neither.

**Participant:** Neither?

**Interviewer:** Well, I was a student of [INVESTIGATOR NAME], but I’ve just last month finished my masters.

**Participant:** Oh, congratulations!

**Interviewer:** Thank you, so I’ve no graduated to unemployment. But I’m doing a little bit on the side as a research assistant for [INVESTIGATOR NAME].

**Participant:** Ah, here we are, it was urm, the funds were supplied by the [NAME OF FUND]-

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** -[NAME OF FUND]. But this is umm, I’ll e-mail you our emergency plan document and you might be able to take bits and pieces from it.

**Interviewer:** [NAME OF FUND], okay.

**Participant:** So, the [NAME OF FUND].

**Interviewer:** Fantastic.

**Participant:** So, you’ve just done a masters, I was never clever enough to do that, you know, but, so my, all of my children are graduates and my wife and I are, but one of our, one of our sons has a masters so I know what kind of work you’ve had to put in.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, yes. It’s a lot, lots and lots. So, have you tried to get any official recognition by becoming a company or a charity?

**Participant:** No, apart from the charity I’ve just mentioned now.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, we’re not, we’re not a registered charity, we are just basically a volunteer support group.

**Interviewer:** Sure, so you’ve sort of, kept your independence in that way?

**Participant:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Have you considered doing it?

**Participant:** Well, only for thing like urr, we do have our own, we do have our own insurance. There are other, there are other, urm, if we were a registered charity, we would be eligible to apply for other funding, but we don’t need it.

**Interviewer:** No.

**Participant:** So, basically, basically, our initial remit was, if the village was cut off, how could we support each other? And we were thinking more in terms of urm, urr, cut of water, cut of gas, cut of electricity, and cut of transport networks. So, we weren’t thinking, kind of, of the kind of environment we find ourselves in at the moment. However, because you know that the people who are willing and able to help, those people would be willing and able to help whether it was a flood or an infection. So, you know, so, the only thing that we have bought recently, which is actually on order, in case we should ever need it is, for our, for our resource box, we’ve bought some masks, some gloves and some, urr, hand gels, just in case we ever had to open a centre and be there for people.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant:** Nothing more than that.

**Interviewer:** Nothing more than that. And, so, now moving on to kind of the other participants, or other coordinators or volunteers.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Urm, what do you think were *their* motivations for getting involved?

**Participant:** Well, once again I think probably, like me, they were encouraged, shall we say.

**Interviewer:** \*Laughs\* Yeah.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah. Some people sort of say, “yeah, I like that sort of thing, I’ll help out.” And then, they might actually say after a while, you know, I’ve had enough. So, we’ve had two, the reason why I’ve started as secretary was the secretary they had at the time had other commitments, she was working full time, and she wasn’t able to put in the amount of time that she wanted to. So, she resigned, I took her role, we had one other person who was an ex-police officer, who is also now working full time, who is help – has said that he’s available but he didn’t like the committee sort of idea of things, he wasn’t comfortable with that. So, he said, I’m going to resign, but bear in mind, I’m here if you need me, if there is an emergency. And a lot of people say the same. There are a lot of people who say – I don’t like sitting around a table and, you know, I don’t like committees as such… urm… I just get on with it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, just get on with it. So, I mean, apart from that idea of being a sort of social aspect to it, there are other people who heard of it through word of mouth, is it-

**Participant:** Yes, yes, there were, and these are what we call the ‘volunteers’, and so they said, “okay, I live on, you know, road x and let’s say [ROAD NAME]. I’ll keep an eye on the [ROAD NAME] and I’ll feed back to the person who’s looking after the rest of [CITY NAME 3] every day.” And so, they volunteered their services.

**Interviewer:** And why do you think they did that? Do you think they wanted to help their neighbours?

**Participant:** Yes, yes, I do. I think they were just magnanimous and kind because it’s the same people who would be collecting food for charities, collecting food for animals, urr, who would be making masks and selling them for charities. It’s the same kind of people, people who have community at the heart of what they do.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. And when you say, “community at the heart of what they do,” you mean they’re always looking out for people in their community?

**Participant:** Yeah. Exactly, I don’t mean being noisy.

**Interviewer:** No.

**Participant:** I mean, these are the kinds of people who would offer to help, rather than have to be co-opted.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, I see, I see.

**Participant:** So, we’re very lucky in that way. So, so, as I said before, it might seem a small thing at the time, but one particular lady said, “okay, I’m going to arrange to have a fish merchant come every week.” That’s been very popular. “Because the supermarkets are not selling flour to bake bread, I am going to buy it in bulk and I al going to distribute it to everybody, I’ll put it in small bags, come and collect it and just pay what I pay for it.” Another lady has said, “I know there is a wholesale fruit and veg merchant – you give me the orders, I’ll send it to him, I’ll be at the community hall on a Thursday afternoon, let’s say from 4:30-5:30, come and collect it from me.” So, people have offered their services.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes. So, do you think any people were involved in a way of almost feeling more in control of the situation of a way of just-?

**Participant:** No, no, I don’t think so.

**Interviewer:** No?

**Participant:** No, I don’t think there was that. I must admit, and I don’t really think this should be… I think… there are some people who maybe… urr, have a real, real need, maybe because of what’s happened to them in earlier life, to, to be on hand if somebody needs support.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, for example, this, this urr, this friend of mine, [ORGANISER NAME], who, who set this whole thing up originally, you know, five or six years ago, he was *absolutely* adamant that if anybody needed, for example, the urm, the services of the food bank, we should be able to help them. And what would have said, what I said to him was, “listen, we can’t, we can’t feed this village, but what we can do is say, here is where you can get help.” And so that, that’s what, that, that’s what happened. And I don’t think very many people have needed that, it’s been more small things – “bring me in, you know, some eggs and a loaf of bread, if you’re, if you’re going out.” Or, you know, “send me the name of a… of a food outlet that will deliver to my house,” this sort of thing.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. So, do you think that people thought that people were more in need than they were and they kind of wanted to do that…?

**Participant:** Urm, probably, listen I think, [INTERVIEWER NAME], as a village we are very lucky, we are very lucky.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** I’m sure there are people who are better off than me and worse off than me, but I think, it has not in a big way impacted on us. There are one or two people who like to keep to themselves, they don’t want help, they don’t want anybody interfering with them. Urr… but most people here were very fortunate. I don’t think there are many people here who are, let’s say, very needy. There may be some, there may be some who don’t want us to know, and it’s not our job to pry, do you know what I mean?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** It’s our job to say, “we’re here, if we’re needed. But we’re not going to force anybody to do anything.”

**Interviewer:** Mmm, definitely, definitely. Urm, I just think it’s interesting isn’t it, because the people here are, are, doing, doing, quite a lot for their local community, right?

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And they’re not being renumerated or –

**Participant:** No.

**Interviewer:** So, so, you know, there is clearly some other psychological motivation that’s –

**Participant:** Oh yeah there is, there is. And like I say, it tends to be the same people who will offer to do anything.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** Who, and who will take it upon themselves to do things.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** They just say, urr, “I’m going to do it!” And they don’t really want thanks. I mean we do thank people; we do thank people. And we try to thank them publicly as well, we try to put on the, the, the website, you know, “these people have done this, this is brilliant for the village.” And, and, and I must say, that the lady who actually set up ‘[FACEBOOK GROUP NAME]’, the Facebook, she, she has received a good neighbour award of some kind, somebody – I don’t know who, it wasn’t me – someone has put her forward for that. And I think that’s, that’s highly deserved.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Who runs that award then? Is that just local?

**Participant:** I don’t know, but I can find out for you, I can find out for you and let you know who runs the award.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** The lady who… the lady who, basically, one lady runs Facebook, and it’s called ‘[FACEBOOK GROUP NAME]’, as I said…

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** -urr… and she is now supported by a second lady and there, you know, they’re, basically, they’re, one runs the, the whole thing but the second lady is the one who, you know, has been making masks and collecting for, I must say, mostly for animal charities. Whereas personally I would rather collect for human charities, but there you go, it’s just the way it is. You know? I wouldn’t say that to her, and I haven’t said that to you – I’ll deny I said it.

**Interviewer:** \*Laughs\*

**Participant:** But urr, urm… so, let me… let me see if I can, let me see if I can find what the, what the award was what she got. What I, I’m very careful you see, if I go onto Facebook, I don’t want people to know I’m on Facebook.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** Mmm. Yeah… now l’m just getting pictures now of our, of our Prime Minister – I’m not going to get into politics with you [INTERVIEWER NAME].

**Interviewer:** We’ll be here all day.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. Listen if I find it, I’ll, I’ll e-mail it to you.

**Interviewer:** That’s alright, there’s no rush, there is no rush. Urm, so, I mean, just to re-cap I guess on what you’ve said. Urm, I think what you were saying was people… who did this, or you know, the coordinators and volunteers, what seems to underlie it is some sense of responsibility or some sense of community, right?

**Participant:** Yeah. Community responsibility.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah, some sense of being, you know, being responsible for others and wanting to do things.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** It’s not necessarily any kind of self-interested reason.

**Participant:** No.

**Interviewer:** You know, wanting recognition or-

**Participant:** No.

**Interviewer:** -wanting to feel better about yourself, anything like that. It’s more of a sense of responsibility?

**Participant:** I think so, I do think it is. I mean, I quite like having things just to urm, just to, just to keep my brain working. I’m quite happy to get in involved in things. Urm, but I think, I think, generally speaking, people have done it through the goodness of their own heart.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. But, you know, there might be some of that as well, something to keep people occupied.

**Participant:** Yeah definitely, definitely. I can’t find what… there is so much rubbish on Facebook, I’m sorry about this, you might use it all the time.

**Interviewer:** It’s okay, it’s only a side point, it’s only a side point.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I realise that okay.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic, so now moving on to how you, I guess how you adapted to like changes. Urm, so, firstly, does involvement in the group mean a lot of time and effort for people?

**Participant:** Not, not, not necessarily no. I mean I… I can put in as little time or as much time. There has been times when it’s taken a lot because we’ve had a plan to write, we’ve had training documents to write, we’ve had things to order, we’ve had, you know… publishers to…

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** But, but in, in a way I kind of enjoy that and the other members are quite happy, you don’t have to report this, to leave it to me to do. If you know what I mean? Urr, so it can, but I would say, when we were doing the daily walks, people wanted to have a daily walk anyway, a lot of the volunteers were out walking their dogs, but they said, “okay, whilst I’m walking my dog, I will cover road one, road two, and road three.”

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** “Just keep my eyes open, say ‘hello’ to people if they were there.” People - most people didn’t even know they were doing it -they just think they were out walking the dog, so there is no big flag flying, you know, “we’re walking around the village to keep it safe.” It was just a question of having your eyes open and being aware. And if, for example, you came across a house and day-after-day-after-day you didn’t see anybody, you would maybe say to a neighbour, “does somebody live there?” And I did it on one occasion and they said, “oh, it’s okay, he has moved out to live with his father during lockdown.” So, at least we know there wasn’t someone vulnerable stuck in the house needing help. So that’s all that was done, so maybe a half hour dog walk during the day and then, and then at the end of the day, sending me a WhatsApp to say, “all okay on [STREET NAME].”

**Interviewer:** Yeah, so it’s just like, small adaptations to what people were doing anyway.

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

**Interviewer:** Urm, has anyone dropped out of the group? Has anyone stopped volunteering?

**Participant:** No. No, one of our volunteers, because she still works full time, didn’t offer to do the walking, but everybody else has kept going – I’ve just seen somebody drive past now, that was one of my… one of the key workers. I’m just trying to think of the volunteers… one volunteer who was quite elderly and not very well said, “listen, I’m not going to do this every day.”

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** But that was fine. Apart from that, everybody’s just kept going the whole time.

**Interviewer:** And urr, I guess, do you think that’s because there wasn’t too much of an adjustment.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** In a lot of other groups, they’ve lot volunteers because people have had to go back to work, you know, the lockdown is easing.

**Participant:** Yeah. A lot, a lot of our, urm, a lot of our volunteers, ah, let’s say are not desperately young.

**Interviewer:** They’re not, yeah, yeah.

**Participant:** So –

**Interviewer:** I did think that - I wondered what would be a sensitive way of approaching that, yeah.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah. No, no, no, so, for example, ah, one or two of them were even in the seventy – I’m not quite that old, so don’t guess how old I am. One or two of them were in the ‘over seventy’ bracket so, they had to be very careful about what they were doing anyway, because they were classed as vulnerable.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, two of them, were. Urm… urm… one… I’m just trying to think, retired; one works from home, but was walking his dog everyday anyway. Urm… let me go through them all in my head. Another does work but a lot of the time she was walking from home but was still happy to – you know, a lot of people like to go for a walk anyway every day.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, just saying, “when I’m on my walk I will make sure I do those roads. *Or,* if I don’t want to walk – if someone is a bit older, they can get in the car and do it. All they’re doing is just driving down a couple of roads and checking that they can’t see anything… that is worrying.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** That’s all they were doing.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, definitely. Urm, and you said that – I mean were there any other problems, do you think, that affected the group?

**Participant:** No, I don’t think so. I think one of the things tends to be that, in any kind of voluntary group, people are more than happy to do what they’re asked to do, but they don’t necessarily want to put themselves forward. If they’re asked, they will do something. But whether they’re shy, or whether they don’t have as much time as you might want to use of there, they might be a little bit reticent, so they’re, they’ll say, “if you want something done, let me know, otherwise I’m just going to take a back seat.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I see, okay.

**Participant:** I do think that one of the, one of the – thinking of people more say, of your age… there is one group that I know but it’s actually in [CITY NAME 1] its self and it’s actually near the university and I’ve met them, and some of them are very young. Because as well as having the people who are, let’s say, permanently living in the area, they have the transient population –

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** -some of whom are students, who love to get involved in this. Lots of energy, lots of enthusiasm, you know, lots of intelligence and ideas and what not. And I met some very young people who were working in that particular group.

**Interviewer:** Right, right, right, right, right.

**Participant:** That was a city group.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. Interesting, yeah. And did, were they – you were just meeting them, they weren’t getting involved in like the local –

**Participant:** They were getting involved in *their* local area. And I was meeting them, because I was asked to go along, urr, to share with them, urr, our ideas and our plan.

**Interviewer:** Nice.

**Participant:** It, it, in a way, what we did was very different from what they were going to do.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** They were basically, in an emergency, they would be, they would, they would, their role would be, basically, to open a community centre if there were an emergency. And ironically, or coincidentally, they’re the only group that I know of who have had to open a centre during the pandemic. There was a flood in their area, and they had to open a centre. They use a church hall, so they - \*audio cuts out\*

**Part Two:**

**Interviewer:** Right okay, yeah, sorry about that.

**Participant:** So, I’m well aware of glitches.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** Okay, so they had to open a centre and they basically had to provide shelter, I think they probably have things like blankets and what not, and they would provide, maybe, tea and coffee and maybe a warm drink to anybody who had had to leave the house.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** So that *did* happen during the pandemic. So, they were not able to social, socially distance. And once again, if you wanted to find out about that, [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME] who runs the civil contingencies would be a great person to talk to.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure. And you said earlier that you wanted to, kind of, increase the engagement or at least you wanted people to know that people had done things and you wanted to get that out there, that message.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Were there any other kinds of things that you did that kind of helped the group to keep going?

**Participant:** I think, to be quite honest, we were surprised at how little anybody wanted. There, there were no – in, in, in the months from, what? March, April, May – March, April, May, June, July, August, September, we’ve had maybe a small handful of, of very minor needs in the village. Because, most people will have children, relatives, friends, neighbours, people they know, and all they’ll do is say, “if you’re going to the supermarket, will you pick me up some milk.” You know? “Will you do this? Will you do that?” And it’s stuff that you would do for your friend or, you know… if… if one of your friends broke their leg you’d go shopping for them, you’d just do it, won’t you?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. That’s it. So, in that sense, because the task wasn’t too demanding, you didn’t have the problem with, kind of, fall out?

**Participant:** No. None at all.

**Interviewer:** So, you didn’t then put in place measures to –

**Participant:** I’m sorry, say that again.

**Interviewer:** You didn’t have to put in place measures to kind of mitigate that?

**Participant:** No, no, there was no need to mitigate, no mitigating circumstances at all, we were very fortunate.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Do you think you had any group identity as a coordinating group? Or, as a general unit?

**Participant:** Right, the answer is, not really. I’d say in a way, we are pretty well invisible. People may… people will, generally in the village people will know each other a little bit more because of these daily walks that were not necessarily to do with our group, it was something that – this amuses me – we, my wife and I will walk most days anyway. And whether it’s a few miles in the country or just around the block for half an hour, but far more people, I think people who never, ever, ever go out for a walk, went out for a walk. Almost because they were encouraged by the government who said, “you can’t do this, you can’t do that, but you can go out for a walk.” So, people went out for a walk. So, we know more people than we did before. Urr, most of those people would not know that we were doing an [GROUP NAME] checking-up walk, they’ll just think, “oh, it’s a couple of people walking down the road.”

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** You know? We don’t have a uniform, we don’t wear high-vis. We do actually have IDs, but we didn’t have them with us. If we needed them. Urm, so we were just, we were just a couple of people walking down the road. And maybe talking to people who saw them, “how are you doing?” You know, “are you okay?” Urr, and if they asked, we’d say, “well, yes, this group is going x, y, z.”

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** But people won’t necessarily know that I’m [PARTICIPANT NAME]. It’s just some face that you see walking down the road.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** So, we don’t have a very high profile.

**Interviewer:** No, no, no, no. And I guess because you haven’t had to do too much, it’s more that people know about – that you exist in the background.

**Participant:** I think so.

**Interviewer:** That if they need help then they can, they can refer to you.

**Participant:** And I think a lot of people would probably be happier even… ah, probably be happier even just talking to their next-door neighbours, *or* going on, and I can’t… I’m not on commission so don’t worry, I can’t flag it up enough, going on the local Facebook page. You know, people would say, “I’m here today if anyone needs anything, just ring me.” So, lots of people are doing that anyway.

**Interviewer:** Mmm. And on that Facebook page are their more people registering their needs or more people offering services, do you think?

**Participant:** I think probably offering services. I don’t think many people… I can’t think of anybody who’s expressed a need on there, but once again I don’t use it, as such. Urm, but people every single day will say, “it’s a nice sunny day, I’m here if you want anything.”

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes.

**Participant:** But they’ll also, like I said before, the reason I don’t use it is because… I do think there is a lot of urm… urm…trivial or, or –

**Interviewer:** Yeah, just people just, sort of, going on about –

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, having a go at each other, “did you see what he did yesterday?!” You know, this sort of thing. Urm, and that’s why I don’t really – why it’s useful, but it’s not the kind of thing I use much.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes. Urm, do you have any kind of events or things amongst yourselves? Because I know you said you’d been attending sort of training sessions for floods and things like that.

**Participant:** Well, some of that, of course, has not happened. What we do, if we want, if we need to discuss things in detail – and we’ve only done it once during the pandemic, I will set up a zoom meeting.

**Interviewer:** A zoom meeting, sure.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah. And, and so, this week, because of course in [COUNTY NAME] here, we’re on partial lockdown I’ll, sort of, give you an example, I am not alloweed to go to anybody’s house or to have anybody in my garden.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** And they’re not allowed to come to my house or come and visit me in my garden. So, I did send an e-mail out to our group of coordinators to say, “two questions: number one, do you think we need to meet? And number two: do you think weekend to start our daily walks again?”

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** And the consensus has been, no we don’t need to.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, what I will be doing later today, I will be e-mailing the group and saying, “thanks for your responses, the consensus being we don’t need to do anything actively, but stay alert and get in touch if you think of anything.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, that’s the way we’re, that’s the way we run it.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure. And do you think that will be re-vamped then if there is a second lock-down?

**Participant:** I do, I do. If there is a second, if there is a tighter lockdown we will certainly start to do our daily walks again and we will probably just continue saying to people, you know, “look out for each other, let us know.” Everybody has, even though they don’t necessarily know who I am, they have my number, my mobile number, they have my e-mail address, and I have been contacted only once.

**Interviewer:** Wow.

**Participant:** And ironically, it was the same lady that ended up ill, who lived near [ORGANISER NAME], who ended up in hospital. So, she knew, I think, that she was becoming ill. And so, we were able to help her. But that was – there was nothing massive there. Basically, there was a question, we went around to her house, knocked on every door, looked through the window, couldn’t see anyone so in the end we rang the police.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** The police came around, it turned out that although it was the middle of the day, this elderly lady was in fact in bed, so they woke her up – I didn’t want to go climbing through her window, I didn’t that’s my, that’s my role, let the emergency services do that. The police – they were wonderful, and they, they then said, “listen, we’re going to send an ambulance around so a paramedic can look at this lady.” So, the paramedics came around and looked at the lady, and they decided she needed to be hospitalised. They took her to hospital, and it turns out she had pneumonia.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, she had pneumonia, yeah.

**Participant:** So she was basically just, and, and I think this lady is about eighty, so she was quite frail and she has no relatives, no living relatives and now, her next door neighbour is keeping a daily eye on her, but once again, irrespective of the [GROUP NAME], it’s the kind of thing that you’d do anyway.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, exactly, so in a sense this group is, kind of, a formalisation of, or adding a kind of structure to the kinds of things that would just happen anyway.

**Participant:** Exactly. You’ve hit it on the head [INTERVIEWER NAME]. And, we’ve got, you know, lets say training, it’s not massive training, but we’re aware of, urm, you know, we’re aware of vulnerability needs we’re aware of the kinds of things that we are and not able to do. We’re aware of not putting other people in risk if there were to be an emergency, you know. And we’re aware that we are not the emergency services, if there were to be – so for example, that elderly lady, I could have climbed through the window but I don’t think that would have been appropriate, and as we were able to get the police there within ten minutes, they did their job and we stood back.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do have any particular links with say, the NHS or the emergency services?

**Participant:** No, no. Just saying, however, our emergency plan is held by them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, right, right, right.

**Participant:** So, our emergency plan is e-mailed to the city council civil contingencies and there is a system where by, I think fire, police, ambulance are able, if there was an emergency here, they’re able to bring that up on their screen and see it. So, they can get just a bit of background knowledge. I’ll e-mail that to you, [INTERVIEWER NAME], anyway, after this meeting.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic.

**Participant:** You might not want to look at it, you might flick through and see what it is. I’ll e-mail all our stuff to you, you can look at it, you can use what you need, don’t use what you don’t need.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic, thank you so much. And finally, what have you yourself learnt from coordinating the group?

**Participant:** Ah… it’s very strange that. I’ve learnt that some people, urm, some people can be um… they have a very, very… clear idea of what they feel other peoples needs are.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** And that might… other people may have those needs, they may not. But some people have a real deep-seated need to try and help other people.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** I don’t think I could put myself forward as somebody who is literally going to go out *looking* for people who need help – I’m not as magnanimous as that. Urm, but, but some people are. Some people can really, they can devote themselves to trying urr, to use, urr, what reserves they have to help other people. And think this fellow [ORGANISER NAME] is one of those. You know, he really, is aware that people might have a need, let’s do what we can to help them.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** I’m a bit more softly, softly than that, I think.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure, sure.

**Participant:** I think I would say, in terms of humanity, you know, most people are great.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** There’s a very small number of people who, who are painful, but most people are lovely.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, yeah. Well it’s a shame we keep electing the bad ones then, isn’t it?

**Participant:** Oh, hey, hey, in every nation! Look at America and the UK, I said we weren’t going to get into politics, bloody hell! Excuse my language.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. I think that’s right, I think that’s right, yeah definitely. And have you learnt anything about say… you know… local government, or like surrounding structures, different organisations?

**Participant:** Well, well, I have, I have. I hadn’t realised, for example, the importance of what is called parish councils.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** I hadn’t realised, they do have a little bit of clout. Now we are not a parish council – our plan is accepted by the parish council but it’s not a part of the parish council. But I know our parish councillors and I will communicate with them regularly. So, for example, there’s a, a Teams meeting once a month, and we will go on it for *all* the local groups, so all of the local, urr, parish council’s meet and I’m – although I’m not a parish councillor, because I’m a member of this emergency group, on behalf of out village, I go on that meeting once a month. And it’s quite useful, it might just be, you know, farmers are concerned about footpath use, we’re concerned about travellers stopping on this part of land, that part of land, we’re concerned about our children’s playground. Urm, but once again, the leader of the city council, and representatives from civil contingencies, from planning, urr, from street cleaning are all there available and can be spoken to. So, I’m aware of that.

I’m also aware now, of course, that local government feeds down to parish council. And I didn’t know that happened. So, for example, if – there will be somebody in the village, and it will not be me, and it will not be [ORGANISER NAME], who will know if somebody was vulnerable and needed help.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** And the parish council has a role to play there, so the leader of the parish council maybe given that information.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant:** Whereas I would not be. Okay?

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Participant:** So, I wasn’t aware of that structure until now, until this pandemic.

**Interviewer:** Sorry, I’m not very clear on these, so what is… the parish council, what is that? That operates alongs-

**Participant:** Parish council they are volunteer, elected members. It’s a small group who would run parish, err, activities, they have an eye to planning, they have an eye to health and safety, development in the village. They have a small amount of funds which comes from, urr, city council, from peoples, umm, community charges.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** And they make local decisions. They’ll also have a clerk who is there secretary and representative and that person is paid a small remuneration for doing their work. But the rest of them are volunteers. And they will – if they want something to happen or not to happen they will be the people who would actually have the power, the meetings they have are open, but of course it’s been a bit difficult during the pandemic, urr, some, some, local parish councils have held open meetings using Teams or Zoom, for people to come to them. Urr, so the parish council does actually have a specific role to play in local government and I hadn’t realised what that was until now.

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure. That is interesting, I didn’t know that either to be honest.

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah. And I speak to, I know the people -well two or three of the people – urr, one actually, when you were talking about, have people, urr, have people, their role changed. Well, one of our volunteers was a member of the parish council and has actually resigned from the parish council during this, but he’s maintained his position on the [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Yeah, I think he just fell out with the way that people on the parish council though. But that happens with anything. You know? That will happen in all, all walks of life.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That’s yeah, that’s not due to any, kind of, institutional thing that’s just people having –

**Participant:** He wanted something to happen, they didn’t want it to happen, and so in the end he said, “well, I’m going to have to resign my position.”

**Interviewer:** Sure, sure.

**Participant:** Which is what he did.

**Interviewer:** Finally, is there anything else that you wanted to add?

**Participant:** No, that’s great, just tell me, I don’t want to overwhelm you, [INTERVIEWER NAME], but I’ve enjoyed talking to you, would you like me to e-mail the plan and documents to have a quick look at and just dump them if-

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, that’ll be fantastic, I’ll definitely have a look at them, definitely.

**[Debrief]**

**[End]**