

Platform and Voice

The Voice of Older People across Midlothian

NOVEMBER 2011



PREPARING FOR WINTER

Are you ready for winter?

This year Older People across Scotland are being encouraged to get ready for winter.

Getting ready for winter is something we all need to do - it takes only a few simple steps.

It's time to start thinking about how you could be affected by severe weather, and what you need to do now to be better prepared.

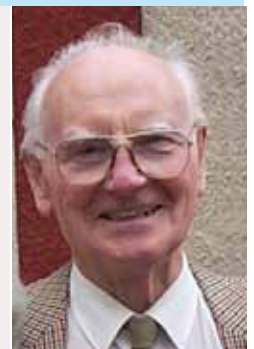
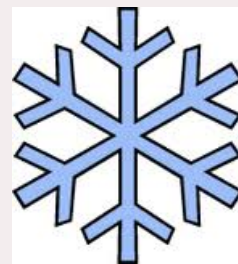
Whether it's at home, in your community and neighbourhood, or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help.

By thinking about how we can all get ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared.

Last year's severe weather caught many people out. This special newsletter contains some good advice and tips to prepare us for this winter. Some useful phone numbers are included, keep this by the telephone! We have included some sources of support, take time to read through, make sure you have thought about the things that will make this winter manageable, safe and enjoyable!

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If you have any news, views, or questions relating to this newsletter, or would like to know more about Platform and Voice, please contact Eric Johnstone at Midlothian Community Care Forum, 4/6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE, or telephone 0131 663 9471

Midlothian Social Work Emergency Helpline

Midlothian Council's social work team will run an emergency helpline which is activated and publicised if severe weather arrives. This is for elderly and vulnerable people without other means of support, for example where carers or family members are unavailable.

The helpline can assist if they are running out of their prescription medication and/or need basic groceries like bread and milk. The council works in partnership with the British Red Cross so if you phone, they can arrange for a volunteer to pick up and deliver an emergency prescription and supplies to your home.

It's important that everyone keeps in contact with any friends and neighbours who might require assistance during periods of severe weather. Older people particularly value the information and support they receive from neighbours during these times. Someone they know popping round can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

If you would like to help any elderly or vulnerable people in my area you could contact your local community council. If the weather is bad you or someone you know might be concerned about transport or whether a council facility has had to close. For up to date information during severe weather visit the council's website www.midlothian.gov.uk or call our contact centre on 0131 663 7211.

In a social work emergency you can call 0800 731 6969 (out of normal office hours).

Prepare for winter

Getting ready for winter at home is easy. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that will be essential to you and your family. (see insert in this newsletter)

Winter proof your home.

Follow Scottish Water's advice on protecting your pipes.

Know where your stop valve is and how to turn off your water.

If cold weather is forecast, and during a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature to help prevent pipes from freezing.

Know how to turn off your electricity supply at the mains.

Making your home energy-efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. Call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Hotline on 0800 512 012.

Check the terms of your household insurance policies, and find out what cover you have for risks such as flood or storm damage, or for the costs of temporary accommodation if your home is not habitable. Consider taking out insurance if you don't have any.

Make sure you will be able to clear your paths and driveway if severe weather strikes. It's a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good), and some salt or grit at home, and find out where your nearest local authority public grit bin is.

Keep Healthy

Keep healthy in the winter, and avoid the 'flu.

If you are over 65 or have a health condition such as heart or lung problems or if you are pregnant, get your free seasonal flu vaccination to protect yourself from flu this winter.

KEY CONTACTS IN MIDLOTHIAN

Midlothian Community Hospital Tel - 0131 454 1001
Refuse/ Wheelie Bins - 0131 561 5284
Advocacy for older people EARS Tel - 0845 6070129
Bonnyrigg Seniors contact Bill Prentice Tel - 0131 663 6895
Gorebridge Over 50's Mary Webb - 01875 825323
Midlothian Travel Team contact Karl Vanter's Tel 0131 561 5443
Dial a bus Midlothian Tel 0131 663 1103
Dial a ride Midlothian Tel 0131 447 9949
Midlothian Social Work Services Tel Loanhead 0131 271 3900
Emergency services - Ambulance, Fire and Police Tel 999
Carers VOCAL - Midlothian 0131 663 6869
Citizens Advice Bureau Tel 0131 660 1636
Breathe Easy Tel George 01875 823323
Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian Tel 0131 271 3900
NHS 24 Tel 08454 242424
Direct Payments Tel 0131 271 3900
Leisure and Recreation Tel 01968 664055
Taxi card scheme Tel 0131 561 5442
Alzheimers Scotland Tel 0131 654 1114
Housing Midlothian Council Tel 0131 271 3607
Benefits 0131 271 3201
Blue Badge 0131 561 5442
Direct Payment 0131 271 3637
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living 0131 475 2350
Citizens Advice Dalkeith 0131 663 3688
Citizens Advice Penicuik 01968 675 259
Red Cross 0131 654 0340



Winter in the community

Last year's severe winter weather struck quickly leaving some people vulnerable. A little planning now can help keep people warm and safe this winter.

Identify family or neighbours who may need an extra helping hand if severe weather strikes. Have their phone numbers to hand, and offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks.

Equally if you think you may feel isolated or alone during a patch of bad weather, equip yourself with a few useful local contact numbers; a neighbour who can help, the local minister, your local community council.

We have included an insert with this newsletter called My Winter plan; write down your important numbers now and keep by the phone.

Clear ice or snow from your pathway. Remember, for some people bad ice can make things just as difficult as deep snow.

Communities throughout the country are being urged to follow Scottish Water's winter code - a set of simple steps you can take to protect your pipes, be prepared and heat, insulate and protect your home. Download the Scottish Water winter poster to display in your local community to help people know where to find more winter information and advice.

Your community can get ready for winter by agreeing what you, your neighbours and your colleagues can do on your own and collectively to minimise the effects of winter weather where you live and work.

You can volunteer to help others during winter by contacting Volunteer Scotland.

Local services

Midlothian Council will do all they can to keep essential services running during periods of severe weather. However, severe weather may cause some change to routine local services, such as temporary closure of schools, changes to the times of refuse collection and greater emphasis on gritting and route clearance.

Information about local services is kept up to date on Midlothian Council's website, so it's important to check with your local authority for the latest information and advice during severe weather.

Loanhead Parish Church Volunteers

We're a group of volunteers who are keen to provide practical help and support to folk in Loanhead.

Do you need help with....

getting the shopping?

transport to appointments?

small DIY/household tasks?

help in getting out, e.g lift to a club, going out for a coffee?

Or maybe you know of someone who does?



If so, please call 07968 580 283 and we'll do what we can to help.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Doctors

Bonnyrigg
107-111 High Street
Bonnyrigg
EH19 2ET

Dr Smart & ptnr 0131 537 9828
Dalhousie 0131 537 9844
Strathesk 0131 537 9977

Dalkeith Medical Centre
0131 561 5500
St. Andrew Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1BJ

Danderhall 0131 654 1079
85 Newtonchurch Road
Danderhall
EH22 1LX

Loanhead 0131 440 0149
209 Mayburn Avenue
Loanhead
EH20 9ER

Newbattle 0131 663 1051
Blackcot Road
Mayfield
EH22 4AA

Newbyres 01875 820 405
Hunterfield Road
Gorebridge
EH23 4TP

Pathhead 01875 320 302
210 Main Street
Pathhead
EH37 5PP

Penicuik
Health Centre 01968 672 612
Imrie Place
Penicuik
EH26 8HY

Eastfield Clinic 01968 675 576
Eastfield Farm Road
Penicuik
EH26 8EZ

Roslin 0131 440 2043
122 Penicuik Road
Roslin
EH25 9NT



Community Councils

Community Councils are useful sources of information and potential support in each community. If you think you can support your local community council or if you know of someone in need or require some information or a wee bit of help with something in a period of bad weather, they may be able to help, or at least let you know who can.

Community Council's were very active and helpful in last year's difficult weather period, helping to clear routes and help vulnerable people where possible.

Community Councils are currently working to develop a straightforward way of managing contact and information flow. These details will hopefully be available in December. We would recommend that you find out more about your community council if you think they may help, or if you want to contribute.



Keep safe and warm at home this winter



If it's cold outside you need to be warm inside. Here are some tips for keeping warm:

If you can't heat all your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed.

A balanced diet will help keep you warm and healthy in the winter. Make sure you and your family eat at least one hot meal a day. Soup is nutritious and warming, and inexpensive to make or buy.

Wearing the right kind of clothes can help keep you much warmer. Layers are best, t-shirts and under clothes to keep the base of your back warm will heat you from the core.

Staying active is good for your health, walking for example can be beneficial. If the weather prevents you getting outside, stay active indoors - catch up on all the household tasks you've been putting off.

Talk - especially if you've been stuck in the house for a few days. Lift the phone and call friends and family for a blether.

If you have elderly relatives or neighbours who might need help please check up on them. You can get a warm feeling inside by ensuring they are warm on the outside!

Loss of utilities

Power cuts and loss of other utilities including gas, water and telephones can happen during the winter, just when we need these services the most.

While utility companies in Scotland have well-tested plans in place to deal with all kinds of events, there are steps you can take now that will help you cope with any loss of utilities in future.

Keep mobile phones and lap top computers fully charged, so you will have use of battery power for a short time at least if there is a power cut. Certain types of mobile phone allow you to access the internet and other services, which will help you to stay informed.

Make a list of all the telephone numbers you might need, and keep them handy. Here are a few to get you started.

National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas) 0800 111 999
Scottish Gas 0800 048 0202
Scottish Power 0845 272 7999
Scottish Hydro Electric 0800 300 999



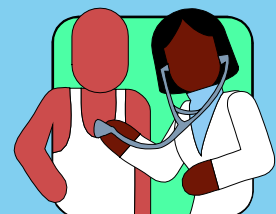
Licensed Plumbers

It always makes sense to use a licensed plumber. Scottish Water supports and promotes the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbers Employers Federation (SNIPEF).

To find a licensed plumber in your area visit www.needaplumber.org or call SNIPEF on 0845 224 0391 who will be able to recommend a plumber. Office opening hours are Monday - Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. For out of office hours, please visit the website or refer to your telephone directory.

Health advice over the festive period

- **GP practice closures:** During the festive season most GP practices will be closed for four days from Saturday 25 December to Tuesday 28 December (re-opening Wednesday 29 December). They will also be closed for four days from Saturday 1 January to Tuesday 4 January (re-opening Wednesday 5 January).
- **Pharmacy closures:** Most pharmacies will be closed on the festive public holidays too. For opening times, see the NHS 24 website at www.nhs24.com
- **Repeat prescriptions:** With GP practices and many pharmacies closed on these days, please order and collect from your GP practice any repeat prescriptions you need in plenty of time. Our out-of-hours services cannot provide repeat prescriptions.
- **Your local pharmacist - health care right up your street:** For expert health information and advice - ask at your local pharmacy. Community pharmacies are changing, with highly-trained staff providing even more services to protect your health and treat minor ailments. For pharmacy opening times over the festive season, visit the NHS 24 website at www.nhs24.com
- **A&E services:** Hospital Accident & Emergency (A&E) services are for urgent and emergency situations only. A&E is not an alternative to your GP, so please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your GP surgery is closed.
- **Minor Injuries Clinic:** For minor ailments and injuries (such as minor cuts and burns, infections, stings, suspected sprains and small bone breaks) go to the Minor Injuries Clinic at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital (for adults and children over one year). Open every day of the year from 8am to 9pm. No appointment necessary. Phone 0131 537 1330/1331.
- **NHS 24 and out-of-hours care:** If you need urgent medical advice that cannot wait until your GP surgery opens, phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24. If you need to be seen out of hours (between 6pm and 8am, at weekends, or on public holidays) an appointment will be made for you at the most convenient out-of-hours centre. Patients are seen by appointment only in out-of-hours centres.
- **Remember:** If you think you need an emergency ambulance for a life-threatening condition, call 999.



For your good health:

- **Keep a supply of remedies at home.** Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin all help to reduce raised temperatures and relieve the aches and pains associated with coughs, colds and flu. If you have a cough, cold or flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace fluids lost in sweating and keep warm and rest as much as you can.
- **Check medicines in your home are up-to-date and keep them in their original labelled container.** Always follow instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure or taking other medicines prescribed by your doctor, check with your local pharmacist first.
- **Many cold and flu remedies already contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin.** Using several products together can be very dangerous and can lead to an overdose. Products are labelled to say they contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, so always check before using them.
- **To combat the cold, layers of thinner clothing are more effective than one thick layer.** Choose clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Also wear a hat (up to half your body heat is lost through your head) and make sure that your shoes will grip in slippery conditions.

Your county needs you this winter!

Midlothian Council is relying on communities to help in severe weather.

Residents in Midlothian must 'do their bit' in severe winter weather, according to Midlothian Council.

The Council says local people did a 'sterling job' in helping keep their driveways, pavements and roads outside their homes free of snow and ice during last year's big freeze.

And it will again be relying on community help if and when the temperatures plummet.

Councillor Wilma Chalmers, Cabinet Member for commercial operations, said: "Residents were absolutely terrific last year, often clearing not just their own paths and pavements but those of elderly and vulnerable neighbours.

"Again, in snow there's really only so much the Council can do to keep the county moving so we really need everyone to do their bit."

Councillor Chalmers said local people can help in a number of ways. For example, residents can group together and take delivery of bags of salt and grit mix to clear local roads.

She said: "There's already more than 22 groups, including community councils, we've been in touch with. All we need is a name and contact details and note of somewhere safe where we can deliver the bag. When that bag is finished, they can simply contact us and we will deliver another."

Residents can also visit older or vulnerable neighbours to check if they need any help.

Anyone with time might also get in touch with their local community council to see if they can volunteer.

Councillor Chalmers said: "We would certainly be happy to put them in touch with the relevant community group."

With 6,500 tons of grit in stock, the focus again this year will be clearing snow from what are known as priority roads. These are important main roads and bus routes as well as roads to hospitals, fire stations, ambulance depots and local hazard spots.

A map of these priority roads can be found on our website:

It is only when these routes are clear that Midlothian can tackle secondary routes such as roads into industrial areas before gritting other roads such as residential streets.

Councillor Wilma Chalmers, Cabinet Member for Commercial Operations, said: "We have a copy of our winter service plan on our website so local people know exactly what we plan to do if severe weather strikes. But there's also a lot that local people can do for themselves."

For more information on taking delivery of a bag of grit/salt mix for your community group email ; severeweatherdutyofficer@midlothian.gov.uk

READY SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government's 'Ready Scotland' website provides a wide range of information on emergencies and how to prepare for them. The site is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/ready-scotland>