Behavioural Research UK



Storm Goretti: A Qualitative Investigation of Rural Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery

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Foreword from Professor Tom Crick

Storm Goretti brought severe weather across the UK and parts of western Europe on 8–9 January 2026, with particularly damaging impacts in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. In Mawnan, Cornwall, the experience of those affected was shaped by much more than the weather itself: power and communications failed, roads became inaccessible, formal services could not always reach people, and communities had to respond using the resources, knowledge and relationships available to them.

Social and behavioural science therefore has an important role across emergency preparedness, response and recovery, helping us understand how people interpret risk and warnings, how they make decisions under uncertainty, how communities organise and support one another, and how institutional responses are experienced by those they are intended to help.

This research in Mawnan provides a detailed account of those interactions. Residents underestimated the likely severity of the storm despite previous experience; warnings did not always lead to action; and the simultaneous loss of power and communications exposed dependencies that were not always apparent beforehand. Local knowledge and existing relationships became important resources in response and recovery, but that support was uneven, particularly for people who were geographically or socially isolated.

This has important implications for how we think about resilience and vulnerability, neither of which should be treated as fixed. Vulnerability can emerge or change as disruption cascades across infrastructure, services and everyday life, while people are not simply recipients of warnings or instructions but interpret information, adapt, improvise, share resources and make decisions in circumstances that formal plans cannot fully anticipate. Preparedness depends on understanding these interactions between people, communities, institutions and infrastructure. The first Social and Behavioural Science for Emergencies (SBSE) playbook, developed earlier this year, reflects this approach by treating vulnerability as dynamic and asking planners to consider cascading and secondary effects.

For the SBSE Steering Group, this report marks an important development in how we work: it is the first primary research commissioned through SBSE. A standing cross-government capability should be able to identify evidence gaps before and between emergencies and mobilise research expertise quickly enough to inform live policy and preparedness questions. This study was initiated rapidly after Storm Goretti and completed within months.

That complements another important part of SBSE's work: translating established social and behavioural science into forms that resilience and response teams can use both before an emergency occurs and during one. The aim is not simply to accumulate evidence, but to make it usable in planning, exercising, communications, risk assessment and operational decision-making, so that insights from research become part of the practical machinery of preparedness.

The next step is therefore to make use of what has been learned. The findings have implications for warning and risk communication, emergency planning and exercising, infrastructure resilience, community preparedness, and the identification and support of people whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable during disruption; they also raise questions that warrant further research and continued attention across government and the wider resilience community.

I am grateful to the residents of Mawnan who gave their time and spoke candidly about their experiences, and to Katherine Saunders, Suzy Darke and Carrie Heitmeyer, together with colleagues across government and the research community, for designing and delivering this work at pace and with care. The purpose of examining an emergency in this detail is straightforward: to learn from what happened, and to plan and prepare more effectively for the next one, with the necessary infrastructure and capability in place.

Professor Tom Crick MBE
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Section 1: Executive summary

Background

This report presents findings from a rapid study commissioned by the Social and Behavioural Sciences for Emergencies Group, convened by the Government Office for Science, to understand how rural residents prepared for, experienced and recovered from Storm Goretti in January 2026. The project was conducted by researchers from the Government Office for Science, University College London (in collaboration with Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK)) and the University of Exeter (in collaboration with ACCESS). The research focuses on the Parish of Mawnan in Cornwall, a rural location with an older-than-average population, limited access routes and known vulnerabilities relating to power, communications and physical isolation.

Key findings

1. **Storm preparedness**
   Many residents underestimated the severity of the storm and did not take preparatory action. Others were incidentally prepared due to pre-existing self-sufficiency rather than deliberate planning.
2. **Effectiveness of weather warnings**
   Residents largely did not act upon yellow or amber weather warnings they received. Participants reported that they receive weather warnings often and therefore underestimated the potential impact of Storm Goretti. The escalation to a red warning - while impactful - was viewed by some as coming too late to enable meaningful preparation.
3. **Effectiveness of emergency alerts**
   Government emergency alerts had limited behavioural impact. Some residents did not receive alerts or received them late, and those who did often reported that the alerts confirmed existing knowledge rather than prompting additional action.
4. **Power and communications outage**
   The loss of power and communications resulting from the storm was widespread and one of the most significant impacts of the storm. Even households with what they believed were alternate energy sources, such as oil-fired boilers, were affected due to reliance on electricity for the systems to operate. Communications failure was widespread and, for many, the most challenging aspect of the event. Loss of mobile and internet connectivity limited access to information, hindered contact with emergency services, and increased feelings of isolation and uncertainty.
5. **Impact on businesses**
   Local businesses experienced disruption due to road closures, power outages, and reduced customer access. There were concerns about longer-term impacts on tourism and revenue, particularly where access remained limited.
6. **Effects on individuals and households with additional needs**
   Vulnerability was shaped by a combination of age, health, reliance on electrical equipment, social isolation, and geography. Those living alone, dependent on carers, or reliant on infrastructure (e.g. for medication or mobility) faced heightened risks. First responders based in

the village itself were crucial when emergency services could not access the parish due to tree fall.

7. **Community response**
   Residents played a critical role in immediate response and recovery, demonstrating strong local initiative and mutual aid. However, access to support was uneven, often depending on geographical proximity to others and existing social connections.
8. **Perceptions of government and utility company responses**
   Responses from utility companies were mixed, with power companies viewed more positively than communications providers due to their responsiveness and visibility in the aftermath of the storm. Local and central government responses were perceived as minimal, lacking visibility communication, and understanding of the severity of impact on the area.
9. **Future preparedness**
   The experience of Storm Goretti prompted residents to take steps to improve preparedness for future emergencies, including acquiring equipment and strengthening local coordination. Participants widely described planning to make changes to their preparedness, but few had taken steps to put their plans into action, suggesting that without additional support, behaviour change may not be sustained.

All key findings and insights drawn from the data can be seen in Table 1.

Study aims

The study aimed to investigate:

- levels of preparedness for the storm
- the effectiveness of early warning systems
- community, individual and business responses
- immediate recovery (within 7 days of the storm)

Project approach

Findings are based on interviews with 18 residents of Mawnan conducted within 8–10 weeks of Storm Goretti. Data were analysed thematically using the Framework method (Smith & Firth, 2011; Gale et al. 2013) and reviewed with participants and SBSE members before publication.

Table 1. Key findings and insights

Theme	Study findings	Key insight	Location in report
Preparedness	Participants' awareness and experience of storms do not necessarily result in preparedness or preparedness-related actions. Similarly, repeated past storm or natural hazard experiences, particularly those which do not lead to significant impacts or harms, may result in complacency around preparedness and underestimation of future storms.	Awareness and prior experience of storms may not be sufficient to drive preparedness behaviours.	5.2 Before the storm
	Most participants felt underprepared for a lengthy power outage, reporting not engaging in preparedness activities ahead of the storm. Most people then relied on resources and tools already available to them at home.	Populations may not expect extended power outages following storms and therefore may be unprepared for this outcome.	5.2 Before the storm
	None of the research participants demonstrated an awareness of recent central or local government preparedness resources or campaigns (e.g., the GOV.UK Prepare Campaign).	Public awareness of government preparedness resources may be limited.	5.2 Before the storm
	Participants reported relying on alternative sources of power and heat during and after the storm. Populations may rely on candles, fires, or other open flame sources of heat and energy.	Limited preparedness for prolonged outages may increase reliance on alternative sources of heat and energy.	5.4 The Storm
	Participants often had access to resources (e.g. torches, battery packs, car chargers) which they realised they could not use during the storm and aftermath, due to not being enabled or compatible in some way.	Access to preparedness resources does not necessarily mean they can be used effectively during an emergency.	5.9 Future preparedness
Warnings and alerts	Participants gauged risk level by triangulating weather warnings and storm-related information from multiple sources, including media such as news and radio, as well as local sources (e.g. schools and employers). Participants did not mention mis- or disinformation.	Populations are likely to use multiple information sources to assess storm risk and inform preparedness decisions.	5.3 Alerts and warnings
	Despite repeated warnings, participants were surprised by the ferocity of the storm.	Storm severity may be underestimated despite advance warnings.	5.4 The Storm
	Participants responded more seriously to red warnings when compared to yellow and amber warnings but felt they arrived too late for them to take meaningful action to prepare for the storm.	Where yellow and amber weather warnings are common, these warnings alone may not sufficiently differentiate unusually severe storms from routine weather events.	5.3 Alerts and warnings

Theme	Study findings	Key insight	Location in report
Warnings and alerts	According to some participants, the lack of response to the yellow and amber warnings was due to the fact that they regularly faced extreme weather events given the location of the parish, and therefore did not feel the need to take additional precautions.	Red warnings, which may be taken most seriously, may not always provide sufficient time for affected populations to act.	5.3 Alerts and warnings
	Government Emergency Alerts were not widely received and several arrived late, indicating challenges for rural populations in receiving Emergency Alerts.	Emergency Alerts may not reliably reach all populations in sufficient time to support protective action.	5.3 Alerts and warnings
	Participants made suggestions about how to ensure the weather warning systems are more nuanced, including asking for more specific behavioural advice about what to do or how to prepare in the lead up to and during a storm.	Populations may want specific behavioural advice on what actions to take before and during a storm.	5.9 Future preparedness
Power outage	Power outage had wide-reaching impacts, even beyond the expectations of residents who had experienced many power outages in the past. Uncertainty around when power and communications would be restored resulted in frustration.	Populations may underestimate the extent to which essential household systems depend on electricity. Heating systems powered by oil or gas may still be affected by power outages due to their reliance on electricity to operate.	5.4 The Storm
		Uncertainty about when power and communications will be restored may contribute to frustration and anxiety during prolonged outages.	
	Although Mawnan did not experience widespread disruption to water, nearby Helston experienced severe water outages due to fallen trees breaking water pipes. Participants were affected by boreholes failing to operate during a power outage.	Populations may not know that boreholes may be affected by a power outage and those reliant on boreholes may need water reserves as a matter of broad resilience.	5.6 Other knock-on effects
	Participants reported confusion around how long food could be safely kept during a power cut.	Populations may need clearer guidance on food safety during prolonged power outages.	5.6 Other knock-on effects
Communications outage	Storm Goretti related tree fall brought down both power and communications lines, which are above ground in this area.	Above-ground power and communications cables are vulnerable to storm-related tree fall, increasing the risk of simultaneous service disruption.	5.9 Future preparedness
	In areas of poor connection and signal, there may be 'hotspots' across settlements where mobiles can connect to their network.	Access to mobile communications during outages may rely on individual or community awareness of local areas where mobile connectivity remains available.	5.4 The Storm

Theme	Study findings	Key insight	Location in report
Communications outage	Participants described technology as central to modern living, with a reliance on mobile phones and the internet for many vital needs and functions (e.g. calling emergency services and contacting relatives or loved ones). Being unable to access or use technology as usual caused stress and difficulty for many participants.	Storm-affected populations may expect fast restoration of communications services, leading to frustration when outages are prolonged.	5.4 The Storm
		Demand for communications services may increase following severe weather events as populations seek information, assistance, and contact with others.	
		Rural communities may face additional challenges during emergencies where mobile connectivity is limited or unreliable as a result of living in a 'not-spot' (Shared Rural Network)	
		Widespread dependence on technology may impact people's ability to respond in contexts where power and communications are severely impacted.	
	Lack of information and slow responses from communications providers were a source of great frustration to many participants, with many homes experiencing communications outages for many weeks post-storm.	The experience of communications outages may be influenced by the availability of timely information and updates from communications providers.	5.7 Response and recovery
Vulnerability	Participants reported that emergency services access to Mawnan were severely limited during and immediately after the storm, as a result of damage and disruption to travel routes.	Severe weather may disrupt access for emergency services, leaving rural communities reliant on existing local medical and emergency resources.	5.8 Vulnerability
	Local emergency first responders are a central resource when emergency services cannot access certain locations.	Communities may rely on local emergency first responders when severe weather limits access to formal emergency services.	5.8 Vulnerability
	Individual and additional needs varied across participants from Mawnan and therefore should be considered broadly and inclusively.	Power outages may disproportionately affect people who rely on electricity for mobility, daily living activities, or the safe storage of medication.	5.8 Vulnerability
		Disruption to transport routes and delivery services may affect access to essential medication during and after severe weather events.	

Theme	Study findings	Key insight	Location in report
Vulnerability	Individual and additional needs varied across participants from Mawnan and therefore should be considered broadly and inclusively (continued)	People who depend on regular carer visits may be particularly vulnerable during emergencies which disrupt physical access.	5.8 Vulnerability
	A central concern during communications outage was the ability to contact emergency services or access first aid support.	Communications outages limit the ability of rural populations to contact emergency services.	5.4 The Storm
		Access to life-saving equipment, such as defibrillators, may depend on communications infrastructure that is unavailable during outages, an issue also identified in a 2024 statement by Resuscitation UK.	
	As in Mawnan, internet and communications connections that sit above ground may be vulnerable in rural areas at risk of storm damage and tree fall.	Communities with limited mobile connectivity may have few alternative means of communication when primary communications infrastructure fails. Public telephone boxes may serve as an important alternative communication route in some rural settlements (Pengelly and Dixon, 2026).	5.4 The Storm
Response and recovery	Residents in Mawnan are not a homogenous group and think differently about where they live - some experienced Mawnan as having a tight knit community, while others felt more distant and separate. This may change over time and affect how they experience emergencies.	Informal support from neighbours and local networks may be an important source of assistance during and after emergencies.	5.1 Background
		People who do not have close existing relationships with their neighbours, or who live further away from the centre of settlements, may not immediately be considered for recovery and wellness checks.	
		Levels of social cohesion may influence how communities experience and respond to emergencies.	
	Mawnan residents proactively self-organised to provide mutual support. Those who benefitted the most were those geographically located close to others and those with existing relationships with their neighbours.	Community-led support acts as a lifeline in response and recovery when formal services are delayed or unable to access affected areas.	5.5 Community resilience
		The benefits of community-led response may not be experienced equally across all residents, particularly those who are geographically or socially isolated.	

Theme	Study findings	Key insight	Location in report
Response and recovery	Participants were concerned that neither the parish nor local businesses had received sufficient external support with clearing the tree debris that remain in the parish, and that this would have a long-term impact on tourism in the area as well as safety.	The consequences of storm damage may extend beyond immediate disruption, including ongoing safety risks from fallen or damaged trees.	5.6 Other knock-on effects
	Participants reported residual feelings of anxiety during and following the storm and impacts on mental health.	Severe storms may have longer term impacts on well-being for both adults and children.	5.6 Other knock-on effects
	Participants felt that Cornwall had been overlooked and abandoned, and were frustrated that local representatives were not visible in the aftermath of the storm. Local MPs were appreciated for their visits and the relevant information they shared.	Community perceptions and experiences of recovery are influenced by the visibility and engagement of local representatives following severe weather events.	5.7 Response and recovery
	Some participants felt that the storm should have been treated as a national emergency, and participants called for mobilisation of the armed forces to support the clear up effort, and some participants criticised the council for failing to support the clear up effort immediately following the storm.	Communities may expect a level of recovery support that reflects the severity of impacts they experienced, regardless of formal emergency classifications.	5.7 Response and recovery
	Participants did not mention the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) based in Exeter, indicating they were either not aware of the LRF and/or did not experience any support from them. As in Mawnan, rural parishes may create their own resilience groups and networks in the aftermath of storms or other crises, particularly where there is disconnect from the LRF.	Rural communities may establish their own resilience networks where Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are not visible.	5.9 Future preparedness
	Mawnan residents had equipment needed to clear debris following the storm, but not all residents had the appropriate qualifications and knowledge to use them safely.	The availability of debris-clearing equipment does not necessarily mean it will (or can) be used safely.	5.5 Community resilience

Section 2: Project initiation and approach

This project was conducted in response to a commission from the Social and Behavioural Sciences for Emergencies Group (SBSE) convened by the Government Office for Science. The project was conducted by researchers from the Government Office for Science, University College London (in collaboration with Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK)) and the University of Exeter (in collaboration with ACCESS).

Most climate projections indicate that winter windstorms will increase slightly in number and intensity over the UK, including disproportionately more severe storms. There is substantial evidence on people's responses to and recovery from climate events such as flooding and extreme heat in the UK (e.g. King & Demski, 2025; Quinn et al., 2023; Power et al., 2020). However, the extent to which the population is prepared for, can respond to and is able to recover from severe storms is largely unknown. SBSE sought to understand and learn from the impact of Storm Goretti on Cornwall in January 2026, due to the widespread experiences of power and communications outage, reduced physical access, and receipt of weather warnings and government issued emergency alerts.

This rapid research study used qualitative interviews to capture lived experiences of Storm Goretti within a rural community and provide insights to UKHMG policymakers (see Appendix 5).

Aims

To investigate:

- levels of preparedness for the storm
- the effectiveness of early warning systems
- community, individual and business responses
- immediate recovery (within 7 days of the storm).

Section 3: Background to the Parish of Mawnan

Focus on Mawnan

The Parish of Mawnan was chosen as the location for the research project for two key reasons. Firstly, the residents were significantly affected by events of interest to SBSE (power and communications outage, reduced physical access, receipt of Met Office weather warnings and government issued emergency alerts), and even more so as these largely occurred concurrently. Secondly, a resident of Mawnan, who is also a member of ACCESS, agreed to be a liaison with Mawnan, acting as an invaluable, trusted conduit between the research team and the residents themselves, enabling rapid data collection.

Demographics

Mawnan has a population of 1,601 people living in 756 households. The parish has a higher-than-average age profile, with 48.4% of the population over 60 years of age compared to 24.8% of the population in England as a whole (ONS, 2026). Mawnan residents are almost entirely white (97.7%) and born in the UK (93.8%) (ONS, 2026).

Geography

Mawnan is a rural, coastal parish in South Cornwall. It lies around 3 miles south of Falmouth and is bounded by the Helford River in the south and the Fal Estuary in the east. The principal entrance into the parish is via Penwarne Road (Fig.1). The other key entrances are via Maenporth, Bareppa Road and Port Navas via narrow rural lanes (Fig.1). Figure 2 shows the location of the Parish of Mawnan in wider Cornwall.



Fig.1: Map showing Mawnan Parish boundaries; OpenStreetMap

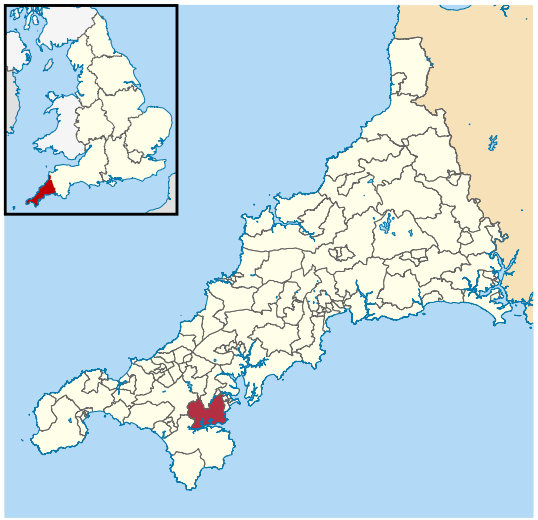


Fig. 2: Map of Boundary of Constantine, Mawnan and Budock, Cornwall (in red); Wikipedia

Settlements

The village of Mawnan Smith ('the village') lies at the centre of the parish and is the main settlement area. Smaller settlements and hamlets in the parish include West Bay near Maenporth, Budock Vean, Meudon, Carlidnack, Bareppa, Penwarne, Helford Passage, and Durgan.

Established facilities

The village has a range of established facilities including a primary school, a preschool, a café, a pub, a village shop, a working smithy, three churches, a recreation area for cricket and football, a bowling green, a village hall and a playing field. A number of community, leisure and sports clubs are based in the village and serve the wider parish.

Governance

The parish falls within the parliamentary constituency of Camborne and Redruth. The current MP is Perran Moon (2024-present, Labour). George Eustice (2010-2024, Conservative) preceded him. Mawnan is part of the Constantine, Mabe & Mawnan ward of Cornwall. The current councillor is Anna Thomason-Kenyon (Cornish Independent Non-Aligned Group (October 2025-present); Reform UK (May-October 2025)). The previous councillor was John Bastin (2021-25, Conservative). Mawnan Parish Council provides services for and manages and maintains the assets of Mawnan Parish. The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum is based in Exeter, 100 miles east of Mawnan.

Terminology and definitions

Throughout this report, we will refer to 'the Parish of Mawnan' using 'Mawnan' or 'the parish'. We will refer to Mawnan Smith as 'the village'.

Section 4: Background to Storm Goretti

Storm Goretti, named by Météo France, was the seventh named storm of the 2025–26 European windstorm season (Met Office, 2026a). The storm brought severe wind impacts across the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, the Channel Islands, and Devon (Met Office, 2026b), and heavy snowfall in the Midlands, Wales and Scotland. Germany, France and the Netherlands also experienced severe winds, heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures (Vidalon *et al*., 2026). Goretti's strong winds were caused by a process called 'explosive cyclogenesis' – rapidly deepening and strengthening areas of low pressure where the pressure drops quickly in 24 hours. It is likely, although not definitively confirmed, that a meteorological feature known as a 'sting jet' occurred, which leads to strong, high-level winds, funnelling down to ground-level very quickly (England and Green, 2026).

Storm Goretti was one of the most impactful storms to affect Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the last 30 to 35 years. Goretti brought high winds to the region on the evening of 8 to 9 January 2026, with gusts of 99 miles per hour recorded on the Isles of Scilly and 90 miles per hour on Cornwall's Lizard Peninsula.

Damages and impacts were widespread, with 55,000 properties losing power and around 15,000 properties losing water supply in nearby Helston and the Lizard (BBC, 2026a; Robinson, 2026). Schools closed in affected areas (including Mawnan), debris blocked roads, and all train services across Cornwall were suspended. There was one fatality in Helston, Cornwall, when a tree fell on a caravan (Simpson and Farmer, 2026).

Weather warnings and alerts issued before and during Storm Goretti

A series of warnings were issued by the Met Office in the UK between Tuesday 6 and Friday 9 January 2026. On Tuesday 6 January, a yellow wind warning was issued in Cornwall, which was then escalated to an amber warning on Wednesday 7th. Finally, at 2pm on Thursday 8 January the Met Office issued a red weather warning for wind for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for the evening of 8 January.

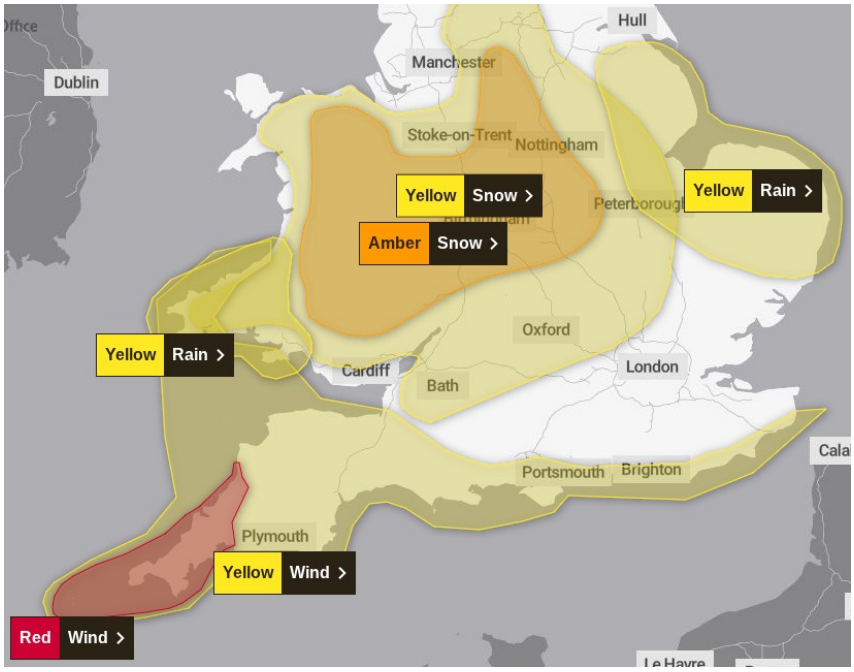


Fig 3: Met Office, 2026b

Section 5: Results and insights

5.1 Background

Participant characteristics

The participants varied across age, sex/gender, employment status and time lived in Mawnan. Age was reported by 56.6% of participants; most were older than 56 years old (38.8%). Just over two thirds of the participants were women (66.7%), and just over 50% were retired (55.6%). Time living in Mawnan ranged from just over 1 year to 48 years, with most living in the parish for between 6-15 years (38.9%). In interview, two participants described themselves as being Cornish.

Detailed participants characteristics can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Characteristics of study participants

Participant characteristics (N=18)		**n**	**%**
Age	25-35 years	2	11.1
	36-45 years	0	0
	46-55 years	1	5.6
	56-65 years	3	16.6
	66-75 years	3	16.6
	76+ years	1	5.6
	Undisclosed	8	44.4
Sex/gender	Men	6	33.3
	Women	12	66.7
Employment status	Retired	10	55.6
	Working	6	33.3
	Unclear	2	11.1
Time lived in Mawnan	1-5 years	5	27.8
	6-15 years	7	38.9
	16-25 years	4	22.2
	26+ years	2	11.1
Interview type (N=16)	In-person	12	75.0
	In-person – walking interview	1	6.3
	Online - MS Teams	3	18.8

Descriptions of Mawnan

Summary

Participants described Mawnan as a supportive and friendly community, particularly interviewees living within the village itself and those embedded within village life. However, sense of community varied depending on where people lived, with those living in more peripheral areas of the parish or in areas with many second or holiday homes describing feelings of isolation and of a less cohesive community.

Detailed results

Participants reported a strong sense of community. They largely described Mawnan as a "*close-knit*" (P8), supportive and friendly community, where people "*will look out for me*" (P2) and "*check on the potentially*

vulnerable to see if they are okay and whether they need any help" (P8). Some participants described Mawnan Smith as a living village rather than just a seasonal or tourist destination, mentioning its "*thriving primary school...the shop, we've got the cafe, we've got the pub" (P5)*, and other clubs, groups and organisations as evidence of a thriving year-round community. One participant even reported moving to Mawnan "*purposely*" due to the "*wonderful community*" (P11).

Participants remarked on Mawnan's remoteness and linked its strong social infrastructure and "*community spirit*" (P7) to its rural location:

> P3: *"because we're not close to Truro, it does take a little longer, I think, for help to reach us... sometimes living in the country can leave you quite remote and cut off."*
>
> P5: *"Cornwall's always been a fairly self-reliant place. It's had to be."*

However, this sense of community was not experienced evenly across the parish. Participants living in hamlets, on outlying roads, or in areas with many second or holiday homes describe themselves as cut off, or "*outside the village*" (P1a) with weaker neighbourly ties. These areas can feel like "*just a collection of houses, really*" (P4). Some participants living in these outlying areas reported feeling "*forgotten about*" (P1a) or physically separate from the village centre.

> P4: *"we don't really have a focal point to get together... some of my neighbours I haven't met, actually... we're all detached houses, so we might nod in the street, but that's about all."*
>
> P8*: "Over time it gets more fragmented, and you know, the holiday homes... there might be someone there, but you don't necessarily know who they are. And you don't tend to be so perhaps concerned about them because you don't know them."*

Key findings

Residents in Mawnan are not a homogenous group and think differently about where they live - some experienced Mawnan as having a tight knit community, while others felt more distant and separate. This may change over time and affect how they experience emergencies.

5.2 Before the storm

Previous storm experience

Summary

Participants reported experiencing many previous storms, both in Cornwall, across the UK and internationally, and some drew on these experiences to judge the risk of Storm Goretti.

Detailed results

Many participants reported having had previous experience of severe weather. For some, storms and extreme weather appear to be seen as "*part and parcel of living in Cornwall"* (P16):

> *P4: "We have storms here all the time. We have weather warnings all the time"*

Some participants drew on past experience to judge the risk of Storm Goretti, including experiencing "*this year, three [storms] in succession*" (P3), but these experiences may have led to some complacency, particularly when previous warnings did not lead to major impacts:

> *P5: "It's going to be a storm, going to be a yellow, amber weather warning. You're gonna have gusts of wind up to 80 miles an hour. Right, okay, we'll probably lose a rooftile."*

> *P9: "we've had a number of preceding storms, I can't remember the names, but they're all named storms, weren't they, that came before? And, you know, the house was still intact and plant pots and things hadn't blown away. So we just kind of, 'it'll be all right and we'll carry on'."*

Some participants personally experienced more extreme weather, including Hurricane Katrina, other US hurricanes, the Great Storm of 1987 in the UK, and previous incidents where trees have hit houses, inferring an awareness of how severe storms can impact homes and personal safety, including when the wind "*lifted [their] caravan up and flung it across the Cornish wall. Had it gone over the top we'd have been down in the bay"* (P15):

> *P6: "we went through a few hurricanes [in the US]. We worked on boats out there, so we had actually, probably more than most, got an idea of when people say sort of 100 mile an hour winds plus of what the impact can be... on the infrastructure, certainly."*

As will be explored below, these previous experiences influenced how participants framed their expectations for Storm Goretti.

Storm expectations

Summary

Participants indicated an awareness of, and even familiarity with, storms and their potential impacts in the area, including on their own personal property, but with most participants still severely underestimating Storm Goretti.

Detailed results

Participants largely reported underestimating the severity of Storm Goretti. Many were expecting Storm Goretti to be impactful, with high winds, fallen trees, and "*probably a power line down somewhere*" (P4), but participants "*didn't expect it to be quite so violent*" (P7) and didn't have "*a sense of how dangerous it was going to be"* (P6).

There were reports of treating the incoming storm as "*just another storm*" (P9a) and therefore they "*didn't take much notice of it*" (P12) and "*didn't think it would impact us too much*" (P13). However, some did consider the potential impact of the storm in the context of their own local setting, such as the position of their house and nearby trees:

> *P9b: "We have two oak trees down the side of our house. And as it happens, the wind was not in the prevailing direction. It was coming behind. So we weren't that worried that they were going to topple on us, if it had been in the sort of normal southwesterly, we might have had a bit more concern."*

> *P4: "The neighbour has two Monterey pines, which are very big. And if they came down, they possibly could get a corner of our bungalow, and they'd certainly demolish the garage."*

Preparedness before

Summary

Storm preparedness, and preparedness more broadly, varied across interviewees. Several reported feeling and being underprepared, while others were better prepared, though this often reflected a pre-existing lifestyle of rural self-sufficiency and readiness rather than specific planning.

Detailed results

Levels of preparedness for Storm Goretti varied. Some considered themselves significantly unprepared for the storm and its consequences, taking no actions to prepare despite being aware of the incoming storm and considering their existing provisions sufficient, particularly as they reported not expecting a prolonged power cut:

> *P11: "We didn't even fill a kettle, fill the thermos flask, at a personal level, we were unprepared... we didn't boil the kettle, fill flasks, eat properly a hot meal earlier in the day. We didn't have dinner. We hadn't shopped for food supplies, filled hot water bottles, got our blankets together, warned our family, friends and neighbours that we might get cut off... So we hadn't gathered our stuff or mentally got ready for like a long-term power cut."*

There was evidence of participants being self-critical of their levels of preparedness, with sentiments including "*there's a lot more we could have done*" (P1b) and that their approach to preparedness was "*lackadaisical*" (P13).

However, there were other participants who were well prepared for the storm, though their preparedness tended not to rely on actions taken or provisions made specifically for Storm Goretti, but instead a general state of preparedness they maintain through living in a more self-sufficient way, particularly around power resilience:

> *P15: "Living in the rural community, you're always semi-prepared... I don't think we made any special provision for the storm, but we always are prepared for an emergency... we've got a little mini gas stove, and we've got a bottle of gas heater. And we have oil central heating."*

> *P6: "We've actually got solar panels and we've got a solar panel battery and so the day of, my husband actually had the good sense to charge the battery off the mains. So he topped up our solar battery, our backup battery power to 100%."*

One participant reflected that their preparedness was "*by chance, really. Just because of who we are and what we are*" (P5) and because "*that's just my make up*" (P8), inferring that levels of preparedness and resilience in Mawnan may reflect the rural nature of the parish and their experiences of previous storms or disruptions. However, another participant suggested that an individual's levels of preparedness *"depends a bit on your outlook on life"* whereby "*the pessimist might be, going down to the bunker and, you know, tins of food for 10 days"* (P9a).

There were also some reports of specific preparedness actions ahead of Storm Goretti, including moving cars away from trees which may fall, collecting children from school and college early, boiling hot water bottles early to warm beds, filling water carriers, gathering camping equipment, and securing outdoor items (including bins and flowerpots). However, one participant did note taking a new action:

> *P1b: "the one thing that I did do, which is something completely different, I made sure I had the cat basket to put the cat in if we had any damage…and we had to get out of the house quick. So I made sure that basket was there."*

There were participants who reported having items to support them during a storm or emergency, but that were not set up, enabled or ready to be used during Storm Goretti, leaving them without the support they expected:

> *P14: "it's a bit silly really, having a generator without any way to link it up [to the house]."*
>
> *P2: "I've always got torches sort of around… you're trying to find one with batteries in that actually work…I've got a battery pack, but it wasn't charged up."*
>
> *P3: "I changed my mobile phone last year, but didn't realise that the chargers in the car were not compatible with the mobile phone."*

Finally, one participant reflected that the Parish Council was also unprepared for the impact of Storm Goretti, with no agreement between council members on what their plan of action might be should the storm create extended issues.

Key findings

Participants' awareness and experience of storms do not necessarily result in preparedness or preparedness related actions. Similarly, repeated past storm or natural hazard experiences, particularly those which do not lead to significant impacts or harms, may result in complacency around preparedness and underestimation of future storms, showing evidence of normalcy bias.

Most participants felt underprepared for a lengthy power outage, reporting not engaging in preparedness activities ahead of the storm. Most people then relied on resources and tools already available to them at home.

None of the research participants demonstrated an awareness of recent central or local government preparedness resources or campaigns (e.g., the GOV.UK Prepare Campaign).

5.3 Alerts and warnings

Weather warnings and information sources

Summary

Participants felt they were warned of the storm. However, the yellow and amber levels of the warning system were not interpreted as serious until other precautions were being taken (such as the schools and colleges closing early and travel advice changed) and the red warning was issued. The red warning was perceived by some participants as too late, as they had limited time to act ahead of the storm's arrival.

Detailed results

Weather warnings are common in Cornwall and participants were very familiar with the weather warning system. Several participants also reported being interested in the weather, whether to enable them to take part in their usual hobbies or as a hobby in itself as they "*enjoy, you know, understanding it and knowing what's going on"* (P9a), and keeping up to date with weather changes as a usual practice:

> *P4: "We heard there was gonna be a big storm, probably about a week before."*
>
> *P6: "I spend a lot of my time on the river down at the Helford. So we're always weather watching anyway because we need to be aware of what's happening with the wind and tide on the river in terms of obviously access to our boats, but also safety."*

Leading up to Storm Goretti, participants received weather warnings from BBC Radio Cornwall, BBC Spotlight (the local BBC news television programme), the Met Office and other weather apps. Other important information was received through schools, workplaces, local networks and social media. Participants triangulated different combinations of information, helping to build up a picture of what was coming and fill in information gaps:

> P6: *"The college, [name] issued a, an alert, the day before, I think, saying just keep an eye on transport issues, but it wasn't until the day of, about mid-day that they said we're going to send the kids home early... certainly I think the BBC and Spotlight News were saying don't travel past 3:00..."*
>
> P13: *"I think the school sent out a communication post... a friend who's a boater... he knows all about weather stuff. So I think it was him and someone else put a post on a WhatsApp group... And so because I heard it twice, I thought, oh, that's probably correct, yeah."*

Despite knowledge and understanding of the weather warning system, the participants largely did not interpret the yellow and amber warnings as warnings of a serious incoming storm, or consider that the storm might escalate, as residents "*live here with weather all the time*" (P2) and the warnings "*didn't really register*" (P16):

> *P2: "Weather in Cornwall is a sort of 3D immersive experience... I'd say we've already got a sort of heightened kind of sense of kind of weather, but also at the same time, maybe we're a bit guilty of, 'oh, it's never usually as bad as they say it's going to be'... we get so many kind of wind, weather warnings... It's like, well, you know, life just sort of has to go on."*
>
> *P3: "BBC Radio Cornwall always says, no matter what the weather, 'don't go out unless you need to'... They're almost too alarmist, but this time it was well justified."*

A key moment of shift in perspective for participants was the storm warning being escalated to a red warning. Participants correctly regarded these as rarer than yellow and amber warnings, and were inclined to take them more seriously:

> *P10: "I think that's the first time I've ever seen a red weather warning for wind and I've become quite used to like the amber warnings, that doesn't really affect us anymore. That's kind of just the norm. But the red one was like, "okay, this is really bad"."*

P6: "But it's oh, another, you know, another amber warning, another amber warning, another yellow warning, and then suddenly it's red."

P16: "Because that red warning had come in so late, you know, I think a lot of people like us hadn't really taken it as seriously as we should have done."

Government emergency alert experiences

Emergency Alerts is a government system that "provides warning and advice in a life-threatening emergency." Emergency Alerts are sent to mobile phones or tablet devices using 4G or 5G, and may "make a loud siren-like sound, even if it's set on silent" which lasts around ten seconds. Alerts are based on current location. In the lead up to Storm Goretti, Emergency Alerts were issued at around 17:00 to half a million people (Farmer *et al.*, 2026).

Summary

Many participants reported not receiving the alert or reported that it was received very late, with some speculation that phone settings, signal, provider and age may have affected receipt of the alerts. Participants who did receive an alert did not report changing their behaviour as a result, either because they had already prepared or did not feel there was anything else they should or could do.

Detailed results

An emergency alert was issued by HMG ahead of Storm Goretti. Eight participants of eighteen reported receiving no alert and another participant did not own a phone and therefore also did not receive an alert. Of those who did receive an emergency alert, three reported it arrived too late for them to act on:

P3: "Friday afternoon [day after storm], we went into Falmouth, and then it was Friday afternoon. Suddenly, I had this alarm on my phone about the alert... So it was too late."

P9b: "mine quite a lot after [partner's alert], interestingly."

P11: "mine came, I think, about 9 o'clock at night on Thursday. The storm was already in progress... if it was coming through at random or not at all, it was too late to act."

Some participants also hypothesised around why they thought they may not have received the alert, suggesting it may have been because the "*mobile phone signal's not very good"* (P4), *"Maybe I've got a setting turned off or something"* (P1b), or "*could be because I'm on Giff Gaff provider rather than Google, rather than on Vodafone"* (P15) among other explanations.

One participant reported receiving a government emergency alert, but recalled receiving it much earlier in the day, "*maybe 11:00 AM... before we went to our meeting, before we picked our daughter up*" (P13), which would not have been possible due to the fact that the Met Office red warning was not issued until 14:00 and the UK government emergency alert at 17:00.

For those who received an emergency alert on the evening of the storm, it did not prompt them to change their behaviour as it confirmed what they already knew or they were already "*pretty prepared*" (P7):

P6: "it didn't change anything because all it says is high winds. There's no, there was no kind of like 'this might happen, this it might be your preparation tactic' at all... we'd already seen all that on the local news anyway."

Key findings

Participants gauged risk level by triangulating weather warnings and storm-related information from multiple sources, including media such as news and radio, as well as local sources (e.g. schools and employers). Participants did not mention mis- or disinformation.

Participants responded more seriously to red warnings when compared to yellow and amber warnings but felt they arrived too late for them to take meaningful action to prepare for the storm. According to some participants, the lack of response to the yellow and amber warnings was due to the fact that they regularly faced extreme weather events given the location of the parish and therefore did not feel the need to take additional precautions.

Government Emergency Alerts were not widely received and several arrived late, indicating challenges for rural populations in receiving Emergency Alerts.

5.4 The storm

Experience of storm

Summary

The storm was experienced differently across participants, but with most noting the power of the wind and noise on the night, and some reporting feeling vulnerable at the height of the storm and in the immediate aftermath.

Detailed results

Storm Goretti was a notably intense experience for participants, dominated by wind force ("*it blew a real hooley*" (P15)), noise, and loss of power leading to darkness. Participants felt it was "*something slightly bigger than the previous storms*" (P9a) and were "*surprised by the ferocity*" (P9b) as it began as a fairly normal evening that escalated quickly:

> P6: "*we just kind of went about our evening as normal... You could hear the wind picking up probably from about 5:00 onwards... And it was pretty hairy pretty quickly. But we were sitting watching the TV and we heard a massive crack outside where basically the, the wind was tearing apart the trees in the woods... 100- and 150-year-old oak trees and you could hear them rip as, as the branches were being pulled off and everything went black.*"

Many participants reported drawing on alternate energy sources to cope with the impact of the storm, including torches, transistor radios, generators, solar power batteries, and candles.

Some participants found the storm itself "*very frightening*" (P12) and reported feeling vulnerable when "*you're sitting hearing all that cracking and breaking going on in such close proximity*" (P6) and feeling as though "*the roof's gonna come down*" (P10):

> *P10: "The first night was like the worst just because I wasn't prepared. I had a small... I had candles in my house and then I, a plastic bag was in the wrong place and that caught on fire. And I was like okay, right so then I was like no more candles.*"

> *P12: "the experience of that storm, actually, I found very, very frightening… I think it's because I'm on my own."*

Some had more practical, even casual, perspectives on the storm, with one participant even stating that the storm "*wasn't really that bad*" (P16) while others "*slept right through the rest of it*" (P1a):

> *P16: "it was a bit more violent than usual, but, and the power went out. But other than that it was, it was pretty normal."*

During the storm itself, some participants reported considering or actually going outside despite the dangers they perceived, for reasons such as help seeking, coping with the storm, or experiencing the storm, and some reported not realising how dangerous that would be until afterwards:

> *P3: "my husband said, 'Right, we've got to get in the car and get out of the valley and get up to the crossroads and ring National Grid to tell them about the power cables that are down'. And that was quite scary, because it was at the height of the storm… we couldn't get out of the lane, because another tree had fallen… Fortunately, by that point, I've got a faint signal on my mobile. So I was able to call National Grid from that point, but we couldn't get through for about 20 or 30 minutes. So we were sitting under all these swirling trees and sort of thinking, 'my goodness, you know, a tree could fall on us'. And that was the scariest point."*

> *P10: "Part of me was like, 'do I go and sit in my car and like drive up the hill and see if I can get phone signal?' Then at least I can put the heating on and I can sit in my car and like have lights on and feel a bit more normal, but then I was like, 'no, don't do that. That's really stupid'….That was during the storm."*

> *P1a: "I'm gonna open the front door first, just to see what it's like out there. Well, as soon as I opened the front door, the wind pushed us back in. And I'm struggling to hold the door…"*

Damage and immediate effects

Summary

Damage was widespread across Mawnan, with many reporting the worst tree fall they had ever seen and serious damage to infrastructure, homes and other structures.

Detailed results

Storm Goretti resulted in significant tree fall which damaged homes, roads, utilities and the natural landscape. Several participants noted the importance of the wind direction in the damage that they experienced in Mawnan, indicating their in-depth knowledge of their local area and weather:

> *P7: "It was the direction, I think, that was the big thing. If it had been a southwesterly the trees all know southwesterlies and they grow with a bit more support, but a northwesterly is really unusual, for it to come across that way, and personally I think that's why a lot of trees went, and trees go and the power lines go and you know, so yeah."*

> *P13: "if it was southerly... I don't think we'd have a house anymore, but because we have a lot of shelter from trees... from the north-west I think it was that direction, it wasn't so bad."*

Tree fall, particularly along the main Penwarne Road into Mawnan, was severe and shocked many participants, with a 300-metre stretch of road having "*35 plus trees down*" (P1a) and several describing the damage as looking "*like a war zone"* (P8, P12):

> *P5: "I've never seen anything like it in my life. I mean, it looked like one of those pictures you see from the First World War when somebody, an artillery bombs gone off... there was a tree down over somebody's car. There was a tree down on somebody's bungalow. There was a tree down, but that had actually fallen between 2 of the bungalows... it was absolute...carnage."*

Participants also reported varied damage to their personal property, including "*damage to the roof"* (P4), to greenhouses ("*it's scattered halfway up the drive*" (P5)) and to trees:

> *P14: "within an hour or so, we'd lost a major tree in our garden...which took out the garage to next door's house and two sheds... from my bedroom window, we basically had a completely different view in the morning."*

There were also serious and dangerous incidents observed and reported by participants, including one near-death incident of a person being hit by a tree while in their car:

> *P2: "there's a car that's been hit by a tree and someone was in it and they were okay, thank goodness."*

> *P1a: "Three trees hit his [neighbour's] house. One of them actually went between his house and ours, which is only a 10-foot gap."*

Experience of power outage

Summary

Power outage was a significant part of most participants' experience during and after Storm Goretti, with knock on impacts of its own. Participants reported frustration, stress and relying on varied strategies for coping with loss of power.

Detailed results

Power outage was one of the most impactful consequences of Storm Goretti, with all participants experiencing power outage. Most participants reported that the power went out during the storm on Thursday evening and was mostly restored on the following Sunday or Monday. This resulted in at least two full days of power outage for most participants, though there were significant variations in length of outage, with some in the Penwarne Road area reporting a five-day outage. The loss of power resulted in the loss of many other functions in people's homes. Heat was a key concern for participants:

> *P5: "It doesn't take very long for even a modern, well-insulated house to get very, to get very cold, if it's cold outside... once you don't heat something for sort of two or three days... you start getting cold."*

> *P2: "I'm solely reliant on electricity. I have no wood burner, I don't have any gas, source of gas... So if I've got no power, not only can I not heat my home, but I can't cook anything either."*

Notably, some participants whose heat systems were not reliant on electricity, such as oil, still weren't able to heat their homes as "*it depends on electricity to keep it going*" (P15):

> *P8: "Heating, there's not a lot one can do, because obviously if you depend on electricity, and there isn't any, not only does it affect any electric powered heaters, but like a lot of properties around this area, because there is no piped gas, a lot of people are on oil fired systems for their central heating and hot water. Now, you'd think, 'oh, well, you know, well, that's fine, because I've got oil, not electricity', but the boilers do not work without electricity, because of the controllers and the pumps that drive the heat and water around them. They work in tandem with electricity, so your oil fire system is still no good in a power cut."*

Other functions lost as a result of power outage included "*no internet, no WiFi, no working phones, no fridge, no freezer" (*P3) and inability to use tech as usual:

> *P[redacted]: "my [child] who has [neurodevelopmental diagnosis], [they don't] understand that that means that there's no internet and [they] can't watch things on [their] iPad."*

As a result of power outage, one participant was unable to get out of their electric powered bed and into their electric powered chair:

> *P15: "the biggest frustration really was the fact that you couldn't get out of bed, and if you got out of bed, you've nowhere to sit because you need power, to run your chair and your, your beds."*

The impact of Storm Goretti on those with individual and additional needs is fully explored in Section 5.8.

Participants reported ways of coping with losing power, which depended on the resources they had available to them, such as an "*oil fired Aga and the diesel cars"* (P3) and *"running my car to plug it [mobile phone] in"* (P11):

> *P7: "we had power Thursday, Friday [through use of battery] and lost it Saturday morning because our battery was drained by then... we barely noticed any difference until the battery ran out on the Saturday."*

> *P16: "We were accidentally prepared. We bought a van a little while ago that we converted into a camper and rather than getting all the leisure batteries and all the complicated wiring, I bought this, it's a just a giant power pack. It's absolutely huge. So that was really good. So we could run the kettle on that and can run the fridge and you can run loads of stuff on it."*

The loss of power and the uncertainty around when it would be restored resulted in stress for some participants as they had "*no signal, no phone, no information, nothing"* (P2):

P2: "They [other residents] said it's not coming back on until Monday morning. I was like 'Oh no, I can't do this. I can't do this on my own with [number of] kids, um, until Monday morning.'"

P12: "as it got longer and longer, I started to get very concerned. I made sure that I got a bedside lamp in 'on' position, so that, you know, I would know that the power would come back."

P14: "if we'd known on the 8th of January, we were going to be in the situation for a week, we probably would have booked into a hotel for a week. But we didn't, and it wasn't 'til, sort of, the Sunday you think, 'well, bloody hell this is terrible, we can't live like this, but it'll be on tomorrow so we're okay'. And then tomorrow came, and it wasn't."

Experience of communications outage

Summary

The loss of communications during and after Storm Goretti was a significant impact reported by nearly all participants. The communications outage was described as the "*biggest problem*" (P14). Overall, communications outages were a failure of rural infrastructure which revealed vulnerability that was managed well by some participants, but created a period of uncertainty and risk for others.

Detailed results

Communications connections are consistently poor in the area with participants noting that "*mobiles don't work in the valley*" (P3) and "*the signal down there is atrocious, absolutely awful"* (P16). Storm related communication outage was caused by significant tree fall, which brought down both power and communications lines which are above ground in this area. There was a near total loss of all communications channels and most participants struggled to access information in the hours and days after the storm, resulting in feelings of confusion and isolation:

P2: "I had no phone signal, had no idea what was going on. It was a Friday morning, so my [child] thought that school might still be on... I've got no, I got no means of getting any messages from school. So if any messages have come, I can't get them."

P10: "on the Saturday I drove to my mum's house. At this point, I didn't have any, my phone was dead, and I was going a bit nuts, because I was like, 'I have no one to talk to. I don't know what's going on.'"

Some participants walked to certain areas of the village, to 'hotspots', in order to send and receive messages, such as "*up there by the shop*" (P2) or "*the church, we went up there, that was the only place we could get signal*" (P16). After the storm, participants reported relying on each other for information. They reported people walking through the village to put "*together little pieces of information*" (P2), talking to neighbours, stopping cars, gathering at key points such as the shop, pub, church or war memorial, and swapping information about blocked roads, power restoration and where mobile signal could still be found:

P9a: "you were getting quite a lot of useful snippets of information just by standing talking to somebody. A few cars were stopping to chat, which was quite nice as well. They did make the effort to sort of just say where they come from. At that point, though, the village was closed off."

The length of internet and communications outage varied significantly across participants, from a few days to over a month, and was "*the biggest frustration*" (P2):

> *P8: "there are still people without broadband and phones in the area... he [colleague] doesn't expect to get his back until the middle of March."*
>
> *P12: "I was actually luckier than some in the village that I got that back, fairly, fairly swiftly after I got the electricity back, I got the internet back in."*
>
> *P16: "the pub didn't have any Wi-Fi for about... close to a week in the end... there was a woman I saw in the café two weeks ago and she'd only just had her Wi-Fi, her Internet back in the last couple of days. So for some people it's knocked out for a really long time."*

Some participants had better access to signal or communications than others, with some accessing "*just a standard mobile signal, which is patchy"* (P6) and other connections depending *"on your provider"* (P7). There were concerns about how residents can access emergency support during communications outage, a key issue in rural areas:

> *P11: "[during the storm] she went to dial 999 on her mobile and there was no signal... ran next door, and tried her neighbour's phone, which had a different mobile provider, network provider and actually got the 999 call out... they needed the defib, the access code to the defibrillator... I think we need to know what we're supposed to do in a medical emergency, and there's no means of getting in or out the village. There's an air ambulance, obviously, but how do you call on it? And can you access, if your mobile signal is very weak, how can you access to call 999 to open a defib cabinet?"*

Participants felt that infrastructural vulnerability was created in Mawnan's transition from analogue landlines, which would have continued to function through a power cut, to digital landlines, which do not function in a power cut without a backup power system.

> *P12: "You had no telephone, no landline that was working... this is what sort of angers me, if anything does. Back in the day, you didn't need an electricity supply for a telephone...nothing works without electricity. And I'm sorry, if that is progress, you can keep it."*

Key findings

Despite repeated warnings, participants were surprised by the ferocity of the storm.

Power outage had wide-reaching impacts, even beyond the expectations of residents who had experienced many power outages in the past. Uncertainty around when power and communications would be restored resulted in frustration.

A central concern during communications outage was the ability to contact emergency services or access first aid support.

Participants reported relying on alternative sources of power and heat during and after the storm. Populations may rely on candles, fires, or other open flame sources of heat and energy.

5.5 Community resilience: Resident action and recovery

Resident response

Summary

Participants described community resilience and a strong sense of community spirit following the storm, with residents helping one another through sharing resources and offering practical and emotional support. Others described some sense of apathy among residents, and a feeling of disconnection after the immediate clear up efforts.

Detailed results

Many participants reported an "*extraordinary community spirit*" (P2) immediately after the storm, with residents sharing resources, offering practical and emotional support, and helping to clear the roads of fallen trees. There was a general sense that *"people did what they could*" (P4) for each other and that "*everybody just gelled together*" (P1b). Several participants described feeling proud of and heartened by Mawnan's response. They spoke of residents pulling together and selflessly giving their time to help others in the aftermath of the storm:

> *P13: "It was actually quite lovely and heartwarming. It felt like wartime spirit."*

As well as this sense of pride, some participants expressed having expected this kind of response from their neighbours, describing Mawnan as "*that sort of community*" (P2). However, not all of those interviewed felt able to participate equally in the community. For one participant, this feeling of community was not present before the storm and did not persist after the clear up had ended:

> *P10: "I didn't have any way of being part of the community... I didn't have any way of being in the community group chats or being online... the initial response after the storm was really nice to see the community up at [road] doing all of that, but other than that, I can't say I had much involvement with the community afterwards."*

While most participants reported that residents were proactive and generous with their help, some were seen to be "*standing around chatting*" and noticing "*a sense of apathy of somebody else will do it" (P6).*

Resident recovery action: Tree clearance

Summary

Participants reported a spontaneous and strenuous effort to clear the roads out of the parish, with private individuals, farmers, tree surgeons and other skilled workers organising themselves and working long hours to restore access. Residents did not wait for official help, assuming local services were overstretched, and that residents were well-equipped to help themselves. Participants admired the volunteers' dedication and selflessness but also highlighted safety concerns.

Detailed results

Immediately following the storm, starting in the early hours of Friday 9 January, residents of Mawnan began a rapid and largely spontaneous effort to clear fallen trees and reopen roads by "*people who were good with chainsaws, the local farmers, some contractors"* (P11). People did not wait for official assistance, believing that local authorities "*were probably just stretched"* (P3) and that "*no one from the Council could get through to us"* (P1a) due to tree fall. Immediate action was deemed necessary to restore access for residents and emergency services. There was also a sense that the residents of

Mawnan were well equipped to act on its own behalf because the rural population held the necessary resources and skills to clear the roads:

> *P6: "... myself and my girls were out there on the road shifting wood because it was like nobody else is helping us. This isn't like, you know, Cormac or Highways or whatever are going to pop down and get to us. But if we don't clear it, people can't get out, people can't get in. Emergency services, deliveries, whatever. So it just seemed like, well, we're just going to do it."*

> *P9b: "I think in an area, county like this, it's fortunate that there are people that probably have the equipment, the skills anyway that can actually help themselves or help their immediate area... So the county as a whole, I suppose, is a bit more self-sufficient... you are relying on them the goodwill really is on some extent for people to, to help."*

Participants expressed gratitude and admiration for their neighbours who had worked long hours in "*massive efforts to get the roads open*" (P2):

> *P1b: "I said, 'No, but thank you for what you've done'. He says, 'It's what we do'. But, you know, that was, like, half past three [in the morning], 'til about half past five at night. They were there just doing that, and clearing, and making sure people could get out of the village..."*

> *P3: "there's a lovely man in the village who has a plant company. You see, he's got lots of big JCBs and vehicles that will just pick up trees and remove... And he came down and started helping in the valley... So, thank goodness, there are local people like that who take the initiative and just help. And don't charge for it. I mean, he is just a stalwart [in the] community."*

Other communities from nearby villages also joined to support the recovery efforts:

> *P10: "They were living in like Mabe or further down the Helford... they basically did, like, a 14-hour day of work, really intense work for free... Super dangerous and they were working from like six in the morning until that evening for the good of their community."*

Participants described the clear-up effort as practical, spontaneous and self-organised with people "*just coming out*" (P13) to see what they could do. Volunteers cleared the roads from both sides, using a "*two-pronged approach*" (P6). One participant reflected that the clear-up operation "*wasn't so much of a concerted effort*" (P16) and another that "*it wasn't pretty, but it was effective*" (P6). There were also reports of more organised responses with people effectively "*triaging*" (P5) which roads to prioritise to restore access to the parish or preparing for the clear up operation the day before the storm:

> *P8: "there was one of my near neighbours who told me after the event, he said, 'I knew we were gonna get damage'. He said, 'I set my alarm for 3 o'clock in the morning, so I prepped my chainsaws, got fuel in the van ready, and at 3 o'clock, said, I went up towards Penwarne Road, and I found my first tree across the road and started sawing it up.'"*

Participants reported some safety concerns regarding private individuals using chainsaws or tackling dangerous debris without proper training and two participants described some volunteers as being "*a bit Gung Ho*" (P13). While some of the participants were able to support the road clearance, several reported

not being able to help because they "*don't have a tractor or a chainsaw*" (P8) or necessary certification to use the equipment:

> *P7: "it's lucky there wasn't an accident. Because people go out to be helpful, all Gung Ho, but they might not know what they're doing..."*
>
> *P9b: "we've got tools...but you weren't allowed to use them because he hasn't got what they call the ticket. So there might be goodwill there and skill and whatever, but if you're not formally trained, you couldn't just go out and help them... you [P9a] were very willing, but everybody said 'no, have you got a ticket? Sorry, thanks.'"*
>
> *P10: "I did offer to use a chainsaw. I was turned down quite rightly..."*

However, participants also described volunteers stepping back when a job was beyond their capabilities, deemed too dangerous, or when they were too fatigued to continue safely:

> *P11: "They were exhausted. And we had a professional tree surgeon working with us in our lane... we all said to him 'Stop, stop! You're exhausted. Your girlfriend's freaking out with worry that you're gonna get hurt'... He's talking about climbing up in a tree with a chainsaw running, to get a hanging branch... So, in the end, it was brought to the side of the road and taped, taped to something that would hold it back."*

Resident recovery action: Other support

Summary

In the aftermath of the storm, neighbours, friends, local businesses, and trained volunteers and professionals played vital roles in supporting residents, while additional support came from contacts outside the parish once some communications had been restored and roads reopened. Resident support was largely spontaneous and informal, with residents relying on face-to-face interactions and existing relationships. This meant that help was unevenly distributed, with residents who were more socially or geographically isolated experiencing gaps in support.

Detailed results

Other support offered within the local area was also spontaneous, improvised, and provided through informal networks, with residents knocking on doors to see how they could help. Neighbours, friends, local businesses, volunteers and professionals played key roles in providing essentials such as food, hot water, equipment, shelter, and emergency care, with further support coming from contacts outside the parish. Participants described people acting "*off their own bat*" or "*just getting on with it"* (P8):

> *P16: "there was a few people that have log burners, so they were lighting that. You know, heating up tea, coffee, giving that out to people... our next-door neighbours had a BBQ for a load of people. Anyone with a log burner was letting people come in to heat up water."*
>
> *P10: "And local businesses were also great... It's such a small community you know everyone and like the local...the café, brilliant, it's just a lady who runs it from the community, so she was offering drinks, hot water bottles, coffee, things like that."*

Several participants described offering support as the '*right thing to do'* (P6) or something that they '*wanted to do'* (P5). Participants reported offering access to their own resources, including power and heat sources:

> *P6: "There's a lady a couple of doors down… she was very anxious… She brought her phone to me to keep charged because we were using the solar panel battery still."*

> *P7: "… we had a wood burner so we have one particular lady in our village who's, I knew she didn't have anything [power], so we just said 'look, the fire's burning if you want', and we came back and there she was curled up [on an armchair] in front of the fire with her dog, fast asleep. It was very sweet."*

One participant reported that the hot water they were distributing to older neighbours was the only support these residents received.

> *P14: "I'm not sure what would [have] happened if it hadn't been for us… they were being heated by our hot water bottles… our flask with hot water was keeping them, you know, hydrated, and they had no food. But nobody was interested apart from that. Had we been on holiday… I'm not sure what would have happened. Because nobody was interested… No one from the council came. The parish council weren't interested. Not initially."*

In the immediate aftermath of the storm when the communications were down, some residents reported being "*totally reliant on face-to-face contacts" (P2)* to access support. Those who rely on regular visits from carers who could not access the village were supported by a carer who lives in the village and was therefore "*aware of everything*" (P15).

As Saturday progressed, and some residents were able to find a mobile signal and access the internet, help and resources were then offered through social media:

> *P7: "it was very much was a sort of rallying round, 'does anybody need anything?', people on Facebook on the Mawnan group… it was very much everybody doing their best to help everybody else"*

> *P9a: "once we got some communications back, plenty of chat about roads open and 'everybody all right?' and this sort of thing and 'have you got internet, can we help? We've got some up here. Come and use ours'"*

Once roads into the parish had opened up again, support was also offered from family and friends outside the parish in nearby Falmouth. However, because accessing help relied on existing relationships and location, particularly during the communications outage, the experience of receiving support was uneven:

> *P12: "a couple of friends came down… guessing the plight that I would be in, they came zooming down to me, which was, oh, a lifesaver. It was really wonderful of them to do that… Otherwise, no, nothing. I had no contact from anybody or anything… it was not very pleasant."*

Existing relationships were also crucial in attending to a medical emergency on the night of the storm. First Responders were only aware of the emergency through their relationship with the neighbours of the people involved:

> *P[redacted]: "[They] Knew us, knew we were First Responders. Yes…. Yes. So, if we hadn't been, no, in that particular situation, if they hadn't known us, then they would have had to wait"*

Some participants reported not needing to access support from others because they were adequately equipped to "*ride it out*" (P8) and that they "*were fortunate to be in a position where we, we sort of didn't need any help"* (P9b). There was also an observation from one participant that, despite having given help to known neighbours, they felt guilty for "*not going down the road and not knocking on doors*" (P7) of neighbours and other residents that they did not know.

Key findings

Mawnan residents had equipment needed to clear debris following the storm, but not all residents had the appropriate qualifications and knowledge to use them safely.

Mawnan residents proactively self-organised to provide mutual support. Those who benefitted the most were those geographically located close to others and those with existing relationships with their neighbours.

5.6 Other knock-on effects

Physical access to the parish

Summary

Disruption to physical access was extensive and emphasised by nearly all participants. The issue of physical access was a transport problem as well as a reminder of the parish's dependence on a small number of vulnerable routes out.

Detailed results

Nearly all participants emphasised the impact of Storm Goretti on physical access to Mawnan. The residents experienced near-total isolation, with the parish completely inaccessible by any road due to extensive tree fall. Initially, residents were not aware of the extent of the tree fall and inability to leave the parish, describing it as "a *disaster zone. Can't get through that"* (P2).

Participants emphasised that this inaccessibility extended beyond travel disruption and made many feel totally "*cut off from the world… that did feel quite weird*" (P16) (exacerbated and contributed to by communications disruption also, as described in Section 5.4) and increased feelings of uncertainty post-storm, "*if I leave my house, can I get home?"* (P2). Participants observed some residents "*crawling through the tree fall if they wanted to get out"* (P11).

The lack of physical access affected residents' ability to attend appointments and continue with daily life for several days, as well as making it impossible for emergency services to enter the parish and attend to patients during the storm (an issue described fully in Section 5.8).

Food security

Summary

Some interviewees indicated challenges around food security in the context of power outage (affecting fridges and freezers) and transport inaccessibility (reducing access for delivery services, particularly for older residents), even for a relatively short period of a few days.

Detailed results

Participants did not report concern about an absolute shortage of food, but instead encountered issues around fridge and freezer temperature during prolonged power outages, food waste as "*you had to throw quite a lot of food away*" (P5), inability to access shops and disruption to food delivery services. A recurring concern was items stored in the freezer:

> *P3: "what you tend to worry about when there's a power cut is everything's defrosting in the freezer. So even though you do stock up, you're then worried about, actually, why did I bother? Because we're going to lose everything."*

Some participants felt resilient with regards to food, with some feeling "*lucky I had enough food" (P2)* and others reporting that *"if things had happened too long... just revert back to our squaddy days, you go and catch a rabbit"* (P1a). Others fared less well, relying on inaccurate information from others, not eating their usual diet and not receiving usual deliveries of food:

> *P10: "Someone was like, just bin everything in your freezer, so I did... And then a couple of weeks later, I was like, 'oh, I had to bin everything in my freezer' and this old guy at work was like, 'no, you didn't'. I was like 'okay, well that's not what I was told'. Anyway, yes, that's what I did for food, was just either not eat a lot or consumed what I had."*

> *P14: "There's four people who, who, who live on a food delivery service who couldn't get down the road... So it would been a whole weekend of disconnect."*

Water

Summary

Water outages did not widely affect in Mawnan, unlike other nearby towns, but nevertheless still impacted two residents with reliance on boreholes and electricity.

Detailed results

Mawnan did not experience widespread disruption to water, unlike nearby Helston which experienced severe water outages as *"when the trees fell, they broke the water pipes. So you have houses that have no electricity, no heating, no water. You know, it's like a war zone for a day or so"* (P14). However, two participants did experience water outage because of reliance on a borehole, which needs an electric pump to function:

> *P13: "The borehole has an electric pump. So that was another concern... We have quite a big tank, so it didn't run out because it was only two and a half days. Had it gone on longer, we would have been without water and that would have been quite a desperate situation."*

> *P5: "[we] explained to both sets of [new] neighbours that, um, we wouldn't have any water because we're on a borehole."*

The water outage experienced by Participant 5 meant that they and their household relied on nearby "*mains water supply*" at a farm and "*started flushing the loo with water out of the water butts"* as their *"main concern was hygiene"*.

Impact on business and tourism

Summary

Some participants indicated that road closures, as a result of tree fall, had impacts on local businesses, and there was a fear that there would be longer term impacts on tourism.

Detailed results

Road closures as a result of tree fall posed a significant challenge for local businesses, with the impact on a nearby beach cafe being concern for participants:

> *P11: "[the café] down at Maenporth Beach, very dependent on casual people dropping in, people would drive to there to go on the beach and get coffee, meal or something... You meet a sign from Cormack, Cornwall Council saying, 'Road Closed'... there should be a caveat there saying, 'but the café's still open'. They were on social media big time, saying, 'we are open'.*

> *P5: "It was going to take until mid-March to do the road, which would basically mean the [café] which is there, and all of the Maenporth Estate holiday homes, no access from Falmouth... you just couldn't get in here."*

Some businesses also sustained damage in the storm and remained closed while they recovered:

> *P8: "They had about 70 trees down on the [golf] course and they are still now in the [process] of trying to clear it. The golf course is closed, obviously. And of course, that's the loss of revenue... they were wary, so I understand it, of taking any big equipment in to deal with the trees, because of the soft ground, any heavy machinery would just ruin the golf course."*

> *P9a: "the hotel where we play tennis, we've got a little golf course there and that's just been absolutely obliterated."*

There were also issues for businesses as a result of power outage:

> *P11: "They [a local cafe] couldn't provide any refreshments or anything until that point [when power returned]. So therefore they had to be closed."*

> *P13: "I think the pub didn't have [any] electricity, so I don't think that opened."*

> *P16: "That impacted business at the pub. And so for a couple of days you could only pay in cash or if you're a local, they just start a tab. So that that affected them, people coming in and then leaving again."*

Finally, there was a sense of frustration that the consequences of the storm would have "*a long-term impact on tourism and infrastructure down here... these trees aren't going anywhere any soon and the clear up here is probably, I don't know if it's ever going to happen... there's gardens, golf courses, hotels that have had their land decimated and I don't know how the clear up's going, but there's certainly no support with it"* (P6).

Impact on work and education

Summary

Participants reported being unable to work as usual, and there was disruption for local students, but there were also reports of employers outside of the immediate area failing to understand the impact of the Storm on those in Mawnan.

Detailed results

There were several impacts on work and education as a result of Storm Goretti, primarily caused by lack of physical access in or out of the parish and communications disruption (discussed fully in Section 5.4). Firstly, "*they'd shut all the schools" (P16)* and residents "*knew that the primary school would be shut because it was not going to be able to open if it's got no power. And then also all roads were blocked, so the head teacher wouldn't be able to, she lives in [place], there was no way she would be able to get in.*" (P2). One participant was concerned about the impact this would have on "*kids going through mock GCSEs and A-Levels at this time of year. They can't access their iPads or their laptops, and most of their homework is digital… I can imagine there were some kids, this, because the network being so, taking so long to restore that were probably panicking about exams and not being able to do revision*" (P6).

Participants also reported the impossibility of travelling to work on Friday 9 January and the loss of connectivity resulting in not being able to work or even inform employers about the Storm's impact:

> *P10: "I also am a bank staff member for [employer]. And I couldn't get to work… I can't get to [job], which is in Truro, 'cause I can't get out and can't work from home."*

> *P10: "I remember talking to another girl who works in [service], and she lives in Falmouth. She couldn't leave her house and she's a manager for a shift, and also not having any phone signal, it becomes impossible to let them know why you're not showing up for work… And they were a bit like, 'well, the storm's finished now, like the winds have dropped' and it's like, 'no, no, it's not the storm. It's the aftermath of the storm. It's the amount of trees going down'."*

Secondary danger

Summary

Tree damage after Storm Goretti left an unstable landscape, with concern that damaged trees may fall and cause injury in the days after the storm.

Detailed results

Participants reported that Storm Goretti left an unstable and unsafe landscape. There were reports of weakened, damaged trees and suspended branches, made more dangerous by winds in the usual direction for the area. This left an "*emotional fear*" (P11) that damaged trees "*could go without warning*" (P11). This extended period after the storm felt potentially dangerous to residents:

> *P16: "My fiancé was really freaked out driving there [under fallen trees]… it looked like these trees could just collapse at any time… seeing people cycling underneath them as they're driving past and that was like, 'bloody hell'… it only takes a little breeze to knock down a tree that's already mostly fallen over."*

Participants also reported that other people were taking risks after the storm and often ignoring measures to keep the public away from dangerous areas by "*scrambling over things that they probably shouldn't be*" (P11). Reports reflect the impact and frustration of slow responses to storm damage, and the potential for resultant emergencies as residents attempted to return to normal life:

> *P10: "Cars were just trying to get past, massive root ball, and that was on the top of a hill as well, because it's a really steep ledge. So again, that was just an accident waiting happen if that slid any further."*

Costs

Summary

Costs were a concern after the storm for some participants. There is a shared concern that storm damage results in grey areas for recovery responsibility, and that residents may be required to bear much of the financial burden.

Detailed results

Participants reported that storm recovery expenses were a concern in the aftermath of Storm Goretti. The cost of removing or otherwise dealing with fallen trees was a central focus:

> *P7: "we know someone who it's cost them £2000 to move, to get rid of the tree..."*

> *P11: "The chainsaw guy that came to our road...Regarded as a friend...Maybe he did it for free, maybe he didn't. But who's paying for that? And we haven't been presented with any bills. But for, at a county level, that's a massive cost."*

Insurance may be assumed to be a safety net in the face of unexpected costs, but several participants recognised that this may not be the case:

> *P7: "If a tree falls on someone's land, it is actually the responsibility of the person whose land it falls on to deal with it. There were some very weird rules, and insurance doesn't cover these things so there will be a lot of people who will have a lot of damage and not going to be getting any insurance."*

> *P8: "I don't know how this impacts on the insurance industry and insurance premiums and claims as to those people who did suffer damage with trees coming down on their houses and cars."*

Some participants reported first or second-hand experience of insurers refusing to pay out for storm related costs or challenging the claim:

> *P1a: "Two years ago, one of our neighbours, in a storm, his house got hit by a tree, and I gave him the landowners address and details, and the landowners insurance company turned around and went, "Act of God", and wouldn't pay out."*

> *P14: "We had um, a bit of a, a battle, um, when the tree fell down, it knocked a fence down. But the other side of the fence blew down in the wind. And the insurance company will pay where the tree was, where the tree had hit the fence, but not where the wind blew."*

Fear and emotional impact

Summary

Interviews show that the damage from Storm Goretti went beyond the physical or practical, but also had psychological and emotional impacts, including fear, shock and sadness, which is not unusual in populations exposed to extreme weather events (e.g. Graham *et al.*, 2019; Cruz *et al.*, 2020).

Detailed results

Storm Goretti left some participants with feelings of anxiety and being "*shell shocked by the destruction*" (P6), well beyond the evening of the storm itself:

> *P10: "it was like the worst, not the worst time of my life, but the worst time this year. I think it was really difficult... It wasn't a good time emotionally, to be totally honest... Worried about my family, worried about my grandad, worried about [job]... it just impacted all areas."*

> *P11: "I have to say there was an emotional impact. Apart from physical. I felt that Cornwall had been devastated."*

Participants described a new fear regarding trees, wind, being trapped or "*a fear of kind of being cut off*" (P2) and infrastructure disruption:

> *P1b: "I hate the wind now. As soon as the wind gets above 40, I think, 'God, those trees'."*

> *P11: "We've all become, actually, like risk averse, about walking under trees or driving under trees, because you can still get treefall... it's left us with an instinct of needing to be ready all the time."*

There was also a sadness around the damage to the natural landscape. One participant mentioned the emotional impact they had observed in their children:

> *P2: "They were scared and then of course they go back to their normal lives and things... but I just wonder if there is sort of underlying kind of climate anxiety and sort of, building up in there... I was just sort of quite surprised by how scared they were when they saw it [the damage]."*

Key findings

Although Mawnan did not experience widespread disruption to water, nearby Helston experienced severe water outages due to fallen trees breaking water pipes. Participants were affected by boreholes failing to operate during a power outage.

Participants reported confusion around how long food could be safely kept during a power cut.

Participants were concerned that neither the parish nor local businesses had received sufficient external support with clearing the tree debris that remain in the parish, and that this would have a long-term impact on tourism in the area as well as safety.

Participants reported residual feelings of anxiety during and following the storm and impacts on mental health.

5.7 Response and recovery

Power company responses

Summary

Participants were largely pleased with National Grid's response, and their physical presence in the recovery provided some reassurance to residents, but there were frustrations about information flow and unclear timings.

Detailed results

Participants were largely positive about the power company responses in the aftermath of the power outages which occurred after Storm Goretti, *"I'll give them 10 out of 10 for the way they responded to the situation"* (P8), with participants impressed at the time they dedicated to restoring power, the speed with which they worked and the distance from which they'd travelled:

> *P3: "They worked all hours, and they were working through the night, and it was so impressive that you'd just hear people outside arriving at 4 in the morning. They just didn't stop. And, you know, you hear so much these days about how, um, the work ethic is and what it was, but my goodness, National Grid were an example to everyone about how to get things done."*

Power companies were reported to be fairly visible, "*they were everywhere, like not a single road you would go down you wouldn't see like two or three National Grid vans out trying to sort stuff"* (P10), as a result providing reassurance to residents that they were working hard and that their power would be back on soon.

How the power companies communicated with participants was key, with reports that this communication was done well and in keeping with expectations:

> *P8: "National Grid lived up to my expectations. I know, from past experiences, not necessarily storms, but when they have, for whatever reason, maintenance reasons, there's going to be a power cut... they inform you, you know, usually well in advance by a letter, and then they'll back it up with texts. So I expected to get info from National Grid because that's their modus operandi."*

One participant (P14) however felt frustration around the communications, with a "*never ending promise*" of when the power would be restored lack of clarity around timings and different residents "*getting different messages from the various power companies"* resulting in "*whispers*". There was also a lack of understanding of what would be required to restore power, with promises being made "*before they'd even had a look to see [what] the damage was"*.

Communication company responses

Summary

The communications company responses were presented as the weakest parts of the recovery overall, with residents feeling "*let down"* (P9b), and a residual feeling of anger and frustration, even well after the storm - "*I still feel annoyed about it*" (P3).

Detailed results

By contrast, most participants were extremely dissatisfied with the services provided by communications companies in the aftermath of Storm Goretti, especially around BT/Openreach. The speed with which residents got their internet back varied significantly, from a few days to more than a month:

> *P10: "they've only just had their Internet restored yesterday [early March 2026]... after so many visits from BT... showed up and they said, 'oh, we don't have the right equipment. We need to do it this way', and then the next person comes and, 'oh, I was only told it was a router problem in the house', and it's like, 'no, all of their poles have come down'."*

> *P11: "some homes are still, one or two, here and there, are still without broadband [in March]. You know, we're talking 8th of January onwards and they're still waiting for whatever reason."*

Communications from the communications companies were felt to be poor and inaccurate:

> *P6: "You had to go through your provider and it was, they were constantly getting kind of updates saying, 'oh, it's OK in your area again'. And it wasn't. Engineers coming down for visit after visit, looking at it, going, 'I can't believe this is still like that. We visited a week ago and it was like that then'."*

> *P9b: "sitting in a layby, going through this arduous process of trying to get to speak to somebody and, and they didn't have the information themselves... I know to some extent you can't expect them to have every answer, but they weren't helpful even."*

> *P10: "My granddad's in his 90s and I was so angry about how long it took BT to come out and sort it. They had about 6 or 7 phone calls. They were raising tickets. They were cancelling tickets. The stress that my mum was under trying to get everything sorted... I was getting so wound up."*

Participants relayed their interactions with BT, which were characterised by feelings of being unheard, not taken seriously, and being completely unsupported:

> *P1a: "We got through to them, and this woman turned around and said, 'It's been fixed'... I said, 'It's all in my garden still lying down'... jumping ahead four weeks... [BT employee] said, 'One moment, I'll look at my computer', she said, 'Oh, yes, it was fixed earlier'. I said, 'No it hasn't been fixed...There's no line attached to my house...Why won't you believe me?'"*

Central government response

Summary

Participants were critical of the central government response, describing it as distant, insufficient, and poorly attuned to the realities of rural communities facing prolonged outages and isolation. Many felt Cornwall was overlooked and abandoned, and some argued the storm should have been treated as a national emergency with stronger state support. Participants distinguished this from the response of local MPs, several of whom were praised for visiting quickly and pushing for greater attention to the area.

Detailed results

Taken together, participants were largely critical of the government's response to the storm, both during the storm but also more generally, seeing Cornwall as "*where you come on holiday*" (P5):

> *P10: "they're [internet provider] no longer going to expand their work to get faster Wi-Fi to rural areas in Cornwall because it's too expensive. And I just think that nobody cares about Cornwall that much... I don't want to turn this into a greater rant about Cornwall, but I think a lot of the government don't care, and I see people like [local MPs]... really pushing to try and get someone to care about Cornwall. And I just think politicians see it as a place to go on holiday."*

Expectations varied, with some participants reporting "*they thought that there would maybe be more government support there*" (P16) and other reporting low or no expectations:

> *P12: "I have to say, I never had that much trust in local or central government, so it hasn't actually shaken me there, because that was how I felt about it before... But I think if I was somebody who did have a lot of trust in them, it would have shaken, shaken mine, shaken that."*

> *P7: "I don't know what the government could have done to make things better."*

There was also a sense of residents' needs, and the needs of rural settlements, being misunderstood and unmet by central government:

> *P3: "they have no understanding of what it's like in rural areas when these things happen. And you just have to fend for yourselves until people come and help you... the government... mustn't underestimate the power of Mother Nature at times."*

> *P6: "I think there was a massive emphasis by the government as a whole on the importance of power, i.e. electricity, and the fact that we went through everything down here and there were so many communities without water, without power, without any way to communicate, for not just days, but in some case weeks. What made a lot of people really angry down here was at the same time they were banging on about, was it Kent or somewhere, being put into a national state of emergency because of water supply or something. Fifty thousand people down here had no power."*

> *P6: "I think there was a real lack of understanding of not just how important electricity is, but of how the communication, how important the communication network is... they rely on fibre, which is most of it is above ground here... people don't have a way to communicate in case of emergency... I think as a community, Cornwall definitely felt very let down by the government... and I think there's a lot of resentment and anger about that."*

There were calls for greater emergency escalation, such as classifying the storm as a national emergency and mobilising the armed forces, which participants felt would have supported them during the recovery phase:

> *P5: "we really did need a bit more help down here, because I mean, if you'd had the army down here, you know, could have cleared that road, some of those roads a lot quicker."*

Different participants had different tones regarding government response, with some demonstrating open disillusionment and anger:

> *P10: "I just felt like significantly let down by mostly like the main government. I still feel annoyed that we don't, we don't have the coverage, and there are still people that don't have Wi-Fi and access to Internet. And nobody seems to care and we're way more than a month on after the storm... our local MPs were really trying to bring attention to Cornwall and be like 'no this is actually quite serious'. There was one loss of life... We should be more horrified by that, like this is something that shouldn't really happen and should be sort of managed appropriately afterwards, and I just felt like a sense of urgency wasn't there."*

Others however, while disappointed with overall response, gave credit to the local MPs for visiting quickly, holding a feedback session and attempting to escalate concerns:

> *P12: "[the local MP] asked questions in the House, and he very kindly came to the village to see us as well. And I've had contact with him before. And I think he's very good. He will keep pushing, but whether anything will happen, of course, is another matter."*

> *P10: "when I did get my signal back and things, I was watching... the Falmouth MP and she was brilliant from what I could tell."*

Council and parish response

Summary

Participants overall felt that Cornwall Council and the Parish Council lacked a visible presence after the storm and could have better supported residents to help themselves, though some understood that the council may have been stretched due to the extent of the storm damage.

Detailed results

Many participants reported that the Cornwall Council response was either absent, too slow, or not visible enough in the most affected parts of Mawnan:

> *P16: "I haven't really seen anything, if they have done something I haven't noticed."*

> *P14: "We thought someone might have been to have a look at what had gone on... there's been as far as I know, no impact or no, no interest from the council."*

> *P1a: "I think the council should have turned out... just meet the people and speak to us... But we've never heard nothing from anybody... Council, the only one I'd like to have seen was the council. That would have been nice."*

Participants reported frustration at the gaps left by Cornwall Council, and that practical support may have made a significant difference, such as providing tools which *"could help the communities help themselves"* (P14):

> *P4: "We're a little community, so I mean, their [the council's] main requirements really to get the main roads open, isn't it? It's a bit like when it snows, you know, we don't get gritters out there. We don't, you know, we don't have many facilities, so, you know, the gritters concentrate on the main trunk roads. And it's the same you know if there's trees down, they're gonna try and keep the main trunk roads open."*

> *P10: "That is why we pay tax. That is why we pay extortionate amounts of council tax. And what is that going to? Who was there to help us? Who was there to manage it? Who was there to put up road closure signs or to inform people?"*

There was anger and were criticisms of the council, including the way that the council seemed to lack understanding the challenges for rural communities in the storm aftermath:

> *P3: "I was amazed by the stupidity of local council leader and others using usual words, 'Go to our website for helpful emergency numbers'. When you have no power and you can't or are advised not to leave the house, people can't access websites. Just when will authorities realise that referring people to websites all the time is useless. It's almost like it's a robotic response, isn't it? I don't know if you've noticed, but people would just say 'go to our website, go to our website', uh, it's like they're opting out of telling giving you useful information."*

> *P10: "Cormac were stuck... They were just stood there with shovels like five guys, just not doing anything and then they were like 'sorry we can't do anything about this. We don't have the right equipment' and then they drove off. And I was like, 'OK, but you've still left the road open. If something happens, if that slides, if there's a rock fall, if something gets, you know, people are gonna be crushed their car'. Felt like the safety side of things was just like, 'we don't care'."*

Some participants did indicate an understanding that Cornwall council's capacity may have been "*extremely stretched*" (P3) and "*overwhelmed*" (P11) because the sheer scale of the storm damage was "*enormous*" (P2):

> *P2: "I'd say I probably have quite realistic expectations of what they might have been able to achieve."*

> *P11: "They got the whole of Cornwall, one budget, one team, and actually they are doing what they can, and they have a pecking order of priorities... I think people in Mawnan are very reasonable actually. They could've been quite angry."*

> *P12: "You can't expect them to be all over the whole of Cornwall, but given that we were the worst off, it perhaps should have happened here, where the worst of it was."*

The Parish Council response was not widely discussed, but was reported as minimal, if present at all, after the storm:

> *P3: "I wasn't aware of anything that the parish council was doing."*

> *P14: "The parish council weren't interested [in elderly neighbours]. Not initially. Someone from the parish council came round after about... three or four days to say, 'Are you all okay?'... that was probably on the Tuesday."*

Finally, other local services which responded to the storm were seen as "*brilliant*" (P11) and "*marvellous*" (P4), including the National Trust and local roofers.

Feeling heard

Summary

Many participants reported feeling abandoned, misunderstood and unsupported in the aftermath of Storm Goretti, although as reported above, some understood why responses were delayed and felt supported by others e.g., by local services.

Detailed results

Many participants felt that Mawnan had been abandoned in the aftermath of the storm, left "*to get on with it*" (P5), and that the impact was insufficiently acknowledged or even understood:

> *P4: "When this happens around Surrey or somewhere, you tend to get like royalty come and you get the Prime Minister, and we didn't have that. So I think we felt a bit abandoned in that way, from the wider country..."*

> *P12: "Don't think, though, up country, they had an idea of how bad it had been. They knew there'd been a storm and there had been trees down and damaged and things like that, but I don't think they really realised how bad the whole thing had been."*

There were varied views on local reporting, with some feeling it was sufficient and others feeling that there was "*really lazy journalism*" (P6):

> *P14: "It wasn't really on the news. It didn't seem to make national news anywhere. And that sort of, I suppose, added to the abandonment feeling... If you'd switch the TV and thought, 'oh, there's my road being bashed around', you might feel so, someone's taking notice. But there weren't any sort of, you know, local TV reporters came around to have a look at anything."*

> *P12: "I was quite pleased with the coverage that we got on TV, um, because it did alert people in other parts of the country to how bad it was, and I did have people contact me and say, 'How are things?'"*

There were frustrations that the *"lack of interest"* (P10) in the storm reflects a general disinterest in Cornwall:

> *P9b: "You do hear a lot of comments now that that say if we were closer to London, the response would have been a lot faster, a lot more efficient, a lot more help available. But because it's Cornwall, it sort of gets overlooked somewhat."*

> *P10: "I get that we're like, the edge of England and I think people just think that we're a bunch of old people that don't do a lot and just live by the seaside and have a good time, but that's not true."*

Participants had ideas about what they thought might have helped them feel more acknowledged, including visits or actions from key figureheads:

> *P1b: "even if, Prince William, the other day, came and drove along some of the areas and actually spoke to the people... It would have been, like, 'I'm thinking of you guys'. You know, 'you're in my Duchy. I really appreciate what you've done.'"*

These reflections post-storm accentuated how isolated Mawnan now feels from local towns.

P5: "you buy a new house on a new housing estate, you know, in, 3 miles from a town like Falmouth, 9 miles from a city like Truro, you don't expect to feel like you're suddenly gonna be thrust into mediaeval England, do you?"

P2: "we're so close to Falmouth and Penryn and yet that weekend proved that we are so far. Because even in Falmouth and Penryn, they had no idea how bad it was here."

Key findings

Lack of information and slow responses from communications providers were a source of great frustration to many participants, with many homes experiencing communications outages for many weeks post-storm.

Participants felt that Cornwall had been overlooked and abandoned, and were frustrated that local representatives were not visible in the aftermath of the storm. Local MPs were appreciated for their visits and the relevant information they shared.

Some participants felt that the storm should have been treated as a national emergency, and participants called for mobilisation of the armed forces to support the clear up effort, and some participants criticised the council for failing to support the clear up effort immediately following the storm.

5.8 Vulnerability

Priority list

Summary

Reports indicate that the Priority Services Register largely did not deliver the service participants expected, and left vulnerable residents feeling unsupported.

Detailed results

Five participants discussed being on, or having household members on, the Priority Services Register for utilities. One participant said their husband was on the Priority Services Register, and so expected that he would have received notifications from them, but did not report knowing this for certain:

P4: "He may have done [received a notification]. He certainly does once the power goes down, he gets a call…So he would have had a call after the power went down… to say that they're trying to fix it or something."

In one account from Participant 5, they reported receiving a "*red alert"* notification at "*5 o'clock*" which they weren't sure if it was "*because I'm on the national group priority… People's register*". They reported receiving "*regular updates all the way through [the storm]*". They also had contact with a friend who "*ran out and said, 'oh, have you heard it?' Cause she's got, she's on the priority thing as well. She'd had the red alert*". It is unclear whether these messages were received as a result of the Priority Services Register as suggested by the participant, or whether they were messages from a different source, for example, the government emergency alert.

However, the other three participants reported being on the Priority Services Register and having received little to no contact from them, with the contact received not considered useful:

> *P1a: "No, never heard from them at all."*

> *P12: "I am on a vulnerable list for the electricity people... And the only time they contacted me was twice, we had a very quick onput of electricity after about, I don't know after about, I don't know, 24, 36 hours, something like that, didn't last. It was only for something... But the electric people rang me and said, 'your power has been restored'... What use was that to me? Absolutely none. So being on a vulnerable list meant nothing. It meant nothing to anybody, and that made me very angry. What's the point?"*

Two participants attempted to reach out directly, without success:

> *P15: "we contacted the Western Power Distribution because we're on a priority list because I'm disabled. Um they weren't much use... pretty poor really."*

> *P1a: "Every time we went out, we tried contacting National Grid to find out about the priority register, 'cause we had no help. And I had medical, medicines that need to be kept in the fridge, 'cause that had all gone off. So every time we went out, we'd try contact them. Couldn't get through half the time."*

One participant indicated that a neighbour had received support as a result of being on the Priority Services Register, and felt let down that they hadn't received the same:

> *P1a: "We found out, um, when it was basically all over, that one of my neighbours, she's on the priority register. She had two visits. She had several phone calls, and they brought her batteries, torches... A couple of blankets out... and I thought, well, hang on a minute. I'm on the priority register. How can she get all this contact? And I didn't. So I wasn't happy with them at all about that."*

These accounts indicate that the Priority Services Register largely did not deliver the service participants expected, and left vulnerable residents feeling unsupported.

Emergency services

Summary

Emergency services had severely limited access to Mawnan, which had serious consequences during medical emergencies on the night of the storm and nearby first responders provided support instead.

Detailed results

There was acknowledgement across interviews that emergency services access to the parish was severely limited during the storm, both because of limited physical access but also lack of communications after the power cut:

> *P1b: "if there'd been an emergency, somebody had had a heart attack, a woman was in labour, and she had to get to hospital. There's no way they could have got an ambulance in, and there's no way they probably could have got a helicopter in because of the winds, and the danger."*

In fact, there was an incident during the storm which required emergency attention, and the parish's first responders were dispatched:

> *P[number redacted]: "the power had just gone off... I felt my leg go funny. My left leg went a bit odd... I got as far as the living room door, and I collapsed... I could still speak, but not clearly, and I was having a stroke... before, whenever we had no electricity, we usually had a phone line, because we had a landline. But now we've gone digital, which we really didn't want, of course, our landline wouldn't work."*

This participant's partner had to leave them on the floor to ask neighbours to call for help, illustrating the serious decisions that had to be made during the storm. The first responders had to make similarly difficult decisions, and after careful assessment of the situation, decided to push their way through on foot:

> *P[number redacted]: "we were called by some friends to say that the neighbour had become unwell. They called an ambulance, but trees were coming down left right and centre by then. So we gave some advice on the phone, and a bit later, they rang again and said the person had got worse, could we come. So we attempted to get there by car, and got about half a mile. And found trees in our way. Actually, trees full of bits of car, which, they'd actually landed on a car... we clambered over and through the trees, which was probably one of the scarier moments of my life, because things were flying around.... Bits of tree were coming. The noise was incredible. And I know my husband said we shouldn't be doing this. And so he watched while I climbed through, and then I watched while he climbed through..."*

Individual and additional needs

Summary

Participants described social vulnerability during Storm Goretti as uneven, with older residents, people living alone, those dependent on medication or electrically powered equipment, and households with additional needs experiencing serious challenges when power, communications and access were lost. Individual and additional needs were shaped not only by health or age, but also by social isolation, reliance on infrastructure, and how connected people were to local support networks.

Detailed results

Several participants noted the age of many in Mawnan, reporting that "*we do have quite a lot of older people in my community*" (P4), and that they may struggle in situations such as Storm Goretti:

> *P6: "They were huddling in their front room and sleeping... I think they were sleeping in their chairs in the front room because they had a gas stove... But the house was no warmer than 16 degrees for about 5 days... And when you're in your 80s and you've had a couple of strokes, that's quite worrying."*

> *P10: "My main concern was I, one of my friends is a lovely lady who's in her 80s, she's blind... that was my first point of concern. She is super isolated. If she's got, she won't have any phone signal if she's lost internet. She can't drive and I was just thinking, 'okay, well, I can't get to her now. I can't communicate with her'."*

However, a question was raised of whether those deemed vulnerable by others felt vulnerable themselves:

> *P5: "lots of people will put me on the list of people who need help, but I don't think I do... Depends how you describe yourself, doesn't it?"*

Some participants reported that had the storm outages lasted longer, they may have encountered more significant challenges, including one participant whose child has a neurodevelopmental diagnosis and another who relies on regular medication:

> *P[redacted]: "if it taken longer to clear the roads, you know, I would have had to have got out with [child] somewhere... I think it was just about long enough that I could handle [child]. It would have got a lot harder that [they] couldn't watch [their] iPad."*

> *P[redacted]: "You're only allowed to have a month's drugs at a time... I'd actually picked up my prescription on Thursday morning. Well, if I hadn't done, I would have been out without my Parkinson's drugs for the weekend... I could not have been without that... I am not happy about always having to run my drugs down to nothing... And I want to be able to have a month in reserve... 24 hours without drugs with Parkinson's, I wouldn't be able to talk, you know, I'd really I'd be shaking like, you know. Two days without drugs, I can't imagine what I would be like..."*

There were concerns for those who rely on electricity to power essential equipment, as well as direct experience of this within our participants:

> *P11: "we had a knock on the door from a neighbour right at the other side of our garden. Somebody who dropped in on her, said, her stair lift's not working. She's got no lights. She's got no heat. She's huddled up in her armchair down below. The Stannah stair lift didn't work. The lifelines didn't work. You know, these devices people wear if they're gonna fall. And actually, if you had a hospital bed, that wouldn't work. If unless you had a personal generator for medical supplies if you needed, breathing apparatus or something. Probably that wouldn't work."*

> *P8: "Anyone who has a stair lift, you know, in a two-storey property... Even more serious, perhaps, people are on home dialysis units, you know, what do they do?"*

> *P15: "if you depend on carers to get you in and out of bed, it's very frustrating...Especially when you want to pee or anything else... I was in bed for 24 hours... I have a hospital bed, which is electrically operated. An electrical operating chair and I know quite a few patients who have blow up beds that have the blowing mattresses which require constant power."*

There was also a sense of vulnerability around people who experienced the storm alone:

> *P5: "I wouldn't have liked to have gone through it on my own... as soon as the road was open, my neighbour who's is on her own, her daughter came and rescued her. And another friend of mine lives on her own... and got rescued on the other side of the barrier by her daughter and just got scooped up."*

Some participants imagined the challenges faced by those with babies or young children, as well as those who perhaps are less involved in the community, highlighting groups that may not be widely thought of as vulnerable:

> *P5: "Heaven help you because you got, you know, babies, toddlers, you know, nappies. Oh, God, I mean, you know... Daughter's just had a baby, you know, last year, so, you know, I can't imagine trying to have done that 36 hours if they'd been staying with us, you know, with, again, coming back to the hygiene thing, you know, with changing nappies and, you know, trying to boil, you know, get bottles warmed up and things like that."*

> *P7: "there are a couple of social housing blocks, with obviously residents change a lot there... they generally maybe aren't part of the village community and yes there could have been there, people there who were struggling who didn't get help."*

Key findings

Participants reported that emergency services access to Mawnan were severely limited during and immediately after the storm, as a result of damage and disruption to travel routes.

Local emergency first responders are a central resource when emergency services cannot access certain locations.

Individual and additional needs varied across participants from Mawnan and therefore should be considered broadly and inclusively.

5.9 Future preparedness

Changes to personal preparedness

Summary

Participants reported clear intentions to better prepare for future emergencies, with plans ranging from buying practical supplies and backup equipment to investing in more resilient household energy systems, although some of those intentions had not yet translated into action.

Detailed results

Many participants had made plans to improve their preparedness for future crises. There were several participants who decided to buy items which they now deemed essential, including gas and gas cookers, rechargeable battery packs, radios, bottled water, logs for burning, and having a "*tree chopped down, cause it was a hazard*" (P15):

> *P8: "I have bought fairly inexpensive radio, which works by wind up, and also you can charge it, you know, to a rechargeable internal battery, and also it's got a solar cell on. So you've got 3 methods of making it work. So I thought that would be useful to have so that you could keep up to date with news, you know, 24/7 if you've got no electricity."*

> *P11: "I would have a car full of petrol, all our, both our vehicles for the petrol. Everything that could be charged, charged, everything that could be gathered, gathered, in terms*

> *of lighting, blankets... I would tell friends and family, we've got significant weather warning, don't worry if you don't hear from us... I would probably make sure, and this would be partly parish council, go round and check that all the defib units are fully activating."*

Others were considering how to improve the power and energy resilience of their household, including getting "*another source of heating that isn't reliant on power"* (P2) and "*getting solar panels*" (P4):

> *P2: "My brother said, 'oh, you should have some, you should get yourself some plug-in radiators'. It's like 'no, but they rely on electricity'. *laughter* It wasn't that I didn't have oil. I had got heating oil, but I had no power. He was like 'oh yeah'. So that's a bigger thing because that's a more expensive thing, but I'm thinking about like a little, you can get those bioethanol stoves that aren't as expensive as woodburning stoves."*

> *P13: "we've got a good drop and so there is potential there to get hydro power from the stream... [the storm] really made us think, right, we need to get on with it, do this hydropower."*

> *P15: "somewhere along the line, we need a 240-volt generator [for bed and chair]."*

Some had items they wanted to use during the storm and aftermath, but these weren't enabled properly for use or had "*things that you put by for emergency use and you don't look at them for 3 years and then when you come get it out, it's, you know, gone past its use by date, or it doesn't work"* (P8). For example, reports of new phones not being "*compatible with existing car chargers"* (P3). Participants had plans to address these issues:

> *P1a: "a couple of weeks ago, I contacted the guy who put our solar power battery on, and I said to him, I said, 'how come they have power when there's a power cut, and I can't?' And he said that basically, he said, 'We have to adapt, we put a... a cable from your battery in the garage'... He's coming around next week to do our house, so that if there's another power cut anytime, all we got to do is plug into those two sockets."*

Participants also noted however that their plans weren't necessarily translating into action, acknowledging that life moves on and *"eventually you just become a bit complacent again"* (P9a) and "*people think 'well it's over now, it won't happen again'"* (P6):

> *P9b: "No, we haven't followed through actually what we said we would do."*

> *P14: "all the things we were going to do, we haven't done... You know, we said we must get more Calor Gas in for the Calor Gas stove, which we never did. We realise you can now get an online heater for a Calor Gas thing to warm a room up... Never got those, either. Never got the torches that we're going to get."*

There was also a sense that perhaps there are aspects of preparedness that individuals cannot address themselves:

> *P13: "Comms is massive, but I don't know how we can, you know, as individuals improve that... we can get all the like the little bits... but the bigger issues is kind of out of our hands."*

Mawnan Emergency Group

Summary

The Mawnan Emergency Group (MEG) is a key response and outcome for the community, although varied levels of involvement and knowledge were reported, with key concerns about how it would operate effectively (including accessibility of hubs, funding and external support) cited.

Detailed results

As a result of the community's experiences during Storm Goretti, several residents have "*set up the Mawnan Emergency Group… by the cute name of MEG*" (P7). The Mawnan Emergency Group was formed to "*be the help before help arrives*" and their goal is to support the community in emergencies such as severe weather, power outages, or other major incidents, "ensuring residents remain safe, connected, and accounted for." (Angelov, 2026)

A core aim for this group is to set "*some kind of emergency hub in the village*" (P3) where community members (who are able to access it) can congregate if there is another emergency, as "*there wasn't like a central place everybody could go*" (P3) where residents "*could have comfort*" (P11).

The participants who knew of MEG were feeling positive about the group's creation and were "*very impressed that it sort of got off the ground straight away"* (P12). Reportedly, "*about 12 people said they wanted to be in on it"* (P11). One participant was immediately keen to join:

> *P10: "I would like some way of knowing what the plan is… I'm, like, one of the younger people in the village that's relatively capable, and I love my older neighbours… I would happily go and check in on them, and, like, it's also something for me to do as well, because I live by myself… It's for their benefit, but it's also for my benefit because it's just human connection, isn't it?"*

Another aim of the group is also to create a communication network, whereby "*someone, or more than someone, in each road, with local WhatsApp groups and local knowledge to know whose doors to knock on*" (P7) and those with skills are centrally listed and contactable.

The point was made however that not everybody in the parish would be able to access a central hub, and therefore they would remain isolated:

> *P4: "I think it's a really good idea to have some kind of hub if you can go. But, of course, we can't get there… as soon as, you know, the wind blows, we're gonna have trees down if it's that bad. So we'll still be isolated… But it's really good for the main village. People, you know, who can walk here."*

Some participants reported not knowing much about the group so far, and several who knew about the group, but were not *"actively involved in it"* (P12) and reported not wanting "*to get involved at the grassroots level*" (P5), although they were happy to support through action if needed:

> *P8: "There's a bunch of reasonably intelligent people there. I didn't think I'd be able to add anything much extra. I'm sure someone's already thought about having a, you know, satellite phone, perhaps… I'm not a great one for committees and things. I can find them, sometimes a bit frustrating. So, I will go if really necessary…Otherwise. I tend not to volunteer."*

> *P9b: "we would help anybody or whatever, but probably won't sign up for that... we don't want to be part of a formalised group, but I can see the benefits of it."*

This dynamic was acknowledged by one participant who was more involved in the group, that "*there's always a core group of people who do turn up and they're the ones who, you know, who do everything"* (P7). For some, they cited other commitments as a key reason for not being part of the group, such as being "*already involved with a lot of PTA stuff. So it's just too much"* (P13) and the pressure on volunteers was acknowledged also:

> *P15: "there's such a, a demand for volunteers. But you can't cope with it... Once you're a volunteer, you're a volunteer for everything... Especially in village communities."*

The Parish Council are also planning on reinstating their own emergency committee, as "*we had decommissioned it a couple of years ago, because the Parish Council went down to 5 members*" but now "*we can have the luxury, and the need for restarting the emergency committee"* (P11).

Finally, there were concerns about the practicalities of the group, as "*the problem is that they've got no authority, they've got no power... And they've got no access to funding"* (P15).

Needs for the future

Summary

Participants' reflections on adaptation for future resilience focused on stronger communications, better support for rural infrastructure, and more local emergency capacity. They also called for clearer, earlier warnings and closer coordination between the residents, parish, and wider authorities.

Detailed results

When reflecting on the storm, many participants focused on future resilience needs for the parish. One of the clearest needs was improved communication and connection, with reflections that "*it's a broader question of mobile connectivity and service in the area"* (P9a) and that potentially "*having the old phone line back would be a good thing*" (P4). One participant noted the potential use of a decommissioned phone box:

> *P11: "in the village, right here, we've actually got a phone box that we've given over to being a book swap... and the phone system has been taken out. So, I'm wondering, should we, in fact, ask BT to reinstate the landline and to hell with swapping books, you know, we need actually a working landline here."*

There was also a sense that the needs of rural communities, particularly with regards to energy and communication, needed serious consideration:

> *P3: "constantly pushing for electric and changing to electric cars and things... it's a very urban-centric view."*

> *P13: "I wonder if that is something that could be considered, you know, more money put into different types of power, including solar power as well, of course."*

> *P8: "I did think that maybe there ought to be a member of the community, or even if the parish council were to buy, as a community asset, a satellite phone."*

Participants also acknowledged the value of having "*pockets of first responders throughout the area*" (P4) or providing some first aid training, including learning on "*a little bit of CPR, [how to] open a defib*" (P7) as there would be a benefit to have people with first aid knowledge in the parish:

> *P15: "many years ago, we set a community responder team here, and we were all trained medically... communities should be encouraged to have responder teams to, in the event of an emergency, they can get out and help people."*

There were also suggestions around improvements to the warning system, which may need to be more *"nuanced"* (P5):

> *P5: "we have amber warnings all the time, gusts of 80 miles an hour, expected gusts of 70 miles an hour, expected... We just go, yes... then you go from that to this, which was a completely different level. And there was no, so no, no underpinning what that actually meant... to make people think about what, you know, this, this, the strength of this storm, it really is likely that some areas are going to be without power... people might not have thought of... If you're on a borehole, you probably won't have any water... How are you going to keep warm?... Your animals... have you got enough dog food?... I think that's the thing about the weather warning, it's one thing to have, like, oh, red alert weather warning... 'May cause power cuts, may cause travel delays'... It doesn't say, 'so if the power was off for 2 days, what would you do?'"*

> *P7: "the alarm going off at 5 o'clock doesn't it give you a lot of time. I wonder if there should be some sort of pre- alert. You know, not quite so scary, but something saying, you know, 'This is likely to happen. Do you have, you know, water, means of making a hot tea or anything? Please check on your neighbour'. Or something like that... 'Check on your neighbours.'... I think something like that might have been helpful."*

> *P11: "The minute that the Met Office declare, it's more like red than amber, can we have maybe have an amber alert, even, to say to people that look look look, 'if it goes to red, you're gonna need to do X, Y, Z. Are you ready?'"*

There was also a desire for closer connection between the parish and the local council and government, perhaps via a "*spokesman for the parish*" (P11) and a "*designated person, somewhere on the council*" (P14):

> *P11: "how do we check in with you? What are you gonna do to check our parish and what are we, how do you want us to respond to you? About all of the incidents that might be reportable."*

Key findings

Participants often had access to resources (e.g. torches, battery packs, car charged) which they realised they could not use during the storm and aftermath, due to not being enabled or compatible in some way.

Participants did not mention the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) based in Exeter, indicating they were either not aware of the LRF and/or did not experience any support from them. As in Mawnan, rural parishes may create their own resilience groups and networks in the aftermath of storms or other crises, particularly where there is disconnect from the LRF.

Storm Goretti related tree fall brought down both power and communications lines, which are above ground in this area.

Participants made suggestions about how to ensure the weather warning systems are more nuanced, including asking for more specific behavioural advice about what to do or how to prepare in the lead up to and during a storm.

Section 6: Conclusion

Storm Goretti highlighted both the strengths and the vulnerabilities of rural populations facing severe weather events, which are predicted to become more severe and frequent due to climate change. In Mawnan, local relationships and practical resident action were critical in the immediate response, but the findings also show clear weaknesses in preparedness, warning effectiveness, infrastructure resilience and the visibility of formal support. Strengthening resilience in rural areas may require earlier and more actionable risk communication, improved continuity of power and communications infrastructure, stronger local emergency capacity, and a more coordinated and visible recovery response. These lessons are directly relevant to future storm preparedness and recovery planning in Cornwall and other rural communities facing similar risks.

Section 7: Next steps

After publication of this report, the study authors and the SBSE group will begin dissemination and translation of the findings. Findings from this report will be shared with relevant policy groups, teams and departments involved in emergency preparedness, response and recovery. The insights may be used to support upcoming communications campaigns, particularly where they highlight gaps in preparedness behaviours, community cohesion and response, and warning interpretation. The findings may also support plans for preparedness and response to a variety of potential future emergencies, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure disruption, physical isolation and uneven access to support may heighten vulnerability. Findings will also be shared with relevant funders to consider how they may support future research required in this area.

Section 8: Appendices

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Appendix 2: Data availability statement

The qualitative data generated and analysed during this study are not publicly available. Requests for access may be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to review and approval by the relevant ethics and governance bodies. Any potential sharing would also require a process of recontacting participants to seek consent where appropriate. Researchers wishing to enquire about access should contact the corresponding author.

Appendix 3: Project method and Use of AI statement

Study design

This was a qualitative research study, employing semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data. Ethical approval for the research was gained from both UCL and from a representative from the GSR profession at GO-Science, to ensure ethical rigor and safeguards. This research was needed to understand existing preparedness of vulnerable communities, community resilience during emergencies and recovery experiences and needs.

Qualitative methods were chosen to investigate this rare scenario in the UK of a natural disaster as it provides an opportunity to comprehensively explore individual and collective experiences, stories and reflections. The research questions focused on lived experience, community resilience, warning systems, and behaviour during and after a storm — topics best explored through in-depth qualitative methods.

The work was conducted rapidly, with around four weeks between study initiation and initial data collection. The project was completed and delivered within four months of initiation. Rapid working was required for two key reasons: i) in order to capture perspectives as soon after the storm as was feasible within current funding and ethics review structures, giving as close to 'real-time' data as possible, and ii) to provide UKHMG policy makers with valuable insights as quickly as possible to support their fast-moving work on preparedness, weather warnings and alerts, power and communications outage and community cohesion.

Interview process

Sixteen interviews were conducted with eighteen participants, as two sets of two interviewees wished to be interviewed together. In-person interviews were conducted between 2nd-17th March 2026, beginning fewer than eight weeks post-storm. Three interviews were held online on MS Teams due to scheduling challenges, the remaining thirteen were held in person in Mawnan Smith. One participant consented to a walking interview. Where consent was obtained, interviews were observed by either the senior project sponsor or the community liaison. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes to one hour, were led by KS, and broadly followed a topic guide which was informed by the SBSE group priorities.

Analysis process

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed, at which point identifiable information was removed. Transcripts were iteratively, inductively coded, based on the five main steps of framework analysis (Smith & Firth, 2011; Gale et al. 2013), which are i) familiarisation, ii) identifying a thematic framework, iii) indexing, iv) charting, v) mapping and interpretation. Initial codes were mapped into a framework table, with themes mapped by case, which in this study was interview IDs. After an iterative reviewing process, the framework and themes were finalised, final data charted, and then the framework synthesised narratively. The synthesis process was led by KS, supported by SD, and Copilot was utilised to support synthesis at pace.

Feedback processes

A full version of the results write up was shared back to participants for sense and accuracy checking, as well as feedback on emphasis and evidence gaps. A full draft of the government report was shared with the SBSE group members, as well as other key government leads, for feedback ahead of final publication in July 2026.

Use of AI statement

AI was used during two key phases of the study to support the rapid nature of the project. Firstly, AI transcripts were generated for each interview. These were all thoroughly reviewed alongside the audio recording of the interviews, corrected and finalised by a researcher. Secondly, AI was used to support the generation of thematic summaries for the narrative synthesis. The AI generated summaries were used as a support in structuring the synthesis and emphasising key points but were written in full by the researchers.

Key limitations

There are a few key limitations to this study. Firstly, Mawnan may be considered unusual as i) many residents are permanent with relatively few holiday homes, which is uncommon in Cornwall, and ii) it is a well-served location with many facilities and clubs, creating an environment where a sense of 'community' can thrive. This may mean that findings or recommendations from this data may not generalise to other rural parts of Cornwall or the UK. Secondly, we explored the role and impact on businesses with participants but did not speak directly to business owners, potentially missing some insights on maintaining a business during an emergency. Thirdly, some participants relayed information that was inaccurate or misremembered during interviews. Qualitative investigations such as this do not seek to identify an objective 'truth', however where needed for this analysis, we sought information to verify accounts e.g. the timing of Government Emergency Alerts. Finally, these interviews were conducted between two- and three-months post storm, which could have resulted in perspectives changing or details being forgotten in the time between the storm itself and the interview.

Appendix 4: Key concepts and definitions

Adaptation is the process of adjusting to actual or expected climate change and its effects, to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities (IPCC, 2023).

Community resilience is an adaptive process that enables individuals, groups and organisations within a community to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, drawing on local knowledge, resources, relationships and appropriate inputs from supporting organisations. (National Occupational Standards, 2026; Norris *et al*. 2008)

Infrastructural resilience describes the integrity of systems and physical infrastructure essential to ensure their continued performance in the face of sudden shocks and slow-onset impacts (Sturgess and Sparrey, 2016).

Sense of community is a feeling of belonging to a community, a sense that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to one another (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Social isolation is an individual's lack of contacts or ties with others, such as family, friends, acquaintances, and neighbours. (Veazie et al, 2019; WHO 2025).

Social vulnerability is the risk of communities and individuals being disproportionately susceptible to stresses and emergencies, affecting their ability to respond and recover, and shaped by people's characteristics and interacting social factors including income, housing, health, and governance (Cabinet Office, 2025; Cutter et al, 2023).

Appendix 5: Original SBSE proposal

Community resilience during Storm Goretti: participatory research study with an impacted community

1 page summary 23 Jan. 26

Social & Behavioural Sciences for Emergencies Working Group

Research topic

Parts of Cornwall were issued with a red storm warning and an emergency alert for Storm Goretti. The storm caused widespread damage across Cornwall on Thursday 8th January. People in one of the villages affected are interested in a post-event social and behavioural science participatory research project to capture experiences and learnings around individual, household, business and community resilience associated with the event, which included temporary power outage and fallen trees which blocked off access to the village. The research will explore preparedness, warnings, response and the immediate recovery (within 7 days of the storm) as experienced by villagers.

The research is valuable and timely- it will give us almost 'real-time' insights into how communities are impacted by natural disasters, including topical questions such as:

- Societal resilience: Were residents aware of the HMG Prepare website ahead of the storm?
- Business resilience: What was the role/impact on small businesses?
- Emergency alerts: Did residents receive emergency alerts ahead of the storm, and were these perceived as helpful in improving preparedness?

Research and policy interest

There is significant ministerial interest in evidence around preparedness (CO), crisis comms and emergency alerts (CO/XHMG), and community and societal resilience. Key teams include: CO Societal resilience ([redacted name]), CO Crisis comms, DESNZ SBS and policy teams working on Storm Goretti, Defra SBS, Met Office SBS, EA SBS and incident response, UKHSA SBS.

Project methods: participatory research led by GO-Science fellow supported by officials on the SBS for Emergencies Working Group.

Phase 1 (Feb-March 2026) - data collection via a combination of field work (one or two 2 day visits to Cornwall), online video interviews and participatory discussions.

Phase 2 (April-June 2026) – data analysis (desk based) with participatory quality assurance (online).

Project sample – initially the one village. There is interest from HMG stakeholders in potentially upscaling the research to other locations in Cornwall if demand and resources allow (for example, drawing on UKRI Fellows embedded in CO or EA teams).

Project governance –

Day to day coordination, led by BR-UK Fellow in GO-Science as part of the SBSE Working Group. Other options are to partner with a university (e.g. UCL) or for it to be led by Government department e.g. DESNZ or CO.

Weekly meeting with key govt policy and SBS teams to prioritise research questions and ensure that outputs meet the needs of HMG customers.

Ethical Assurance – needed as community participatory research, use government approach GSR Ethical Assurance for Social and Behavioural Research - GOV.UK. If partner with university, also use their ethics board.

Project resources –

Staff: GO-Science/BR-UK fellow with regular input from other SBSE Working Group officials. Budget: Same amount of T&S for travel and stay in Cornwall (less than £1k expected). Contribution in kind from community through attendance of interviews & group event(s)

Project outputs – main output is internal government report. External academic publication if project is successful would be possible (led by BR-UK Fellow)

Appendix 6: Participant information sheet

Community resilience during Storm Goretti: participatory research study with an impacted community
Participant Information Sheet
UCL Research Ethics: Project ID Number: 2788

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Department: Government Office for Science, Social and Behavioural Sciences Group for Emergencies
Name and Contact Details of the Project Manager: Dr Kitty Saunders (kitty.saunders@go-science.gov.uk)
Name and Contact Details of the Project Sponsor: Dr Carrie Heitmeyer (carrie.heitmeyer@go-science.gov.uk)

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1. What is the project's purpose?
This project will investigate the impact of Storm Goretti on the Parish of Mawnan in Cornwall in January 2026, including the role of community resilience and immediate recovery in the following week.
Specifically, this study aims to investigate:

- levels of preparedness, or not, for the storm and the community's expectations,
- communications channels, disruptions, expectations and experiences during the storm
- community support, resilience and recovery immediately after the storm

You will be asked about your experiences and those of your community.
You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer without being asked to give a reason.

These findings will inform future policy making with regards to emergency alerts, supporting community resilience and cohesion, communication methods and approaches during emergencies as well as support needed in the aftermath of a natural disaster, thus supporting the Government's drive towards evidence-based policy and ultimately strengthening the UK's preparedness and response capabilities for future emergencies.

2. Who is conducting this research?
This research is being conducted by researchers the Government Office for Science, University College London (in collaboration with Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK)) and the University of Exeter (in collaboration with ACCESS). BR-UK is a Leadership Hub focused on enhancing the capability of behavioural research in the UK. BR-UK has been funded for 5 years by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). ACCESS is a programme of work providing leadership on the social science contribution to tackling climate and environmental problems, and is also funded by ESRC.

3. Why have I been invited?
You have been identified as a member of the community in the Parish of Mawnan who was present during Storm Goretti in January 2026. We are interested in your experience.

4. Do I have to take part?
No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time during the data collection without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point. You will have until 1st April 2026 to withdraw your data. After that point the data will have been completely anonymised and it will not be possible to identify your data set to remove it.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you can expect the following steps:

I. You will be given an informed consent form to read and sign.
II. You will be asked to provide optional information about your personal characteristics (age, gender, time lived in Parish of Mawnan, etc)
III. You will liaise with Dr Kitty Saunders to organise an interview date, time and format.
IV. You will take part in an interview (approximately 60 minutes) which can be arranged in-person or via a video or audio call (MS Teams). In the interview you will be asked to describe your preparedness for Storm Goretti, your experiences during the storm, and your experience of recovery and community resilience in the week after the storm.

6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

Interviews will be audio recorded. Recordings will be used for transcription and analysis purposes only – they will be deleted once the study is complete. Transcripts will be used for analysis purposes only. We may use quotes from your interview for illustrative purposes in ensuing outputs (e.g., conference presentations, lectures, publications, Open Science Framework data samples). Any quotes will be de-identified (i.e., we will not link your quotes to any of your identifying details), and you may opt out from quotes from your interview being used in outputs if you wish. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Recordings will be stored on the Government Office for Science One Drive. Recordings will be deleted at the end of the project in June 2026.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

This is classed as a low-risk research project. No specific disadvantages or risks of participating are anticipated, beyond the small, time cost of taking part.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits to taking part, we hope that this work will inform policy around preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies in the UK for natural disasters, improve our understanding of the role of community resilience during emergencies and understand support needs in the recovery period after an emergency.

9. What if something goes wrong?

Any queries or complaints can be directed to Dr Kitty Saunders (kitty.saunders@go-science.gov.uk). If you any concerns about how the research is being conducted, you may also contact Dr Carrie Heitmeyer (carrie.heitmeyer@go-science.gov.uk). If you feel that a complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee – ethics@ucl.ac.uk.

10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. The following arrangements will be made to ensure confidentiality:

- Only named members of the research team will have access to individual data
- All files and materials that contain individual personal data (e.g., contact details, recordings, interview responses) will be stored on Government Office for Science secure IT systems for highly confidential data
- Interview recordings will be deleted at the end of the project in June 2026
- Any files which could be used to link individuals to their interview responses, will be password-protected
- Transcripts will be de-identified as far as possible by removing any identifiable details such as names of people or organisations.

- Where identifiable details provide important contextual information for the findings, participants will be contacted for their permission to use this information in any ensuing reports or outputs. This applies both to direct quotes and to paraphrased summaries
- Participants will be permitted to opt out of their de-identified quotes being used in outputs

11. Limits to confidentiality

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed due to the limited size of the participant sample (for example, if you tell somebody that you are taking part in this study, it is possible they might be able to recognise your quotes in any subsequent reports).

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The data you provide will be stored on a secure Government Office for Science One Drive. Access will only be provided to members of the research team.

De-identified and summary-level data (e.g., aggregated participant characteristics, illustrative quotes) will be shared in research outputs (see Q10 above).

The results/outputs of the research are expected to be an academic journal article and a report in the style of a research summary and policy briefing for government colleagues. You will not be identified in any report or publication. You can request to obtain a copy of the published results by contacting the researchers.

13. Local Data Protection Privacy Notice

Notice:

The controller for this project will be the Government Office for Science, DSIT. The DSIT Data Protection Officer provides oversight of Government Office for Science activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at dataprotection@dsit.gov.uk.

We have a local privacy notice for this project. You can request a copy of this from Kitty Saunders.

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided in the privacy notice.

The categories of personal data used will be as follows:

Name
Contact details
Age
Sex/Gender
Location

The lawful basis that would be used to process your *personal data* will be performance of a task in the public interest.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact the Government Office for Science in the first instance at dataprotection@dsit.gov.uk

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

The Government Office for Science is funding this research project. Kitty Saunders is funded by Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK), an organisation supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Grant Ref: ES/Y001044/1. Suzy Darke is funded by ACCESS. The work of ACCESS is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Grant Red: ES/W00805X/1

16. Contact for further information

Please contact Dr Kitty Saunders (kitty.saunders@go-science.gov.uk) or Dr Carrie Heitmeyer (carrie.heitmeyer@go-science.gov.uk) for further information.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study. If you participate, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep, as well as a signed consent form to keep.

DESNZ & DSIT Data Protection and UK GDPR Team
ICS Digital
Email: dataprotection@dsit.gov.uk

Appendix 7: Participant consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Community resilience during Storm Goretti: participatory research study with an impacted community
Department: Government Office for Science
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This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: Project ID Number: 2788

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

		Tick Box
1.	I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction.	
2.	I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information will be used for the purposes explained to me. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.	
3.	**Use of the information for this project only** I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified. Please note that confidentiality regarding your participation may not be guaranteed due to the limited size of the participant sample. However, it will not be possible for your responses to be connected to you.	
4.	I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the Government Office for Science, including include sponsors and funders, for monitoring and audit purposes.	
5.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any identifiable personal data I have provided up to that point will be deleted unless I agree otherwise. I understand that if I decide to withdraw after 1st April 2026, it will not be possible to identify and remove my data as it will have already been anonymised.	
6.	I understand the potential risks of participating and the support that will be available to me should I become distressed during the course of the research.	
7.	I understand the direct/indirect benefits of participating.	
8.	I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	

9.	I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study, beyond the nominal token of thanks, or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
10.	I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and academic paper. I understand I can request a copy of these from the researchers.	
11.	I consent to my interview being audio recorded and understand that the recordings will be destroyed at the end of project in June 2026	
12.	I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed below, with any questions answered by the researcher: - Aged 18 or over - Living in the village and present in the Parish of Mawnan during Storm Goretti - Able to speak and read English	
13.	I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
14.	I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.	
15.	Use of information for this project and beyond I agree to quotes from my interview being used for illustrative purposes in reports and paper, on the provision that quotes are not attributed to me as an individual.	
16.	I agree to be contacted during the analysis process to offer feedback and insights on developing findings and conclusions.	

If you would like your contact details to be retained so that you can be contacted in the future by researchers who would like to invite you to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature, please tick the appropriate box below. Your information will be kept for one year until June 2027 for these purposes, if you consent.

	Yes, I would be happy to be contacted in this way	
	No, I would not like to be contacted	

_____ _____ _____

Name of participant Date Email address

Appendix 8: Interview topic guide

Introduction (unrecorded)

Interviewer and interviewee introductions, including clarification of interview process (walking, online, face-to-face) and participant ability to withdraw and this process.

Interviewer to obtain verbal consent to continue interview

Section 1: Background and preparedness

1. When did you first hear about Storm Goretti?
    - Prompts around trusted communication sources, information flow
2. How did you expect Storm Goretti to impact you personally, your home, and your community?
3. How did you prepare for the storm, if at all?
    - Prompts around barriers to preparedness, perceived priorities in preparedness, preparedness measures already in place. Interested in: power resilience (batteries, generators, solar), food/water capability, baseline awareness of preparedness guidance, expectations of government support, knowledge and uptake of the Priority Services Register.

Section 2: During the storm

1. Tell me about any emergency alerts you received just before the storm? This could be on your phone, from your community, or elsewhere.
2. When were you first aware of the impact of the Storm on where you live, including power outages and lack of access to the community?
3. Where were you getting your information from during this time?
    - Prompts around trusted communication sources, information flow and accuracy
4. What did you expect from government, utility companies, local businesses and your community? Were these met?

Section 3: Response and recovery

1. How did the community (individuals and businesses) come together after the storm and organise themselves to provide support to each other?
    - Prompts around whether there was a plan in place, leadership, spirit and tensions, and what were their immediate priorities
2. How did households manage essential needs during the disruption (power, food, water, hygiene) and what barriers were there?
    - Prompts around vulnerable groups affected and how this was handled
3. What recovery responses did you expect from (government/local) authorities in the week after the storm? Were these expectations met?
4. Have you made changes to your personal level of preparedness after experiencing the storm?

- Prompts around if not, what are the barriers, and if so, what have you changed?

5. What are your reflections on the immediate recovery process now that a few weeks have passed?
    - Prompts around expectations, disappointments, role of the community, changes that have been made