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	The Lifehouse Network formed in 2024 and is largely a volunteer effort. It exists to serve a growing number of individuals, groups and communities who are preparing for the "Long Emergency". It aims to support work that builds togetherness, resilience and power through collaboration and shared resources. For more information go to: https://lifehousenetwork.earth/

LIFEHOUSE CENTRES

The Covid-19 pandemic was a recent experience of global emergency situations affecting our communities. The way we coped is proof that we can come together to help one another. Places that had active community centres that could reach and strengthen local people and networks fared better.

We cannot rely on the state to help us. It has proved to be slow to act in times of crisis and has often made things worse. Examples include Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Superstorm Sandy in New York, Greece after the economic collapse. The state's response has been described as 'organised abandonment'. So we need to prepare for these uncertainties ourselves.

The good news is that people have always come together in times of crisis to help each other. This 'mutual aid' is simply how people without resources have always arranged the means of their own survival: cooperatively, outside the structures of market or state, using whatever tools they had ready to hand.

Mutual aid starts from the recognition that exposure to risk is unequal, and it has the aim of transforming the conditions that produced inequality. This means it is 'horizontal'; the

refusal to allow any sort of power relation between those offering help and those needing help. It is not charity, it is liberation.

Thinking around emergency preparedness sometimes focuses on a framing of being ready for a 3 day situation, a three week situation and even three months. What happens beyond three months if and when some of the systems we rely on break down?

COMMUNITY COUNTS WHEN SYSTEMS FAIL

Long term, the sensible way forward is to do things differently – we can reduce our dependence on disposable goods, long supply chains, fossil-fuel transport and globalised manufacturing. We can choose to invest in local materials, local skills, local people, and local systems. This is an opportunity for long lasting regenerative change. Over time, the Lifehouse approach can become a slow, deliberate redirection away from fragility and towards a local future that can hold its own.

BUILDING LIFEHOUSE CENTRES

- Climate Emergency Centres (CEC) is a go-to place for advice about acquiring and organising around physical spaces in our communities.
- The invaluable CEC Handbook can be downloaded from here.

Lifehouse Centres and Climate Emergency Centres have much in common. Lifehouse doesn't focus on the climate specifically. Lifehouse centres (and many CECs) are democratised, support scenario planning and focus on mutual aid.

What makes a Lifehouse Centre distinct, is a commitment to:

1. Truly **democratising activity**, through working with “advice and feedback” practices (e.g. sociocracy) and deliberative processes (neighbourhood and standing assemblies).

2. **Scenario planning** for specific situations and storing necessities, that assumes we will have to help ourselves (though would work with statutory services where useful and available).

3. **Cultivating mutual aid**, whilst seeding the transformation to healthy human cultures, by tending grief, conflict and reciprocity.

Many organisations and networks are already doing brilliant work on aspects of that work. Find out what you might need to know by consulting our other resources, joining our community chats or even asking our Lifehouse Knowledge base for some pointers.

Scenario planning can happen within community assemblies and might link to the Local Resilience Forum and develop a local community emergency plan. If an area is prone to flooding for example, a plan might include locating our most vulnerable neighbours who can't leave easily and ensure storage of sand and waterproof bags. Below are several areas you might like to consider.

Lifehouse centres areas to focus on		
Area	**Examples**	**We have already…**
Knowing our neighbours, cultivating relationships	Audits of skills, equipment and vulnerabilities Check whether our nearest neighbours have done any preparing, share the information in this zine Connect to community groups, parish councillors Tool library Through projects related to areas below Music, dancing, events	
Food	Store dry foods in rodent proof ways (after freezing them to kill mite eggs, etc) Community kitchens and meals Community foraging and food storage skills development Community gardening, seed saving / sharing, composting Hunting skills and equipment	
Health	Trained first aiders, People skilled in mental wellness, grief tending, de-escalation, care giving	

	Support for those doing a lot of supporting! Chuddle and hologram approaches to peer support & health Audit of Medical herbalists, nearby medics, midwives, etc	
Transport, Communications and logistics	Bikes and trailers for bikes Lists of important phone numbers Groups connected by social media Agreed meeting points Wind up radios Meshnets Experience in large scale cooking, self-organising systems, supply chain distribution	
Energy	Bikes energy generation Generators and diesel Solar panels and battery store Micro hydro, wind, community energy generation	
Safety	Organise public acts of solidarity and community engagement to counter far right rhetoric Request safety and security resources from Hope not Hate Community safety partnerships are a place to find information on a community role in organising around safety As the far right gains ground, we might also want to develop our own networks for safety and to avoid sabotage	
Community building skills	Building and connecting with people with a variety of skills that create good culture together, from grief and conflict, tending, to decision making, building systems for feedback,	

	connection within and across ages and other demographics. Building the local, cooperative and commoning economy	
Emergency Scenarios	Heating and cooling centres Sandbags Emergency plans created in community assemblies	

Connect with the Lifehouse network:

https://chat.whatsapp.com/JmXOS8jMUisJn65aeLmxaT