

Report to Parish Council on 17 October 2024

Defibrillators within Stokenham Parish

Context

Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of premature death. In the UK, there are approximately 60,000 cardiac arrests annually. In cardiac arrest the heart's steady rhythm is often replaced by disorganised electrical activity called ventricular fibrillation (VF).

Only rarely is the ambulance service able to attend and provide defibrillation early enough, so the best way of ensuring prompt defibrillation is for someone nearby to deliver a shock via a local Automated External Defibrillator (AED). If an AED is used promptly, survival rates as high as 49% - 75% have been reported.

The chances of successful defibrillation decline at a rate of about 10% with each minute of delay, but when bystander CPR is also provided, the decrease in survival is more gradual and averages 3% - 4% per minute from collapse to defibrillation.

The Circuit

The Circuit is the national defibrillator network which maps defibrillators across the UK. It allows ambulance services to locate the nearest registered defibrillator when a bystander calls 999 in response to a cardiac arrest. It is managed by the British Heart Foundation.

The Circuit also sends maintenance reminders to defibrillator Guardians (the individuals responsible for looking after the defibrillator). These reminders support Guardians in making sure that their defibrillators are always ready to be put into action. The names of the Guardians are not showing in the table on page 2 because under the Data Protection Act this information cannot be released.

The Guardian checks the defibrillator every 90 days and reports to The Circuit. In the interim the Guardian makes weekly checks (preferably daily) to make sure that the defibrillator is serviceable. The Resuscitation Council of the United Kingdom and the national ambulance service state that ideally a defibrillator should be in an unlocked cabinet. Further, pads and batteries do not like to be in temperatures below 5°C.

If an ambulance is called, after the defibrillator is used it should be left at the scene. If there is nobody there to take responsibility for the defibrillator then it goes to the ambulance station who then contact Kevin Bowyer. Kevin will look at the serial number and will then phone the Guardian. Kevin Bowyer is the officer at the South Western Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST) responsible for community defibrillators and Community First Responder training. He can be reached at: kevin.bowyer@swast.nhs.uk Mobile: 07825592943

One Guardian whose contact information is visible (on the Chillington defibrillators) is Colin Riddiough. Colin is the Guardian for the post office defibrillator and the Chillington village hall defibrillator. Colin lives in Chillington. He set up the Bristol based company Defib Sales & Training Ltd. which is now run by his son. Defibrillator supplies can be purchased at Defibsalesandtraining.co.uk

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The Status of the Defibrillators Within the Parish

The following information about defibrillator location is taken from the Defib Finder website (www.defibfinder.uk). There are 7 defibrillators listed on the website.

Order on Defib Network	Address as Given on The Circuit - the National Defibrillator Network	Available Times	Access Type	Comment
1	Stokenham Parish Hall, Coleridge Cross to Carehouse Cross, Stokenham, TQ7 2SJ	24/7	Public	Funded by Stokenham Parish Hall
*	Parish Hall, Coleridge Cross to Carehouse Cross, Stokenham, TQ7 2SJ	Not Available Now		* Needs to be deleted from the website
2	Start Bay Caravan Club Site, A379 Kiln Lane to Torcross Point, Stokenham, Kingsbridge, TQ7 2SE	Varied	Public	Funded by the Caravan and Motorhome Club. Only available when the site is open (seasonal)
3	Shop & Post Office, A379, Chillington, TQ7 2LF	24/7	Public	Funded by Chillington Community Association
4	Village Hall, Tanpits Lane, Tanpits Cross to Ridge Cross, Chillington, TQ7 2LG	24/7	Public	Funded by Chillington Community Association. Accessed by a code
5	Widdicombe House, Lane to Widdicombe House, Widdicombe, TQ7 2EF	24/7	Restricted	Privately Financed
6	Start Bay Inn, Torcross to War Memorial, Torcross TQ7 2TQ	24/7	Public	Funded by Start Bay Inn
7	Public Telephone 11M from Quicks End 4M from Unnamed Road, Road from Briarbank to Cob Cottage, Beeson, TQ7 2HW	24/7	Public	Funded by the community

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Community First Responders

Community First Responders are volunteers who are trained to provide emergency care to people in their local area. The Community First Responder within the parish is Graham from Torcross. There is also a Community First Responder at East Prawle (Tim). Training for further Community First Responders in the South West commenced Autumn 2024.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>There is a reasonable spread of defibrillators throughout the parish. There are six defibrillators in total that are available to the public, four are community run and two are located at local businesses. One of the defibrillators which is located at the Start Bay Caravan Club site is not available between 4 November 2024 and 14 March 2025, that is to say, it is only available during the tourist season. The defibrillators are located in residential areas or where people congregate; the locations are mainly visually obvious. The one at the caravan site is in the unlocked information centre with wardens on hand.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1. Consider other possible areas such as Beesands, where a further community defibrillator could be located, and Stokeley Farm Shop. The latter is a private business.</p>
<p>If resuscitation is to be successful people need to feel confident in starting cardiopulmonary resuscitation and using an AED. Training opportunities have arisen in the past which have been taken up. There will always be an ongoing need for training.</p>	<p>Recommendation 2. Continue to raise awareness of any training opportunities within the area via the parish council website, emails and social media communications.</p>
<p>In order to keep a defibrillator functioning, there are ongoing costs for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrode pads if they have been used or are out of date (shelf life is two to five years) • Cost of electric for the cabinet * • A new battery (shelf life between four and seven years) <p>The costs are very variable depending on the make and model of the AED. Both pads and batteries run into hundreds of pounds.</p> <p>* An AED cabinet requires an electricity supply to power features like lighting, heating, and alarms that keep the defibrillator safe and usable.</p>	<p>Recommendation 3. Encourage community groups who may be considering the purchase of a defibrillator to plan for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of the AED.</p> <p>Recommendation 4. Set aside a 'local community defibrillator pot' for maintenance and replacement. Set guidelines for accessing the fund.</p>

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Further Reading

[A Guardians Guide to the Circuit](#) (ND)

[A Guide to Automated External Defibrillators](#) (AEDs) (2019)