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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**CO-LEARNING FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

We would like to invite you to take part in a project about the risks of flooding and how these can be tackled. The research is based in Crediton and this information sheet provides details of what the project is about, what commitment we are seeking from participants and how the project will work.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**Part 1**

**What is the study called?**

Co-learning for Community Resilience.

**What is the study about?**

This project aims to provide a more effective way for communities to become **resilient in the face of changing risks associated with natural hazards like flooding**. It will focus on the issue of current and future flooding risks (and other associated risks, where appropriate) in Crediton as a way of exploring the potential for joint learning between community members, academic researchers and local agencies to understand how risks are shifting as a result of changes in the environment. In so doing, the project will work towards a **community resilience plan** that will seek to represent the different types of knowledge from people in Crediton. The purpose of doing this is to explore how working together can be an effective way of creating local approaches to tackling problems like flooding, which might involve a whole range of responses from local people and public authorities. In this way, the project is designed to be one that **empowers local people to create their own resilience plan**.

The main element of the project is to convene and run **five workshops with a group of Crediton residents and other interested parties** (researchers, County Council, Environment Agency, Fire and Rescue Service). These workshops are designed to allow all interested parties to better understand the risks associated with flooding and to work together to tackle these. This will involve many different kinds of input, from personal memories, photographs and historical records, to scientific data and projections of future weather patterns.

The workshops will be facilitated by Dr. Stewart Barr, who will remain strictly independent of the views expressed by group members. In the spirit of the project, the workshops are designed to bring people together to help them work out the best strategy for their local area – at no point will any plan be proposed from the academic researchers involved.

The project has been developed in collaboration with two main partners: Devon County Council and the Climate Outreach Information Network (COIN) and also includes contributions from statutory agencies (Environment Agony and Devon and Somerset Fire authority).

**What will my participation involve?**

You will be asked to attend a total of five workshop meetings and to participate in discussions at these meetings. This will include sharing your knowledge and experiences of living in Crediton – no expert knowledge or preparation will be required. The main thing that we ask is that you are willing to attend, participate, listen and speak.

The meetings will be held in an appropriate venue in Crediton and will last for no more than 3 hours. They will be scheduled, as far as possible, in consultation with all group members. Refreshments, in the form of a buffet meal, will be provided at all meetings.

The group we are convening will comprise approximately 12 people and each member is treated equally, without prejudice. Everyone’s views count as much as another’s.

The group meetings will be audio recorded so that the research team can help the group at subsequent sessions and in the construction of the flood resilience plan. All recordings are securely stored and, as noted below, at no point will individuals be identified by using the name outside of the group setting.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide. Participation is voluntary. If you do decide to go ahead, we will ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. This would not affect you taking part in other research in the future.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

As this is a study occurring in a specific place and which includes a number of people living locally, your participation is something which is likely to become more widely known. However, we will ask all members of the group to sign a confidentiality agreement that means no one should discuss what individual people have said beyond the group. In reporting the group’s findings, we will not mention participants by name. This is to ensure that people can express their views honestly, without prejudice.

**What will I have to do?**

Attend a total of five workshop meetings over a period of five to six months and to contribute as stated previously.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The main purpose of the research is to develop a community flood resilience plan for parts of Crediton and to demonstrate that this can be done effectively by working with members of the community in Crediton. All participants will therefore play a major role in shaping how the town responds to an issue like flooding. Because of the agencies we have involved, the impact of the group’s work is likely to be long lasting.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

Please feel free to say no at any time by informing Stewart Barr, who is the project leader at the University of Exeter. Do not worry, no one will contact you and try to persuade you to join/remain on the study. The decision to participate is yours and we are grateful for your time.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the lead researcher and impartial facilitator (Dr Stewart Barr, tel: 01392 723832). If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University of Exeter Complaints Procedure. Details can be obtained from the University of Exeter.

**Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Personal data will be kept confidential and anonymised (i.e. individuals will not be identifiable in any written reports or other outputs), unless you specify to us in writing you are happy for us to use your name.

All data will be kept in a locked cabinet and the voice recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study period. All participants will be assigned a code number or pseudonyms, with only the study scientists being able to link codes to participants. For the purposes of the analysis, data will be shared with other researchers.

**Who is organising and funding this study?**

The study is led by the University of Exeter and funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. The study is led by Dr. Stewart Barr and Dr. Ewan Woodley at the University of Exeter. The study is being undertaken in partnership with and has received funding from Devon County Council and the Climate Outreach Information Network (COIN) and also includes contributions from statutory agencies (Environment Agony and Devon and Somerset Fire authority).

**Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter’s Geography Ethics Committee.

**Further information and contact details:**

For further information please contact:

*Dr. Stewart Barr*

*Tel: 01392 723832*

*Email:* *S.W.Barr@exeter.ac.uk*