

Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum – 17 April 2018

L-CAT

Lincolnshire Community Assistance Team

www.l-cat.org

Called To Do What It Says On The Tin

L-CAT's very existence is to provide assistance in times of emergency situations such as severe weather.

The "Beast from the East" has twice this February March called L-CAT into action.



The first occasion we were called out by LCC Emergency Planning to assist in the transporting of medical personnel to their work.

L-CAT is affiliated to the Local Resilience Forum and recognised as a competent volunteer organisation capable of being useful assistance in emergency situations. The weekend of 24th/25th February the weather reports were giving Amber snow warnings for Lincolnshire. On Sunday evening, L-CAT issued a "STANDBY" to its members and asked for availability for 12 hour periods. We also informed the LFR and Lincolnshire Police that we were ready to assist if needed. The evening of Tuesday 27th February the weather became increasingly bad and road conditions across the county became difficult. We had a list of available members. Earlier that day the call out phone had been transferred to me in Louth. Therefore L-CAT Control was in my living room. That evening the phone rang. First time for me! It was Lincolnshire police control asking us for assistance in the Caistor area. I deployed 2 of our members in 2 vehicles. We rarely send out solo so as to provide support for each other.

We also received a call to assist in the South Lincolnshire area and I was able to deploy members there. That evening we attended 2 to 4 incidents.

Wednesday morning saw a reasonable covering of snow and the situation was worsening by the hour. We received a call from Emergency Planning who were convened in Lincoln for our availability. I sent them our availability list. I then was instructed by our leader/ main member to call all available members in to Louth. My kitchen/ dining room became L-CAT Incident HQ! By 14:00 we were deployed to Lincoln and Gainsborough to transport medical personnel to their medical centres.

Eventually I was deployed to The Emergency Planning Center in South Park Lincoln. From there I and three teams were deployed to the County Hospital and carried out another 3 jobs. That evening we completed 7 transport jobs.

I was relieved of my control duties for Wednesday night. However, I had been called by BBC Radio Lincolnshire and gave a telephone report live on county radio.

By Thursday morning virtually the whole of Lincolnshire was at gridlock! This was due to several HGVs jack-knifing and blocking several main roads.

Later on the Thursday afternoon we received calls for assistance from Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Trust and Community Care Organisations. Thursday 1st into Friday 2nd March was an intensely busy period for L-CAT. Our duty control Phill in Grimsby only managed a couple of hours sleep. However, several successful missions were completed.

Apart from Meals on Wheels by 15:45 on Saturday 3rd March we received the STAND DOWN from Emergency Planning/LRF.

Well, we all thought that was that for another few years?! Unfortunately, not! Friday 16th March our 001 Leader went off on his holiday to Norway. I was given the Call Out phone and L-CAT Control was back in my hands. Again there was Amber snow warnings so L-CAT went to Standby. I gathered an availability list and later on Saturday 17th we were requested for our availability list by Emergency Planning.

Saturday afternoon I decided to ask, via Facebook, for any weather and road conditions reports, which many people did send. I began to get a picture of what was happening across the county. I went to bed around 23:15 and reported on Facebook L-CAT Control was turning in for the night with phone beside the bed.

2 hrs later and 001 is calling me from Norway. A police officer had been on the phone to him asking for assistance. I got out of bed, went down stairs and made notes. With that the call out phone was ringing!! Lincolnshire Police Control. Could we assist on the A153 Horncastle? I deployed 2 of our members. Meanwhile this situation was cleared and our members were diverted to another incident on the Caistor High Street. Our members both got stuck in 4foot snow drifts. However, because of our preparations this was not an immediate problem and all persons were safely contained. By around 06:00 Sunday morning a very large tractor and snow plough ploughed a way through the snow and both our responders and the vehicle and occupants were towed to safety at Caistor Top on the A46. Myself and

another responder from Louth escorted the vehicle to Laceby roundabout and off they went back to Scunthorpe. Sunday evening I handed Control over and by Monday morning we issued a Stand Down.

Thanks

DJ Salkeld

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