

South Petherton Community Flood Group Progress Report No 10 – November 2025

This report provides councillors (and residents) with the status of the efforts of the Community Flood Group since the last report to the councillors in October and gives a look ahead to the planned actions of the group and flood related agencies.

Progress Update

Members of the group have met with staff from Somerset Care regarding flood warden support to Burnworthy Care Home in the event of a flood warning. A maximum of three flood wardens were deemed necessary to help assemble flood barriers in a timely manner. Discussions included the offer of temporary shelter at the home for vulnerable at-risk residents in St James Mews. The working details need to be developed further and included in the Community Flood Group Emergency Plan.

Budget preparation for 2026 – 27 continued during the period with work being done to understand the conditions required for grant applications. The first flood warden “grab bag” obtained from the Parish Council has been assessed for inventory and condition which will help inform future equipment purchases.

The Flood Emergency Plan activity is starting to gather momentum, in part due to the winter season and the increased number of volunteers. More importantly the support from experienced professionals who live in the village and have volunteered to help. This additional support will help guide, train and document the emergency plan for our community. Related to this planning was the testing of radio communication which tested different radios within the village and wider catchment area. Testing was positive and this will be used due to the poor mobile phone signal in the flood zones. Individual flood plans for residents continue to be developed.

Desilting the brook is still dependant upon receipt of a permit from the Environment Agency. The Flood Risk Avoidance Permit (FRAP) is back with the flood group with a revised cost estimate and forwarding postal email address. On a more positive note, working parties have removed vegetation and overhanging trees and brambles from the brook upstream of Silver Street, much of which was trapping leaf litter and general litter, its removal is improving the flow in critical areas. One more section is to be worked to reach St James Street by the Coop, property owners’ permission is being sort. Also cleared was debris and leaf litter from sections of Hele Lane and the ford, residents had expressed concern that flash flooding would wash debris into the ford culvert. Both activities were achieved with the support of flood group and community volunteers (see appended section). County Roads also supported clearing sections of Hele Lane with the road sweeper but a heap of debris from the ford still needs to be moved.

Somerset Rivers Authority and the Community Flood Group have had initial discussion with the village school headmistress and one of the governors about delivering practical and fun flood awareness to the school children. It is hoped this can be delivered in the new year and make children (and parents/carers) more aware of what can be done to reduce the risk of flooding and become more resilient when flooding occurs. Equally it's an opportunity to make children aware of the dangers of flood waters.

The first "solo" Flood Café meeting took place on 5th November in the village library. Solo, because it was without the support of Somerset Prepared and the Environment Agency. In partnership with the library management team the flood group facilitated a well-attended community meeting. Several ideas were discussed, one of which resulted in the clearance of Hele Lane and the ford by working party. Also of interest was a brief presentation of practical flood resilience measures adopted by a couple (flood group members) who have suffered in previous floods. A further Café is planned in early December.

National Highways operators were observed around the attenuation ponds off West Street prior to the A303 bridge. An email was sent to the nominated contact to ask if any action was planned soon to desilt these ponds. In parallel Councillor Jo Roundell-Greene is trying to organise a meeting with National Highways and the local parishes who are all looking for support in clearing attenuation ponds.

Somerset bridges department have proposed a design change to the bridge parapet on the downstream side of the bridge in Silver Street. The proposal is not ideal from a flood group point of view, but modification costing have been requested to get some idea of what grant applications may be required.

Members of the group attended a Riparian Rights workshop in Glastonbury delivered by Somerset Rivers Authority.

A first River Parrett Catchment Networking Event organised by Somerset Prepared in Langport was well attended by local parishes and our group. Some useful contacts and flood risk reduction ideas shared. The newly recruited FWAG SW point of contact was met and some initial discussions had. Emma Robertson will replace Tom Shopland who the group have previously worked with.

The flood group contributed to the latest edition of the local TA13 magazine.

Some initial discussions have begun to plan an anniversary flood remembrance/awareness event in January 2026. Possibly a Saturday morning gathering in Blake Hall, coffee and cake for members of the community to share stores, get progress updates and meet the MP, Councillors, local support groups and agencies.

Recommendations and Next Steps

24th November – Monthly Flood Group Meeting

3rd December – Flood Café to be held, village library 14:00 – 15:30 for residents concerned about flooding or have been flooded.

24th January 2026 – Flood Anniversary Event?

Appendix

South Petherton Community Flood Group Weekly Brief 21st November 25

Hele Lane Working Party



Silt and debris in Hele Lane ford (sheep wash) before and after manual removal by the volunteers.



Leaf litter in Hele Lane before and after. The working party on Sunday cleared the pavement and loosened the compacted leaf litter to ensure the sweeper could lift it. The sweeper can be seen at the top left of the picture on the right.



Sunday working party on Sunday in preparation for the road sweeper. Local Hele Lane residents kindly provided hot drinks, chocolates and cakes which were gratefully received.

Brook Vegetation Clearance



Grass and general vegetation cleared just prior to Silver Street culvert. The silt removal requires a permit from the Environment Agency. The following photos show the before and after pictures up stream of Silver Street.





The photos above and below are before and after pictures of the brook which runs parallel to the Prigg Lane car park



The clearance work continued towards the Coop in St James Street and halted prior to the back of the Coop to seek permission from the property owners to continue. Little to no silt was evident in these later sections of the brook.



Flood group management supervising activities 😊