

South Petherton Community Flood Group Progress Report No 14 – March 2026

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 February and gives a look ahead to the planned actions of the group and flood related agencies.

Progress Update

The land at Whitfield Lane is owned by the parish and part of it is farmed by a tenant farmer, the tenancy agreement is due for renewal in 2027 and with twelve months' notice required, discussions need to start now to decide the future of the land by September 2026. With this in mind, members of the flood group met with the parish clerk and a member of the Farmers Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) to discuss timeframes for submitting proposals to help reduce runoff from the land during periods of heavy rain. The flood group agreed that if councillors agree to continue to farm the land, then the tenancy agreement, if possible, should include a clause which encourages the successful bidder to work with FWAG to reduce runoff.

To improve rapid access to the gated area of St James Mews the flood group and residents have installed a key safe. This will save time when flood wardens need to respond rapidly to an incident in this area.

During a walkabout of the catchment with a member of FWAG a blocked drain (silt trap) was located at the bottom of Parkway Lane (at the junction with West Street and Moor Lane). A working party cleared the drain since it was not identified on Somerset Councils drain/grid map.





A grant application was approved by councillors at the February parish council meeting. This is a 20% contribution to a larger grant application to be submitted to Somerset Prepared at the end of March. If approved in early April, the flood group will be able to purchase much need flood warden personal protective equipment and related kit such as radios.

The monthly Flood Café was well attended in the village library on 4th March by residents and members of the flood group. The monthly event is planned to continue since those residents who are at risk of flooding are finding the meetings helpful and informative.

Three evacuation centres have now been confirmed subject to finalising detail operating procedures. David Hall, Village Library and Blake Hall management committees have confirmed a willingness to help in the event of a serious incident. To help develop the procedures the flood group plan to take advantage of the training offered by Rotary charity EVAG, who provide advice on setting up and operating evacuation centres.

A number of flood group members have conducted further radio testing and invested in training courses to become more proficient in radio communication. The group will require a business licence to operate the radios, and the plan is to apply for this on behalf of the Parish Council.

Somerset Council Bridges have reforecast the work planned to modify the bridge parapet in Silver Street. The new date is 25th March was 19th March. This work will increase the drainage capacity of the downstream drain. With some effort from flood wardens using sandbags it's hoped to direct more runoff water downstream of the

bridge, currently the water flows into the brook upstream of the bridge adding to the flood risk.



Planned modification to the bridge in Silver Street, to remove some of the stone work and fit a metal grill

The flood group met on 16th March to progress various actions.

Next Steps:

1st April 2026 – Flood Café, Village Library 14:00 – 15:30.

20th April 2026 – Flood Group Meeting 18:30 Blake Hall

20.03.2026