

South Petherton Community Flood Group Progress Report No 16 – May 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 April and gives a look ahead to the planned actions of the group and flood related agencies.

Progress Update


Riparian Law - The flood group have received a reply from the “Ministerial Contact Unit” in response to an email sent to the Minister for Water and Flooding, MP Emma Hardy. In attempting maintain the brook through the village the flood group have identified that the current common law regarding Riparian landowners is not fit for purpose and therefore asked the minister to consider reforming this law. With so many homeowners and landowners responsible for maintaining small sections of the brook it’s unlikely that it will be cleared effectively reducing the risk of flooding. The only effective way is to have a coordinated effort throughout the water course, hence the letter to the minister. The reply played back the facts that the group were already aware of and offered no commitment to a review. Local MP Adam Dance will write to the Minister on behalf of the flood group and residents as a next step.

Environment Permit (FRAP) – The EA have asked for an Ecologist report (presence of water vole, otter and bats) to support the groups FRAP application. The response timeframes requested were considered unrealistic by the group and after some discussion with the EA it was decided to withdraw the application to avoid losing the fee paid by taxpayers. The fee will be returned to the parish clerk. An Ecologist (Clarkson and Woods) have provided a quote to conduct the survey (£700.00). However, the group need to review the approach to maintaining the brook, possibly employing a specialist contractor to do the work. The work to clear the five culverts can be progressed given the EA exemptions that have already been granted.




Local School Children Flood Awareness – Members of the flood group and a representative from Somerset Rivers Authority delivered flood awareness sessions at both infant and junior schools over one and a half days. The work was included in the schools Enrichment Workshops and was noted in a recent school newsletter (see below). The children were also asked if they would like to design a flood warden logo as part of a competition.

Achieving the best

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Newsletter 1 - Summer Term 2026

<p>Our Focus Value is CARE</p> <p>ATTENDANCE AND TERM-TIME LEAVE</p>  <p>We have recently seen an increase in requests for term-time absence. As a reminder, consistent attendance is vital for your child's learning, progress, and overall wellbeing. Every day in school helps to build strong foundations for their future. Schools cannot authorise term-time holidays.</p> <p>Leave can only be approved in exceptional circumstances, which typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious illness or medical treatment for a parent or close family member • Bereavement of a close family member • Armed forces leave or requirements for service personnel • Religious observance for a recognised faith • A family crisis or emergency that cannot be scheduled outside term 	<p>Enrichment Workshops</p> <p>At both the Junior and Infant Schools this week, we have been focusing on the impact of human activity on the planet. We had an excellent session with the Flood Awareness Team, who taught the children about the dangers of localised flooding and the effect it has had on South Petherton in recent years. The children came away with a clear understanding that playing in flood water can be extremely dangerous. There is a local group who are passionate about supporting our community and raising wider awareness to help us all prepare for more intense weather systems. Scientific evidence suggests that this is something we need to be increasingly ready for, now and in the future, as flooding becomes more likely.</p>   <p>At the Junior School, we also welcomed the Somerset Waste Team, who delivered workshops to help us become more waste aware. The children were encouraged to think carefully about effective recycling, particularly of plastics, among other important messages. Following on from Earth Day last week, we are reminded that we all share a responsibility to care for our planet, it is precious.</p>
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Grant Application – Somerset Prepared have asked some further questions about the flood groups grant application requesting money to buy mainly flood warden equipment. The questions relate to the operating procedures of a planned flood warning alarm to be situated in St James Mews. Given that the questions were answered successfully it is hoped the grant will be approved shortly.

Flood Café – The meeting in the village library was well attended on the 6th May. Bel Deering from Somerset Rivers Authority made a guest appearance with a request for attendees to contribute to a couple of workshops as part of some research by Somerset Council (Health Determinants Research Collaboration). The research is to establish if the flood café idea helps communities be more flood resilient and what makes them successful. Most of the attendees were in favour of the idea. The first session is planned for the 17th June in the library.

Seavington St Mary – Members of the flood group have met with residents of Seavington who are wanting to establish a local flood group to support the residents of the Seavingtons. The South Petherton Community Flood Groups terms of reference only cover the parish of South Petherton so are only able to offer shared experience knowledge and advise.

Monthly Meeting - The flood group met on 18th May to progress various actions.

Next Steps:

group working in partnership with Somerset Rivers Authority and staff from the Infant and Junior schools. The aim is to raise awareness of risks from local flooding.

15th June 2026 – Flood Group Meeting 18:30 Blake Hall

17th June 2026 – Flood Café, Village Library 14:00 – 15:30.

24.05.2026