South Petherton Community Flood Group Progress Report No 20 – September 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 August and gives a look ahead to the planned actions of the group and flood related agencies.

Progress Update

Brook Depth Gauges – The fourth depth gauge was installed at Moor Lane during the month. This gauge along with the other three are located at key "trigger points" which will help inform the flood group when to initiate flood protection measures and mobilise the flood wardens.

Hele Lane Manhole Cover Collapse – A member of the flood group alerted Somerset Council County Roads of a collapsed manhole cover in Hele Lane after making the site safe. It's not clear why the cover collapsed into the drain since no heavy rain had fallen and no inspection works had been carried out. The authorities responded relatively quickly to reposition the cover.

Culvert Inspections – The flood group have inspected the culverts along the length of the brook (within their abilities). Of particular concern is the culvert under Hele Lane as this needs specialist equipment to inspect and clear if required. The flood group have engaged with a contractor after Somerset County Roads said they have no money to carry out the work. The group are now planning to apply for a grant from Somerset Rivers Authority to get the work done.

Brook Maintenance - A working party made some progress clearing vegetation from the brook downstream of Silver Street and inspecting the wall which is being impacted by trees and ivy. Further work is planned during October (Sunday 4th October 14:00 – 17:00).

Wessex Water Report – Wessex Water inspected the sewers during the month and have confirmed that no significant problems were found.

Monthly Flood Café Meeting – This month the meeting was joined by John Jarret from the charity EVAG. John gave a brief on the work of the charity and discussed the use of "one use" flood protection equipment. The charity is looking to provide reusable kit in the future.

Flood Group Meeting Structure – This month the group implemented the new meeting structure, which means every other month the monthly meeting will focus on sub-working groups. The format seemed to work well with members saying the meeting was positive with progress and planning being discussed. The sub-groups discussed: Budget, Catchment and Brook Maintenance and Allotments and Town Watermark Application.

Flood Warden Training – The first training course is now scheduled for Sunday 27th September and a follow up on 3rd October. In total 15 people are signed up for this introductory course which will be followed by first aid training courses. Related to this training the flood groups operational procedures have been reviewed and updated.

River Parrett Catchment Meeting – Members of the group attended the catchment meeting organised by Somerset Rivers Authority. The meeting brings together flood groups and parish councillors from villages around the catchment. This meeting focussed on the £50m Somerset Resilience Fund announced earlier this year by the Minister for Water and Flooding MP Emma Hardy. Piers Hooper (from the EA seconded to Somerset Council as Programme Manager) presented the status and planned approach to taking advantage of this investment. South Petherton are identified in phase three of the programme (mid 2027). The flood group will be working to priorities the local projects which if implemented will give the biggest flood risk reduction measures to ensure we can take advantage of this investment opportunity.

Next Steps:

19th October 2026 – Flood Group Meeting 18:30 Blake Hall

21st October 2026 – Somerset Prepared Event Millfield School Street (all day)

28th October 2026 – Flood Café 14:00 Village Library