



WEST SOMERSET FLOOD GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting held at Roadwater Village Hall,
on Wednesday 24th April starting at 2.00.pm.**

Present : Chair/Secretary Brenda Maitland-Walker (Carhampton): Vice Chair Ian Aldridge (Williton) Christine Dubery (Treasurer – Dulverton): Craig Palmer (Minehead): Peter Payne (Williton): Mel Mileham (Winsford): Brian Martin (Sampford Brett): Polly Soltau (Withypool & Hawkridge) Sue Smith (Carhampton) Mary Coles and Dave Sherman (Roadwater))

Also present Veronica Wilson attending on behalf of Minehead Rotary Club.

Apologies for absence were received from Ted Williams (Exton): and Heather Wilson (Crowcombe): John Stace (Nettlecombe) and Mike Ellicott (Exford)

Minutes of the last Meeting

The having been circulated prior to the meeting, were duly agreed.

Treasurer's Report

Christine Dubery provided copies of end of year Accounts (see attached). She reported she had still not received an invoice for last year from our website providers so we should be prepared to cover the cost of two years when Sondar Digital finally send their invoice.

Dave Sherman said he had contacted Sondar Digital so he could make the necessary changes to the website, and he was told they would send him the necessary access information but he had not received this. He agreed to contact them again.

The time has come to send out an invoice to members to cover the cost of maintaining the website. Everyone agreed to keep this to the £5 as before. This annual fee is payable from your Town or Parish Council. (***see attached request***)

Election of Officers:

It was unanimously agreed the Chair: Brenda Maitland-Walker; the Vice Chair: Ian Aldridge and the Treasurer: Christine Dubery be re-elected. The position of Minute Secretary is still vacant, but Brenda agreed to continue as Minute Secretary but asked if members could help by sending short updates from their towns and parishes to ensure no issues were missed in the minutes.

Minehead Rotary – Proposed EVAC

Brenda welcomed Veronica Wilson to the meeting. Veronica explained the Minehead Rotary Club were looking at the possibility of setting up an EVAC centre in the Minehead area where people could purchase the newer plastic re-use sandbags, and tarpaulins ideal to use under sandbags to seal a doorway.

There was a general discussion and everyone was enthusiastic about the proposal, in particular because it would mean not having to travel so far to obtain equipment (presently from Bridgwater and sometimes further away). Veronica said they hoped to provide two pick up areas, one in Minehead and the other near or in Williton. The area they envisage covering would be from Porlock to West Quantoxhead and to Bishops Lydeard (similar area to the Minehead to Watchet LCN area but including Porlock and Dunster). Members asked if Veronica could go back as see if the Exmoor LCN area could also be included, i.e. the old West Somerset District Council area, which is the area the West Somerset Flood Group cover.

Veronica said that the equipment would need to be purchased, but they would produce a price list of items. Members could obtain Grants of up to £5,000 from the Council via Somerset Prepared website, to help them pay for equipment. For further information email - veronica.wilson@btinternet.com

Minehead

Craig said the gullies along the seafront were blocked again with sand after the last two storms. He said there were issues about the sand profiling, and the fact that the gullies installed were not suitable for the seafront area.

It was agreed Brenda would try to get John Buttivant the Environment Agency's Coastal Engineer to see if he could attend the next meeting to give an update on the issues around the area's eroding coastline.

Roadwater

Mary said a tree had fallen over the river near her property, so she reported it to the Environment Agency, who came out the next day to look at it, and cleared it the following day. Ben said the EA also cleared a drainage pipe which was three-quarters full of stone and debris Mary wanted to acknowledge how helpful and efficient the EA had been, and thank them for their prompt, helpful and efficient responses. Ben said the telemetry was working well.

Williton

Peter and Ian said the Parish Council had held a Village Flood Response meeting, which had been well attended, and they had managed to get a number of volunteers to help with gulley and ditch clearing.

Winsford -Mel Mileham

ENP and the Exeter EA have been notified of the large woody debris accumulating upstream of Winsford particularly in the area close to the new Larcombe Foot bridge. Neither seem to be willing or able to do anything about it, and as discussed it may be worth bringing up the subject at the Exmoor LCN with the Bridges Team.

There was also a tree down across the Exe in the middle of Winsford falling from the bank where Badgeworthy Land are the riparian owners. It is understood that the opposite neighbour has now dealt with it.

Following the Roundwater roadworks and the Stone X to Copleham X being used as the diversion route, Highways have been informed by the PC of the damage done by heavy vehicles running over verges damaging them, and blocking drains and culverts which need repair to enable them to function.

The ineffectiveness of the road sweeping lorry was also an issue, because in the Winsford area it picks up little and leaves the mud and debris loose on the road ready to wash into drains and block them.

Dulverton – Christine Dubery

Christine reported that Dulverton keeps a close eye on their stores to ensure they have all the necessary equipment in case of flooding. In terms of flood issues she had nothing to report.

Withypool & Hawkrigde - Polly Soltau

Polly said there were problems with owners not allowing access to the river, and not being aware of their duties as Riparian owners. It was suggested they could send around a letter setting out riparian responsibilities. Brenda agreed to include leaflet explaining these with the Minutes. (*see attached*)

The issue of shale build up in the middle of the Barle is ongoing, the problem being similar to the problems experienced at Exford. Brenda suggested Withypool and Exford work together to produce evidence to the E.A to show the build-up in the river does not self-clear because of its composition, and suggested contacting either Exeter or Plymouth University to see if there is a possibility of someone who may be keen to undertake an investigation which could form part of their degree.

Sampford Brett - Brian Martin

The two telemetry gauges in the stream by the main street are now fully operational and send texts and email alerts to the flood warden (Brian), and the chair of the parish council, are triggered when designated stream water levels are reached - there are 3 or 4 levels set for each gauge.

Carhampton –

Sue said a number Hill Lane gullies were still blocked, and there had been two landslips which further impedes water getting into the gullies. She confirmed she had reported this via the blocked gullies website. The issue of flooding from overflowing newly constructed attenuation ponds on the new development off Hill Lane is ongoing.

Brenda said Ker Moor, Blue Anchor had suffered from the recent storms and the shingle ridge had completely washed away in places.

Any other Business

Brian suggested members should check their Parish & Towns Insurance to make sure that the volunteers are insured to undertake gulley and ditch clearance.

As requested at the meeting the contact details for Jo Oborn at FWAG are jo.oborn@fwagsw.org.uk

Time Date and Place of next meeting – by kind invitation of Minehead Town Council the next meeting will be held at Minehead Community Centre, Alexandra Road on Wednesday 11th September starting at 2pm.

Directions:

Take the one way turning off Alexander Road, into the Car Park. You will see the building in front of the Recreation Ground. There is free parking on the gravelled area to the side of the building.

WEST SOMERSET FLOOD GROUP

RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024


	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2022/23</u>
Receipts:		
Subs	65.00	65.00
Misc	0.00	33.30
Grants	0.00	0.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Receipts	65.00	98.30
Payments:		
Website Hosting	36.00	0.00
Printing & Stationery	0.00	0.00
Misc	0.00	0.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Payments	36.00	0.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments:	29.00	98.30
Balance Brought Forward from 31st March 2023	98.30	0.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance at Bank at 31st March 2024	£127.30	£98.30

Notes:

EXAMINER'S REPORT

I confirm that the above Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st March 2024 is in accordance with the books and records submitted to me. All supporting documentation for expenditure is present.

Magdalena Harding, Sealeys, Dulverton



22nd April 2024

What is a Riparian Owner?

A riparian owner is somebody who has a watercourse, such as a main river or ordinary watercourse, which runs through, beneath or adjacent to the boundary of their property. This can include a stream, beck or culvert. They are responsible for safely maintaining the bed and banks of the watercourse within their boundary.

Each terraced property below (A) is responsible for the section of culvert that runs beneath their property.

Property B is responsible for the watercourse that run through their property, as well as up to the centre of the watercourse which runs adjacent to the left boundary.

Property C is responsible for the watercourse which runs through their property and the culvert which runs beneath. Property C also owns up to the centre of the watercourse which runs adjacent to the boundary of their property.

Properties D, E and F are responsible for the section of the watercourse that runs adjacent to the rear boundary of their property, up to its centre.



RIPARIAN OWNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

As a riparian owner, you are responsible for:

- **Maintaining your section of watercourse.** You must maintain the bed and banks of your section of a watercourse, including trees and shrubs growing on the banks, and clearing anything which could cause an obstruction large enough to increase flood risk. Do not put grass cuttings or garden waste into the channel or on the banks. You must obtain relevant permission for any planned work on or near your watercourse.
 - **Ordinary Watercourses** – Consult with your Lead Local Flood Authority or Internal Drainage Board
 - **Main River** – Consult with the Environment Agency
- **Letting water flow naturally** and not obstructing the flow of a watercourse to the detriment of your neighbours. You may be liable for damages if your actions or lack of maintenance results in flooding someone else's land or property.
- **Not affecting the quantity or quality of the flow in a watercourse.** You cannot discharge water into a watercourse without prior agreement and permission from the relevant risk management authority.
- **Keeping structures clear from obstructions and debris.** You must keep structures that you own or are responsible for, such as culverts, trash screens, weirs and mill gates, clear from obstructions and debris.
- **Obtaining a licence** to carry out any work that could temporarily or permanently change the level or flow of water and so be classed as an impoundment.
- **Complying with all byelaws** relating to the watercourses in your area.
- **Not allowing the watercourse to become polluted.** Refrain from throwing wastewater, chemicals or anything which could cause pollution into or on the banks of a watercourse.
- **Protecting wildlife**, not causing obstructions to migratory fish and preventing invasive species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam or giant hogweed from spreading into the wild or onto neighbouring land.
- **Reporting incidents** such as flooding, blockages which could cause flooding, pollution, unusual changes in flow, collapsed or badly damaged banks or any activity on or near a watercourse that does not have permission.

You can report incidents to the Environment Agency 24 incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Reports can be made anonymously.

The Environment Agency will attend incidents with a high risk of flood or environmental risk.

WEST SOMERSET FLOOD GROUP



May 2024

Dear Members and Clerk to the Parish/Town Council

As agreed at our last meeting members agreed to keep the annual fee of £5 towards the hosting of the group's website at the same figure.

We would be grateful therefore if you could put our request for an annual £5 contribution to your Councillors at your next council meeting. Without this contribution we would not be able to maintain our website.

If you wish to pay directly into our bank account, the details are:

Nat West Bank, The Parade, Minehead.
Account - West Somerset Flood Group
Sort code - 52 30 42
Account No – 38106140

Alternatively cheques should be made out to 'West Somerset Flood Group' and sent to -
The Treasurer: Mrs C Dubery, 27, Fore Street, Dulverton. TA22 9EX

The Group meets four times a year where members are able to share information on any flood related matters, and if appropriate signposting them to the relevant Flood Management organisations. We also try to get speakers to attend to give presentations on subjects of interest to our members whenever possible

If you have a new representative who is not already on our mailing list, who is willing to attend our meetings please let us have their contact details and we will ensure they are added to the mailing list.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Maitland-Walker

Chair West Somerset Flood Group

Somerset Prepared Roadshow

Community Resilience Support

All Welcome



Monday 7 October 2024


10.30am - 12.30pm Flood warden workshop

1pm - 3pm Community resilience support

The morning session is a 2-hour workshop for existing flood wardens and anyone interested in becoming one. In the afternoon all are welcome to drop in and learn about a range of resilience topics. There will be stalls, demos, and the chance for 1:1 conversations and support from Somerset Prepared partners including the Environment Agency, Somerset Council, and Emergency Volunteer Action Group (EVAG).

 **EMN Hall, Monksilver - TA4 4JE**

 @somersetprepared

 somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk

 www.somersetprepared.org.uk