

**A Record of the Meeting of the  
Sampford Brett Flood Response Volunteers Committee  
*A Sub-Committee of Sampford Brett Parish Council***

**6pm, Monday, 29th April, 2024  
Sampford Brett Village Hall**

**Attendees:**

Martin Blazey, Clive Brooks, Richard Bulpin, Paul Burnett, Richard Crabb, Martin Harris, Guy Kennett, Brian Martin (Chair), Dave Martin, Andy Pawson, Caron Pawson, Alex Pilkington, Tracey Skinner (Deputy Chair), Dave Smith, Phil Swan.

**Apologies:**

Amanda Boyd, Leone Martin, Jan Swan, Simon Tremlett & Jon Toulson.

Brian welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending and being so supportive to the community.

**1. Approve minutes of last meeting - 1st June, 2023:**

The record of the last meeting had been circulated to all volunteers prior to this meeting. The approval of this as a true record of the meeting was proposed by Dave Smith and seconded by Clive Brooks and unanimously supported.

**2. Actions arising from last meeting:**

The draft Terms of Reference for the new committee as presented at the inaugural meeting on 1st June, 2023 were approved by the Parish Council at their meeting on 14th June, 2023.

**3. Community Flood Plan:**

Brian said that the new Community Flood Plan has been issued to all the volunteers. It is part of the Community Emergency Plan for the Parish. The version of the Community Flood Plan on the parish council website is edited to remove the contact details of the flood response volunteers and the vulnerable properties. Brian talked through the main elements of the Flood Plan.

Brian also requested that the Flood Response Volunteers are open to be contacted in the event of any emergency as addressed in the Community Emergency Plan, including prolonged power cuts, prolonged cuts to drinking water supply, storm damage, a prolonged freeze, accidents, etc. There was unanimous approval to support these events.

**4. Telemetry Gauges:**

Brian showed photographs of the two telemetry stream gauges. They are working well and have proved useful. One is by the trash grid outside Sampford House and the other is on the corner of Brett Close. These were installed by the Environment Agency and are both battery operated, powered by solar cells. The level of the stream is measured every 15 minutes. Alerts are sent out when the level breached pre-set levels (Lo, Hi and HiHi) - and these alerts are received as texts and emails by three of the volunteers (Brian, Jan and Simon T.)

**5. Flood events since the last meeting:**

Brian said there had been several small to moderate flash flood events since the last meeting. None of these was serious, mostly resulting in mud on the roads. He described and illustrated the main two events.

On **17th September 2023** the rain gauge showed that 72mm (2.8 inches) of rain fell between 9am and midday. This led to a 0.78m rise in the water level at the Upstream (US) telemetry gauge on the stream outside Sampford House. There was significant muddy water on the roads at this junction, which required a clean up, and down the main street. Most of the vulnerable properties had significantly improved their flood resilience measures and these worked. The equipment from the flood shed was put to use. All 40 sandless sandbags were used at vulnerable properties, together with tarpaulins. Dirty water pumps were deployed to help minimise ingress at one property. Since then, further resilience measures have been implemented at this property. No significant water entered any property. The turnout of flood volunteers was excellent. Somerset Council should be commended for responding to a call to clean up the junction, which they did within 24 hours.

On **13th October 2023** the ground was saturated and a small moderate amount of further rain pooled up in the corner of a field beside Capton Lane. Some hours after the rain had stopped, this pool breached the bank, flowed into the road and a serious amount of muddy water flowed down to the junction in the village. This unusual episode was alerted by the level at the downstream (DS) gauge showing a sudden raise in level, whilst the upstream (US) gauge showed no change. Volunteers managed to keep drains as clear as possible and helped clean up the road afterwards. No water entered any property.

#### **6. Flood storage shed equipment update:**

Since the flash flood events in September and October, we have added a second dirty water pump and two large diameter hoses - one 20m and one 10m. We have also replaced the supply of 40 sandless sandbags. This was done using a grant from the Sampford Brett Activities Group (SBAG) plus a contribution from the Parish Council. Brian showed the list of contents of the flood shed and illustrated this with external and internal photos.

#### **7. West Somerset Flood Group:**

Brian said that he or a stand-in attends these quarterly meetings. Matters discussed include updates relevant to our parishes re: regulatory bodies, councils, authorities, emergency and utility services. We also share experiences and lessons learned.

#### **8. Re-confirmation of agreement by volunteers to hold and share personal detail**

All flood response volunteers have signed the 'Consent to Share Contact Detail Information' forms. These held by the Clerk to the Parish Council. Each financial year volunteers must re-confirm by a simple 'yes' or 'no' that they are happy to have their personal data to be shared between the flood response volunteers. Brian explained that those who were not able to attend had already let him know their wish, and he now asked that those present give their re-confirmation. All present did so.

#### **Other matters:**

- Brian showed a photo of the recent bank collapse on the stream outside Longcroft. Andy & Caron Pawson were in attendance and explained what had happened. Much of it has been cleared, but the bank needs stabilising. They are looking at solutions, and some of these were discussed. Brian said that, to keep costs down, he and the other volunteers would be happy to help.
- Dave Smith commented on the state of the board that sits on top of the trash screen outside Sampford House, and said it should be replaced. Brian agreed, saying he had put it there a couple of years ago - but added that it might be better to remove it completely as it can be

slippery. He reminded anyone trying to clear debris from the screen to be very careful as it would be easy for a leg to slip through the grid. It's best to clear debris by standing in the stream when the level has dropped.

- Brian had shown a photo of the flood board in operation outside Lavender Cottage, and Richard Bulpin commented that the flood water was avoiding the drain just outside the gate. This was because the camber of the road was changed by Highways some years ago. It is very unlikely that there will be funds to correct this.

#### **9. Date of Next Meeting:**

To be decided.

*BAM 30.4.2024*