

Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 3rd March 2021

Minutes of the Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting that took place on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 6.30pm. Due to Covid-19 and following changes to government rules during this period of lockdown, the meeting was held via video conferencing.

Parish Councillors Present: J Swan (Chairman), M Blazey, D Brooks, B Doyle and S Miles

In Attendance: District Councillor L Whetlor, District and County Councillor H Davies;
Four Members of the Public;
Catrina Gaertner, Hannah Bailey and Bryony Wilde from Wetland Water Trust (WWT) and Mrs T-A Biss (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

The meeting commenced at 6:30pm

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced Catrina and Hannah from the WWT, our Guest Speakers for the evening.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4th MARCH 2020

Apologies received from Cllr N Brodrick.

Resolution:

The minutes of the Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th March 2020 were approved as being a true and accurate record and signed as such.

3. ANNUAL REPORT – Present by Cllr J Swan (Chairman)

3.1 Councillors and Clerk

There have been no changes to councillors during the last year. At our annual meeting I was reappointed as chair and Nick as vice-chair. We still have one vacancy, and I would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in becoming a parish councillor. Tracey has just completed her first year as our clerk – and has done an outstanding job. Thank you Tracey.

3.2 Covid 19

- (a) Has dominated the year!
- (b) Support network established early on. A few helpers were paired up with nearby households who required shopping etc. during the first couple of weeks, but since then the system has run

on 'autopilot'. We are very lucky that the general ethos in the village is to help each other in times of need.

3.3 Village flooding

- (a) The storm drain was inspected and cleaned in the autumn and the outlet channel was cleared of vegetation.
- (b) There is an outstanding issue regarding erosion of the riverbank around the outfall. So far as I know SWT are still waiting for a licence from the EA before the work can be undertaken.

3.4 Planning applications; 13 during the year, the most significant ones were all granted:

- (a) 5 glamping pods at Lower Thornes House
- (b) Subdivision of the School House into 3 living units
- (c) New garage and stables at Sampford House
- (d) Stand-alone garden room and replacement garage at Memoirs
- (e) Prior approval for a barn conversion at Thornes Farm
- (f) Plus, a couple of extensions and some applications to vary conditions.

There are 2 extant applications:

- (g) Another barn conversion at Weacombe; we have asked the planners to investigate the historic use of the barn
- (h) An application for a house in Union Quarry (behind Tower Hill) which we will be considering at the meeting after this.

3.5 Local government

- (a) SWT Local Plan – responded to consultation but not seen any progress since then. While this was initially caused by Covid, it is now caught up in local government reorganisation:
- (b) 2 proposals have been put forward for the merger of SCC and 4 district councils - SW&T, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Mendip:
 - (i) SCC favour formation of a single unitary authority covering all 4 districts
 - (ii) The district councils favour the formation of 2 unitary authorities – East and West Somerset. West Somerset would be a merger of Sedgemoor DC, SW&T and the parts of SCC.

The proposals are out for consultation until April 19th so do have a look at them. We will be considering how to respond as a parish council.

3.6 Telephone box

- (a) Light repaired and timer fitted.
- (b) Margie Smith has 'retired' from looking after the books; Terri Pratt kindly taken on the role. We are very grateful to both for keeping the library going.

3.7 Parish Emergency Plan – completed and uploaded to website. This will be reviewed annually.

3.8 Verge cutting – tried to get confirmation from county highways about responsibility for cutting the verge along the stream. No reply as yet.

3.9 Footpaths – Nick is in regular contact with the county footpaths officer regarding maintenance and clearance of trees blocking the paths. It is great to have a responsive department!

3.10 Climate Emergency Fund established by SCC. 2 applications submitted but no decisions yet:

- (a) Community car share scheme; proposed purchase of an electric vehicle for use as community transport in several parishes including SB. Watchet would take the lead.
- (b) Renewable energy for the village hall – solar PV panels and air-source heat pump.

3.11 Parish council meetings are moving to the 2nd Wednesdays of the month in an attempt to reduce clashes with SW&T meetings.

D J Swan. 03.03.21

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – views and questions to Parish Councillors

None received.

5. TWO VALLEYS' PROJECT - Speaker: Carina Gaertner, Project Manager (Rural Catchments), WWT Steart Marshes - "An update on natural flood management measures for the Doniford and Monksilver streams"

The Chairman welcomed Carina Gaertner (Project Manager), Hannah Bailey and Bryony Wilde from the Wetland Water Trust (WWT).

Over the past three years Carina has been running a natural flood maintenance project in the Williton Area which goes from the Quantocks to Exmoor, covering the catchment area which flows into the Doniford and Monksilver streams. The project team are working with Landowners to figure out where to put more natural solutions in place to help reduce the risk of flooding in the area. It is not about building massive attenuation features, it is about putting a pond in the right place, putting wood in the streams at the right places where it is not blocking any bridges - everything that can allow the flow of water over the surface during heavy rain fall to slowdown.

Carina has found it amazing to work on this project with amazing people, with 27 individual projects, such as one or two ponds, fencing off a bit of stream from livestock. There are lots of things people can do such as plant a few trees in a wet patch of a field. Part of her role is also to show people the work which has been carried out which is often "hidden" and welcomed the chance to share photos of the work at this meeting.

See Appendix A for the slides covered in the Presentation.

Natural Flood management
The Two Valleys
Wet Woodland
Runoff storage ponds
Silt traps
Corner treatment wetland

Livestock fencing
Leaky woody dams
Runoff diversion and soil surveys
Woodland planting
Plans for 2021

Carina will be handing over the Project to Bryony, and Hannah is also joining the project as the Engagement Officer. The team would welcome the opportunity to work with the community and landowners on widening this project and has chosen Sampford Brett as one of the key areas.

The Chairman opened the floor for questions.

- Cllr Blazey – at Holnicote Estate they have introduced beavers as part of controlling streams, are there any plans to extend this scheme?
Carina recognised that there are issues with Forestry which need to be discussed and carefully managed. The Holnicote beavers are in an enclosed environment but the project is going well, and she is quite positive that this is something that can be extended in the future.

The Chairman thanked Carina on a very interesting presentation and on the work that has been completed and welcomed Hannah and Bryony and looked forward to working with them in the future.

The Chairman thanked all those in attendance and the meeting closed at 6.58pm.

Chairman's Signature: DJ Swan Date: 9th March 2022

Appendix A- Two Valleys'

Natural Flood Management

What Natural Flood Management (NFM) is all about:

- Reducing flood risk
- Creating wildlife habitat and biodiversity
- Water quality improvements
- Working in partnership and closely with communities
- A chance to create and promote working wetlands



A partnership project between WWT and the Environment Agency

The Two Valleys



A partnership project between WWT and the Environment Agency

Wet woodland



WWT Environment Agency

Wet woodland



Meadowsweet Farm
WWT Environment Agency

Wet woodland

Dead wood is left as habitat



6000 wetland plants planted in 2021

WWT Environment Agency

Runoff storage ponds

Storing runoff during heavy rain fall in 2019

Vegetation covers water surface in 2020



14 ponds/ silt traps/wetlands created or restored

WWT Environment Agency

Silt traps



WWT Environment Agency

Corner treatment wetland



WWT Environment Agency

Livestock fencing



545m of stream fenced off from livestock

WWT Environment Agency

Leaky woody dams

Slowing the flow since 2019



169 leaky woody dams created

WWT Environment Agency

Runoff diversion and soil surveys



90 fields surveyed

WWT Environment Agency

Woodland planting

3864 trees planted

2074m of hedge



WWT Environment Agency

Plans for 2021



WWT Environment Agency

More events with Hannah



WWT Environment Agency

NFM mapping



WWT Environment Agency