



## GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL

<b>Minutes of Resilience Committee held on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm</b>	
Councillors Present	Jon Cousins, Paul Manning, Lindsay MacDougall, Mike Smyth, Michael White.
Apologies	Indra Donfrancesco
Absent	Lokabandhu
In Attendance	Philp Brewin, Ecologist, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium Melissa Taylor, Clerk for this committee
Public Participation	No members of the public spoke during public participation. The subjects raised included: 1.

### **33. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTE THE REASONS GIVEN**

Apologies were received from Cllr Donfrancesco due to another meeting. This was duly **NOTED**.

### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

JC declared that he is a member of the Axe & Brue Internal Drainage Board, a board member at Plotgate.

### **35. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023**

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and agreed as a correct record and signed.

The following updates were noted:

- Cllr Manning reminded councillors that they have received an email detailing plans for replacing the recently closed Boots pharmacy.
- MT summarised progress on the SWT Adaptation Plan and plans for community consultation in the Spring.

### **36. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM PHILIP BREWIN, ECOLOGIST WITH THE SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARD CONSORTIUM**

Internal Drainage Boards (IDB's) manage water, together with the Environment Agency (EA) and landowners. The Environment Act governs processes and strategies.

Across Somerset, 20% of land is below mean high tide level. The IDB manages water across ordinary water courses, while the EA manages main rivers.

Initial:

Date:

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A summary of the history and geography of the Somerset landscape set the background. The coastline has changed over the centuries, and in 5000BC Glastonbury was surrounded by sea. Landscape we have today results from Medieval wetland reclamation and peat extraction which continues in places. Somerset is rich with biodiversity and an asset we should value.

Climate change scenarios predict higher river flows and rising sea levels, which make water difficult to drain. In the past the coastal areas have had protections, but limited funds will be directed to protecting infrastructure and larger urban areas.

2012/13 floods raised awareness of the risks, and lessons. The summer floods are more damaging than winter ones because of damage to crops. Traditional grasslands recover more quickly than rye. Widespread demands for dredging of rivers, and divisive political arguments that result.

Droughts also create problems for this landscape, due to damage to peat, wetlands and nature. Peat is naturally lost under pasture (44-79cm over 100 years), but this is more likely when farmed intensively. Farmers growing maize for intensive dairy feedstock or biofuel experience depleting soils and yields. Compacted soils cause more runoff and strip nutrients from the soil which then pollute water courses. Soil health is crucial for resilience.

If small changes can be made in the agricultural sector huge impacts can be created on wider systems.

Other problems include: hyper-eutrophication caused by excess nutrients – flood plains store nutrients which are then cycled and build up further; protected species such as eels are reduced; non-native invasive species are clogging waterways.

### Solutions

Somerset Rivers Authority are presently consulting on an update to their new Somerset Flooding Strategy, deadline January 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 <https://www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk/have-your-say-on-new-sra-strategy-to-reduce-flooding/>

Dredging is only a short-term solution but it has support. There are a range of engineering and nature-based solutions available.

Defra is encouraging farmers to manage peat in a sustainable way and introducing 'wet farming' where high value crops can be grown as an alternative to damaging ones and peat extraction.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) can slow the runoff flow and filter out nutrients. Constructed wetlands can be used by farms as a nature-based solution for dealing onsite with nutrients. Eel passages in weirs to allow them to access all areas.

GTC can get involved in the Landscape Recovery Project of the Axe and Brue; map opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain. GTC should get involved in Local Nature Recovery Strategies. And PB will suggest someone to come and speak with the committee about this.

MT raised the importance of linking Glastonbury's Food Forum project and the SWT climate adaptation plan with this information.

**Recommendation** - Cllr Smyth proposed, Cllr White seconded, voted for unanimously.

*Since we are experiencing a climate and ecological emergency, this council suggests that the government puts in place a National Planning Policy for Food Resilience, to build resilience based on regenerative farming practices to protect the environment and ecology.*

**37. TO CONSIDER SOMERSET COUNCIL’S ASSET DEVOLUTION AND TRANSFERS**

The urgency of decisions regarding this was discussed. This will be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Asset Devolution Advisory committee, on Friday.

**38. TO CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT EMERGENCY PLAN**

Recent flooding around the town and beyond was discussed. MT asked for reports from councillors who might be more aware of problems faced by more vulnerable members of the community. Some instances that were raised included:

- Flooding along Magdalene Street
- Flooding along Chilkwell Street
- Flooding in the old boiler room of the town hall
- Cllr Manning reported that several caravans along Porchestall Drove have been flooded and the occupants are now living on the streets.

Cllr Cousins raised some additional questions to ask Philip Brewin: What plans do the Drainage Boards have for which areas will be sacrificed during flooding? Which parts of the moors will be impassable in floods, and longer term? This information needs to be included in our Emergency Plan. Main risks for Glastonbury relate to access for supplies, work, food etc, as well as taking people who might be flooded out of their homes in areas beyond the town. It was suggested that we ask Somerset Rivers Authority who we call, if there is flooding on the moors and people ask us for help?

**39. TO SET THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is set for February 6<sup>th</sup> 2024, at 7pm.

<b>SIGNED:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
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