

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group (CEEWG)

A MEETING of the CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP (CEEWG) took place on Monday 14 September 2026 at 7.30pm held in the Community Hall.

Present: James Hood (JH), Richard Clothier (RC), Charles Couzens (CC), Jane Durney (JD), Ewan Jones (EJ) (arrived at 8.26pm), Dee Mullis (DM).

Member of the public: 1.

Officer: Town Clerk.

Hannah Philips (HP) from Somerset Wildlife Trust to give a presentation about Act to Adapt.

Meeting started: 7.30pm.

Cllr Hood welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the attendees to introduce themselves.

MEETING NOTES

26/18: Apologies for Absence.

EJ sent apologies and would join the meeting, if possible, later on.

Nick Trueman (NT) sent apologies. NT also tendered his resignation to step down from the working group, due to personal and professional commitments. JH has written to him to thank him for his contributions.

26/19: Notes of the previous meeting.

To receive and approve the notes from the last [meeting held on 7 July 2026](#).

1. To note that the Field Maple tree trunk (at Jubilee Park) cannot be left in position or carved but will instead be placed in an appropriate place for wildlife habitat.

The meeting notes were approved, noting the above update.

26/20: Act to Adapt – Presentation from Hannah Philips from Somerset Wildlife Trust.

JH welcomed Hannah Philips, a Wilder Community Officer with Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT), who is working predominantly on the Act to Adapt project. HP is also the officer for the area that includes Bruton.

The presentation covered the following, in no particular order:

- SWT have recommended locations to work with for the current funding cycle. HP will be liaising with the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) to establish if Bruton can be included in the current funding cycle, or be included in a later tranche.
 - SWT want to provide support rather than lead communities with 'Act to Adapt', in the future.
 - Act to adapt has been running for three years. The end goal is to create a Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) which is tailored to that particular community.
 - There are three distinct phases of the support: workshops to discuss what a CAP would look like; shape, which involves consultation with the local community to shape the CAP; finally to launch the CAP and promote the next steps.
 - Mitigation vs Adaptation; nature based solutions promoting the benefits of actions that are realistic within the community.
 - The CAP is an up to 50 page document, with lists of actions detailing who could undertake any works and a timescale/timeframe guide. Launching the CAP also includes receiving a £1000 grant (seed funding) to start the projects.
 - Act Together to Adapt is an additional project that builds on this previous work. The SWT colleague is working with Somerset Council to establish how the Act to Adapt plans can be integrated into Somerset Council Climate Actions.
 - There is a Wilder Together event in 2026, which is a series of workshops in a day where climate groups can share good ideas and practices. There are already three members of OPB attending this event.
1. To discuss any immediate actions to be taken in response and whether and how longer term planning for Bruton should take place.

Working group members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

Can you give examples of the sorts of things that could be included in a CAP?:

- Green space and parks
- soil health.
- water: water butts and ponds.
- Flooding is a concern.
- Education and awareness.
- Planning; new building work being environmentally sustainable, and in the best location.

When working with the community, is it encouraged to work with adjacent parishes?

The first step could be a meeting with some of those interested parties, which then scopes out how the CAP could look.

How is Act to Adapt related to what is currently happening in Bruton, as there may be some cynicism about another plan for Bruton.

- When the One Planet Bruton (OPB) Plan has quite a lot of adaptation focus already, and the working group would be keen to build upon this rather than go back to basics.
- The important thing is the outcome and the positive change. The previous plans could be used to feed into, and encourage more open engagement with the community.
- The existing OPB plan could highlight specific locations to focus on.

Could the steps and timescales be clarified please?

- As an example, another location had a workshop in June, which was followed naturally by summertime events that interested people could attend. It could be different if the workshop took place now, in the autumn or winter.
- There is no fixed timescale, as a CAP is a living document.
- An average timescale is about 8 months, but it is different for each community.

There is a lot of nature recovery taking place in Bruton at the moment. The OPB action plan is arranged around 10 principles. The OPB Plan and the Act to Adapt CAP could be viewed as a venn diagram, in which each plan can support each other, but with some natural overlap.

How is progress monitored or logged?

- Generally by feedback with those communities.

- The SWT officers are now permanent staff, and part of their role is to directly support communities that are undertaking these plans.

How successful has liaising with local landowners to support a CAP?

- It takes a long time to liaise successfully and build trust.
- If the landowners can be engaged, the borders to the nature focus can be much more beneficial.
- This sort of engagement does take time to build upon.

What SRA resources are available?

- £1000 seed funding when the CAP is launched.

What would you like from Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group next, and what sort of timescale?

- HP would like confirmation if Act to Adapt is something that would work in Bruton, and if the working group would be interested in going ahead.
- HP can then speak with SRA about the Bruton being the fourth community in this tranche of funding, or the next round of funding. If included in the current tranche, then working towards the launching of the CAP in June 2027.

Working Group members agreed that Act to Adapt is definitely worth pursuing further, possibly including Brewham and Pitcombe, River Brue catchment.

The meeting continued at 8.10 pm.

26/21: To discuss potential for additional CEEWG members and discuss next actions.

Replacing Nick Trueman is a priority. Paul Webb at Black Bee Honey is working with Pitcombe Parish Council to develop a nature plan. Working together with Pitcombe makes perfect sense, geographically. It was suggested to engage with the Chamber of Commerce in Bruton to garner any interest from members.

It is recommended that Paul Webb is invited to come to join the working group. JH to contact him in due course.

26/22: Zero Carbon Energy:

1. To consider a proposal to use 'nudge' approaches to increase the uptake of roof-top solar (JH).

JH circulated a paper previously regarding this sort of 'nudge' approach with solar panels which would be good to consider in Spring 2027, in areas of Bruton which are outside of the conservation area. RC also suggested engaging the local businesses in Bruton. Various businesses were discussed, as was the primary school.

2. A resident has expressed interest in community energy. To consider whether there is the local momentum and will to foster an initiative (JH).

During the discussion that followed, it was agreed that there needs to be a location (land) and a committed group of people to spend time securing grant funding and leading on the project. JD pointed out that there needed to be a 'lessons learned' from other groups. Location was discussed, and whether location needs to be land, or would roof space be adequate. It was agreed that there isn't the impetus or capacity from the group to take this forward.

3. To note the forthcoming talk on Listed Buildings (JH).

The talk taking place on Thursday (17 September), which has been advertised widely.

26/23: Materials and Products:

1. To agree a date for the proposed talk on buildings adaptations in the face of expected climate extremes (CC/JD).

This has been agreed, 19 November in the Community Hall.

EJ arrived at 8.26pm.

26/24: Land and Nature:

1. To receive an update following the meeting at St Mary's Churchyard and agree any further actions to be taken.

The meeting was lively, with the following points discussed (in no particular order):

- Mowing of the daffodil bulb area was discussed at length. Points were raised about bulbs planted a number of years ago, which have not been managed very well and less and less are coming up every year. It was felt that the volunteer effort and the bulb donation at that time has not been appreciated.
- Concern was raised by the 'grave digger' group about wilding areas getting out of control, and brambles.
- There was no resolution about the initial request that the strip at the outside of the churchyard not to be mown until June.

The wilder churches award could be a way into promoting parts of this, and trying to find parts on this criteria that could be achievable. It was noted that opinions do differ about what is 'tidy' for the churchyard. It was suggested approaching the vicar to ask if there are families who could request that their family graves are left unmown for a period, to support the wilder churches drive.

It was agreed to visit the churchyard in Brewham to see how the wilder churchyards was introduced there, establish if there were any barriers and how those barriers were overcome.

2. To note the recent successful OPB Bruton Wildlife Friendly Open Gardens initiative and other current OPB initiatives (JD/DM).

Thank you to all involved with the Open Gardens. It went really well, and raised around £1300, with and 130 people visiting. The feedback was really positive.

3. To receive an update on the Forest of Selwood Meadows Project (CC).
CC provided an update. A project officer, Lucy Stockton, has been appointed. Lucy is currently focussed on Bruton, in particular the Abbey Park area. Lucy is looking at opportunities for meadow restoration, on areas of land managed by the town council (Abbey Ponds and the Dovecote hill). Lucy has started working with the town council on a Countryside Stewardship application for those areas.

A volunteer day was held on Saturday 12 September, looking at management of the butterfly bunds. There were new volunteers attending which was excellent (10 adult volunteers and 4 young people, with 4 people just looking to see what was happening). The project runs until June 2027, and it is hoped to secure funding to extend the project.

A question was asked about the grassy areas of Durslade Community Garden that are managed by Hauser and Wirth. These areas are not currently included within the scope of the project.

4. To share progress on the Combe Brook Catchment project and consider next steps (JH/CC):
 - a. Meetings with landowners (JH/CC).

Both JH and CC have met with landowners about going obtaining permission to go ahead with the surveys. There is a large piece of land in the middle of the area where landowner permission is required.. Once this permission is secured, most of the area to be surveyed will be on board with the proposal.

Following the conversations with landowners, further surveys would be:

- b. Hedgerow survey (CC)

A date has been fixed for the survey (November, during national tree week) where some training will also take place looking at a line of beech trees, to learn about Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group 14 September 2026

measuring and assessing trees. This needs to be advertised for volunteers. The same person would also conduct a hedgerow survey training session in the new year.

c. Chirrup AI (RC/CC)

Landowner approval is still required. Since the weather has been so varied, then to be considered for next year. RC asked for the locations (what//3//words), as they are currently building their map for next year and would like to include the new locations.

d. River Fly monitoring

EJ asked which locations is monitoring required. BruCREW needs landowner introduction in order to conduct the River Fly monitoring. Currently there are 12 sites, which will increase to 17 sites.

It would be good to undertake dormouse footprint surveys in the dormice tunnels along the same stretch where the River Fly monitoring is required, to establish continuity of habitat.

5. To hear any progress on the Petition submitted to The Newt earlier this year. JH has established that the petition has not been submitted. It would be helpful if more signatures need to be added, but it really just needs to be submitted.

26/25: Member updates and AOB

Nothing to report.

26/26: Date of the next meeting:

To discuss/agree the date and venue of the next meeting, 9th November 2026, 7.30pm at the community hall.

Meeting closed at 9.03pm.

END OF MEETING NOTES