

## The Poldens Case Study

Case Study 02: October 2024

21st March - 30th September 2024

### Summary

Through the Act to Adapt process, Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) is supporting communities across Somerset to adapt to climate change. By creating and implementing a Climate Adaptation Plan, the community can proactively respond to climate threats in their local area whilst simultaneously building community, supporting local wildlife, and increasing wellbeing.

Funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), communities across the Polden Hills have come together through the Act to Adapt process to build a bespoke Climate Adaptation Plan!

### The process

Before the public engagement began, SWT communicated with the Polden Environmental Network (PEN). Our initial contact with PEN was to ensure that the community was ready to enact a **Climate Adaptation Plan**, where we found that locals were keen to get involved with the entire Act to Adapt process!



Talk

SWT organised a workshop to engage the community in climate-led discussions. Using a Climate Adaptation Toolkit that outlines **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)**, locals were informed of the current climate issues and provided with general information on adaptation techniques. The community then shared their concerns and priorities, which was used to form the draft Climate Adaptation Plan.



Shape

To enhance the collective input of ideas into the Climate Adaptation Plan, a consultation was carried out. SWT attended the Puriton Flower Show to promote the plan to locals, as well as providing an online survey to increase the accessibility of feedback.



Act

In September 2024, SWT and PEN launched the Poldens' Climate Adaptation Plan to the community. The event, hosted at The Pavilion in Shapwick, welcomed 12 parish councils to discuss their thoughts on the plan. With an excited approval from the local MP, Tessa Munt, The plan was then handed to the community so that they could begin to implement the outlined adaptation strategies.

## Adaptation strategies

Each community has identified four unique adaptation themes that best suit their needs. For the Poldens, these four strategies include:

1. Improving and increasing green spaces
2. Reducing flooding risks
3. Sharing knowledge and raising awareness
4. Local empowerment and planning

For each theme, the Climate Adaptation Plan outlines 5-6 focused adaptation strategies that have been identified through Act to Adapt.

Information includes the benefits and co-benefits, useful links, and examples of how to carry out the strategy, as well as specifying 'where', 'when' and 'who'.

## Future work

Across Somerset, five other communities are currently on their Act to Adapt journey to create a tailored Climate Adaptation Plan. These include: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Minehead, Wells, Spaxton, and the Martock area. The process has only been running for one year so far, where SWT aims to facilitate Climate Adaptation Plans for every community!

An important feature of the plans are that they are never finalised. Communities should alter the plan according to their changing priorities and to adapt to any current climate issues.

SWT's wider objective is to share the Climate Adaptation Plan outside of Somerset, providing a case study for groups to use and apply to their community. If you would like to find out more on the plan, contact the Climate Adaptation team (details below).

## Useful links

[Act to Adapt project](#)

[Somerset Rivers Authority \(SRA\)](#)

[Climate Adaptation Toolkit](#)

[e-Newsletter Sign Up](#)

## Contacts

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Also a massive thank you to those individuals who helped with the process, particularly Steve Mewes, Thibaud Sulzer, and of course PEN!

## Impacts

The process for the Poldens has allowed for excellent communication between local groups and residents, where a £1000 fund (provided by the SRA) will kickstart the plan into action!

PEN have been an involved, committed group and we can't wait to see what impacts they will have as well as the Climate Adaptation Plan.

Already endorsed by the local MP, the plan is making an impact, where parish councillors across the Poldens have already made three pledges to take back to their communities. The climate adaptation team will follow the progress of the plan, seeking an update in 6 months.