

# TO CLIMATE ADAPTING ON THE SOMERSET CHANGE LEVELS

Between December 2019 and March 2020 in  
Wedmore and Langport, Adapting the  
Levels held two large public  
drop-ins, and workshops  
with Parish, District  
and County  
Councillors.



These events shared information about local climate change projections and how nature-based solutions might help us adapt to the changes.

Farmers, councillors and community members all shared their ideas and experiences. There were strong calls for action, and many ideas about what this could/should include. **All quotes are taken directly from contributors at the events and are representative of the overall comments.**



A full report and the raw data can be downloaded from our website

[www.adaptingthelevels.co.uk](http://www.adaptingthelevels.co.uk)

Sometimes the solutions are right under our noses! Lots of people had ideas about how our homes can be part of the answer - how we build them, the rules on what we build, and how we can improve them.

"Stop covering driveways with impermeable surfaces."

"ALL new housing built to the highest environmental standards- Renewable energy, insulation, rainwater capture. MAKE the developers change and Regulate, Regulate, Regulate."

"Sharing good practices- informal open gardens, tree planting, composting how to."

"Stop building on the flood plains."

"Start local scheme and supply water butts."

## "Working together has to be the way forward."

This is the biggest challenge we all face."

"Education support for small local projects enabling individuals to implement small, beneficial changes."

"Local events that attract locals and neighbours to attend and interact with landowners & farmers."

"Education for everyone, old and young."

"Make all our public buildings SuDs friendly."

There are lots of ways we can use the power of nature to help reduce the risks of flooding and drought - these are known as nature-based solutions or NBS.

"Slow the flow in upland areas of catchments."

"Work with nature to restore the moorland."

"Lots of rewilding."

"More trees of course, but not the only solution..."

There are more answers right under our feet - in the soil that feeds us and soaks up rainwater. Improving relationships between farmers and local communities, changing the subsidy systems for farming, being mindful of what crops are grown where and protecting the Levels' carbon-rich peat were all topics that came up.

"How do we change farming, so that it suits the new climate and is part of the solution not the problem?"

"Floodwater storage on agriculture land/ payment for landowners."

"More use of flooded fields and compensation for farmers."

"Stop blaming farmers for problems we all created and need to solve together."

"Maize!"

"Deep-rooted grasses on moors. Rotation crops."

"Don't plant trees on old pasture which is still home to the wildflowers, these are carbon sinks in themselves."

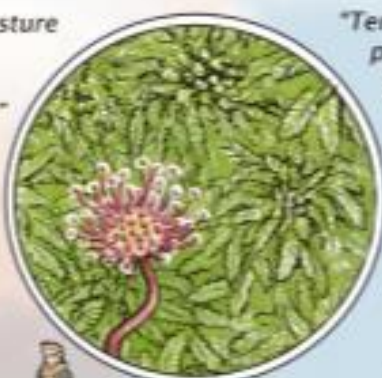
"Planting of hazel plantations on slopes above floodplains. Willow in flood areas."

"Terminate all ongoing peat extraction and licences."

"Stop blaming farmers for problems we all created and need to solve together."

"Maize!"

"Deep-rooted grasses on moors. Rotation crops."



More ideas came up with an eye on the future, on how we safeguard our communities, prepare for changes that are coming, and work with nature to adapt.

"Realise socio-economic benefits of adapting now & grow accustomed before it's too late."

"Communities need to re-think normalcy of flooding."

"...Adaptation is about what we can do in advance, and so so much better (and cheaper) than trying to clear up after the event."

"Accept that change is coming, work with nature to adapt."

"Find areas to make space for flooding."

Tackling climate change requires solutions at every level, from individuals all the way up to National Governments.

"What simple actions can my family take NOW?!"

"All must try to help, no good thinking you won't be around for much longer, we have to think of future generations."

"Join local green groups - become active."

"Parish/town tool kits. Environmental advice for defending planning applications."

"Committed and strong leadership - local, regional & national. Lots of partnership working."

"Make space for water so the rivers can flood onto the floodplains."



The warming of our world is already altering our weather and rainfall patterns locally. On the current trend, by 2070 we expect to see:

Since the industrial revolution, human activities have caused CO<sup>2</sup> levels to spike, increasing the global temperature by 0.9°C since 1880. Two-thirds of this warming has happened since 1975, meaning the world is warming



ten times faster than it would at the end of an ice age.

47% less rain in Summer



35% more rain in Winter



Winters are becoming wetter. Storms are becoming more frequent, bringing heavy downpours which leads to higher peak flows in the rivers and increased winter flood risks.

According to the Environment Agency's probable climate projections, by 2080 Somerset is facing:

Summers are becoming hotter and dryer.

Winter increases in peak river flows of 35% - 85%

Summer decreases in river flows of 85%



More summer storms will bring heavier downpours, with rain falling on dry ground. These conditions increase runoff and the risk of summer flooding.

People's emotional health can be affected by climate change.

Working together with your community to find solutions and talking with friends or family can help. If you are struggling, contact your GP or self-refer to Somerset Talking Therapies at [www.somersetft.nhs.uk/somerset-talking-therapies](http://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/somerset-talking-therapies), or 0300 323 00 33.

### RAINFALL INTENSITY



We're used to rain being light and spread out.

Climate change will increase its intensity.



# CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOMERSET

Somerset is one of the UK's most climate-vulnerable areas, facing increased risks from sea level rise, river flooding and drought.