

Climate Adaptation Plan



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

GREAT MEAD



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CHARD
2026

Funded by
Somerset
Rivers Authority

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The climate emergency poses many threats to Chard. Winters are becoming warmer and wetter, increasing flooding risks. Hotter and drier summers are increasing the risk of droughts, heatwaves and wildfires.

Adapting to these changes is urgent and essential to reduce the impacts on our buildings, green spaces and the daily life of Chard's residents.

Through collaborative events, residents have identified four key themes for how Chard should adapt to the changing climate:



Improving and increasing green spaces



Adapting to flooding



Building local climate knowledge and action



Engaging with local planning and policy

The resulting plan:

- reflects the priorities of Chard's community
- outlines adaptation actions under each key theme
- gives guidance on taking action
- highlights the co-benefits of each priority, such as improving water quality or health and wellbeing



Explore this plan to discover the actions you and your community can take to adapt to climate change. Your support and contributions will be vital to ensure we can build a better adapted, resilient and connected future for Chard.



To find out how you can get more involved contact:
cultivate@takeart.org

INTRODUCTION

Since August 2025, local residents and Somerset Wildlife Trust have been working together to address the following challenge:

"How can we help Chard adapt to climate change?"

The impacts of the climate emergency are already unfolding. Sea levels are rising and flooding, extreme heat, droughts and wildfires are all likely to happen more often in Somerset. Thankfully, there are lots of ways that communities can act together to be better prepared for the changes and build a positive future where people and nature can thrive. Climate change is already impacting Chard, there is an urgent need to adapt.



Somerset Wildlife Trust has been raising awareness of adaptation and encouraging communities across the county to develop plans. In collaboration with the Great Mead team, we started developing a locally tailored Climate Adaptation Plan for Chard.



Beginning with a Climate Adaptation Workshop event at Holyrood Academy, Chard, the '[Act to Adapt](#)' process has brought together residents, community groups, councillors and Somerset Wildlife Trust's [Climate Adaptation](#) team to:

- Talk about climate change projections for Somerset
- Discuss the need for adaptation in Chard
- Co-create a bespoke climate adaptation plan, using the [Climate Adaptation Toolkit](#) for communities

This plan shares the key themes and priority adaptation actions chosen by Chard residents, and offers advice on how to make these actions happen. We have also highlighted the adaptation benefits of each priority, and additional 'co-benefits', such as mitigating climate change or supporting biodiversity, to demonstrate how they will support Chard in becoming better adapted and more resilient to our changing climate.

SHAPING CHARD'S PLAN

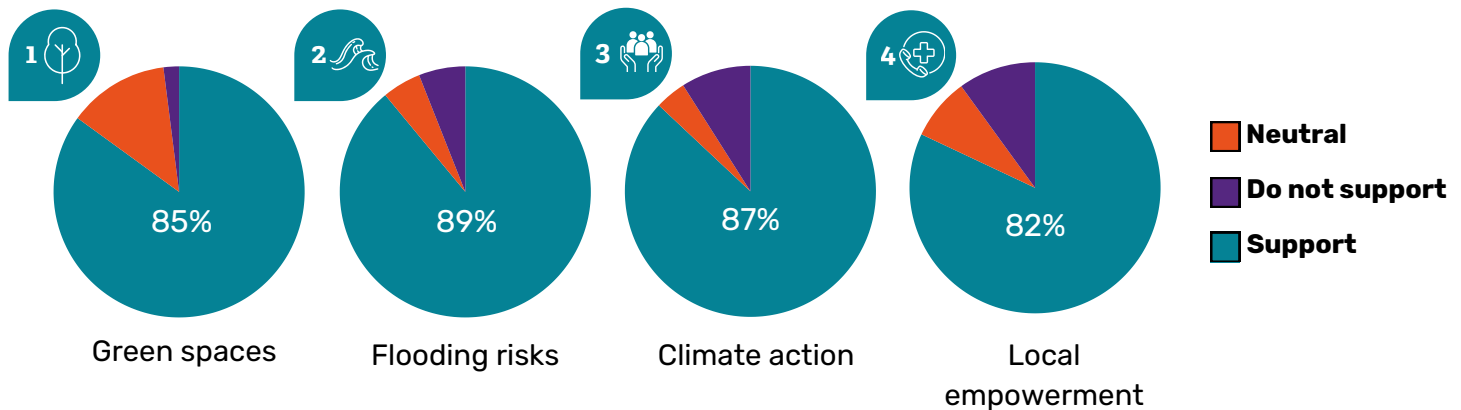


Following our initial events, we compiled participants' suggested adaptation priorities and actions and turned these into a draft Climate Adaptation Plan for Chard. To ensure that the plan better reflected the needs and priorities of Chard, we organised a consultation period to gather feedback on the existing priorities and ideas for new adaptation actions from more residents.



In October 2025, we held in-person consultations at community festivals and events, where residents learned more about climate adaptation, read the draft plan, and helped shape the full plan by sharing their ideas. For those unable to attend these events, we also had an online survey and opportunities to provide more detailed feedback by email.

59 respondents also provided feedback on how strongly they **support** each priority:



Survey respondents reported which of the adaptation priority areas they felt were most important for Chard. In order from most to least important, these were:

1. Adapting to flooding (34%)
2. Improving and increasing green spaces (30%)
3. Building local climate knowledge and action (22%)
4. Engaging with local planning and policy (14%)

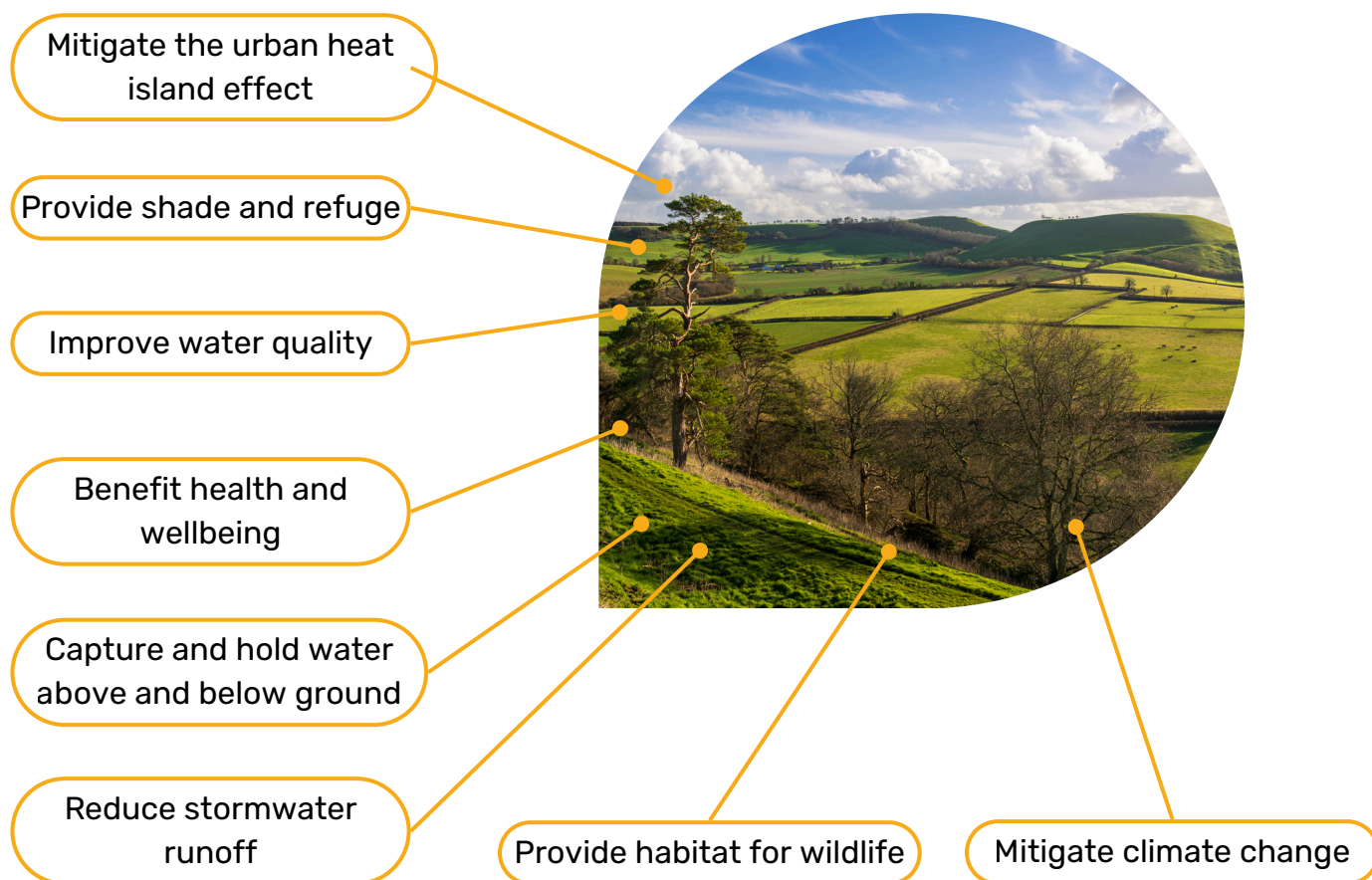
See Appendix I for more information about consultation responses.

However, to ensure this plan stays flexible and best serves Chard, residents should have regular opportunities to suggest additions, changes and improvements. If you have any suggestions for the plan, get in touch at: cultivate@takeart.org

1. IMPROVING AND INCREASING GREEN SPACES



Actions to improve and increase green spaces could provide the following adaptation benefits and co-benefits to the local community:



1.1 - Increase tree and plant coverage



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations of previously removed hedgerows • Field margins and boundaries • Community allotments • Roadside verges • Chard Town Council land • Snowdon Park • Great Mead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Chard • Chard Gardening Club • Chard Town Council • National Highways • Somerset Council tree officers • Woodland Trust • Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) • Reimagining the Levels • Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

How:

Develop a community tree planting strategy: Work with residents, landowners and local experts to create a comprehensive plan that identifies suitable locations for tree planting. Consider soil types, drainage, and potential future climate conditions when selecting sites and tree species.

Establish a "plant two trees for every one lost" initiative: Create a formal policy that ensures when trees are removed due to development, disease, or safety concerns, at least two native trees are planted as replacements. Set up a monitoring system to track tree losses and subsequent plantings across the area.

Replant lost hedgerows: Identify historic hedgerow locations using old maps and local knowledge. Prioritise replanting in areas where hedges have been previously removed. When hedgerows need to be cut back for ditch clearing, explore options for buffering them from the back rather than complete removal, allowing for quicker regeneration.

Create food forests and edible landscapes: Identify suitable public spaces for planting fruit and nut trees, berry bushes and other edible plants. Design these areas to be productive while also providing wildlife habitat and climate resilience benefits.

Engage the community: Organise community tree and hedge planting days to involve residents in the physical work and foster a sense of ownership. Provide training on proper planting techniques and aftercare. Create educational materials explaining the multiple benefits of trees and hedges for climate adaptation, wildlife, and wellbeing.

Secure funding and resources: Research grant opportunities specifically for tree and hedge planting. Explore partnerships with conservation organisations, local businesses, and suppliers of trees and materials. Consider establishing a community tree nursery to grow saplings for future planting projects.

Develop a long-term maintenance plan: Create clear responsibilities and schedules for watering, weeding, and protecting newly planted trees and hedges. Consider recruiting volunteer "tree guardians" to help with ongoing care, particularly during establishment periods and drought conditions.



Useful links:

1. [More trees | BANES case study](#)
2. [Free trees for schools and communities | Woodland Trust](#)
3. [Tree planting advice | Woodland Trust](#)
4. [Managing and caring for trees | Tree Council](#)

1.2 - Create wildlife habitats and green corridors



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural fields • Field margins and boundaries • Roadside verges • Community allotments • Chard Town Council land • Snowdon Park • Great Mead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Chard • Chard Gardening Club • Chard Town Council • National Highways • Somerset Council tree officers • Reimagining the Levels • Woodland Trust • Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

How:

Map existing green spaces and corridors: Conduct a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify all green spaces, ponds, hedgerows, and potential wildlife corridors across the area. This will provide a baseline for planning and help identify key areas for connectivity improvements.

Link aquatic habitats: Connect existing ponds and create new ones to establish networks for amphibians, particularly toads. Install amphibian ladders in drains to prevent wildlife casualties while maintaining drainage function. Consider how these features might need to be adjusted during drain cleaning operations.

Enhance field boundaries: Work with local landowners to add hedgerows to existing field boundaries and create buffer strips around field edges. Promote the use of green finance options to support farmers in implementing these wildlife-friendly measures.

Create micro-habitats: Identify suitable locations for a variety of micro-habitats such as:

- Wildflower borders in parks and community spaces
- Beetle banks to support beneficial insects and provide natural drainage
- Log piles and bug hotels in suitable corners of public and private gardens
- Bird and bat boxes on buildings and mature trees

Develop key sites as wildlife hubs: Work with landowners and managers of significant local sites to enhance their wildlife value. This could include reducing intensive management of grassy areas, creating more wild zones, and planting native species.

Utilise Town Council land: Identify suitable parcels of Town Council-owned land that could be dedicated to wildlife habitat creation. Develop management plans that prioritise native species and natural processes.

Monitor biodiversity improvements: Organise regular BioBlitz events involving the community to monitor wildlife across the area. Use the data collected to assess the success of habitat creation efforts and to inform future projects.

Seek funding and support: Research and apply for grants to support wildlife corridor creation. Partner with local wildlife groups, conservation charities, and Wessex Water for potential funding opportunities.



Useful links:

1. [Why are wildlife corridors important? | Heart of England Forest](#)
2. [Create wildlife corridors | RSPB](#)
3. [How to create microhabitats | LivetoPlant](#)

1.3 - Support climate-resilient planting



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community allotments• Chard Town Council-managed green spaces• Roadside verges• Footpaths and rights of way• Snowdon Park• Great Mead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable Chard• Chard Gardening Club• Chard Town Council• Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

How:

Establish natural cooling zones: Work with the Town Council to designate areas of playing fields for natural shade development. Plant native trees around the recreation grounds and school areas to create cooling effects for children and sports participants. Create wild areas that provide cooling benefits while helping to slow water flow during heavy rainfall.

Church management: Work with local churches to allocate areas maintained as a wildflower meadow. Develop a sustainable management plan that prevents grass from overgrowing while supporting biodiversity.

Reduce chemical usage: Phase out weedkiller use across council-managed areas including the allotments. Support natural hedgerow development by allowing hedges to grow out, providing better habitats for wildlife and improved natural screening.

Create community management schemes: Establish a framework for community groups to take greater ownership of local green spaces. Support initiatives for biodiversity enhancement and food growing projects at the allotments. Develop clear guidelines that balance community needs with climate resilience.

Build local expertise: Organise workshops with Somerset Wildlife Trust on climate-resilient land management techniques. Partner with groups to provide training on biodiversity-friendly maintenance. Create a knowledge-sharing network among community volunteers who are already planting wildflowers.

Monitor and evaluate: Track changes in biodiversity and temperature in managed areas. Document the effectiveness of different approaches and share successes through council communications. Use feedback to refine management strategies.



Useful links:

1. [Micro forests | Scotscape](#)
2. [Drought-resistant plants | RHS Gardening](#)
3. [The Wildlife Trusts and RHS call on gardeners to bring their lawns to life | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

1.4 - Develop local food security



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local farmers and landowners• Great mead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chard Town Council• Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)• Sustainable Chard• Chard Gardening Club

How:

Implement soil health initiatives: Work with local farmers to encourage cover crops between main crop rotations. Demonstrate how cover crops reduce surface water runoff, improve soil structure and enhance soil health, which helps land adapt to both drought and heavy rainfall conditions. Organise workshops on sustainable soil management practices that support climate resilience.

Develop appropriate land use guidance: Create locally relevant guides for crop selection that consider changing climate conditions. Focus on crops that are well-suited to local soil types and projected weather patterns. Provide information on rotation practices that benefit both farm productivity and ecosystem health while reducing flood risk.

Support natural water management: Offer guidance and identify potential funding sources for farmers interested in creating ponds and small wetland areas on their land. Highlight the multiple benefits these features provide: water storage during heavy rainfall, wildlife habitat, and water reserves during dry periods. Share successful local examples that demonstrate these benefits.

Enhance hedgerow networks: Organise knowledge-sharing sessions on hedgerow maintenance and restoration techniques that benefit wildlife while helping manage water flow across the landscape. Connect farmers with resources for appropriate native hedgerow species selection that can withstand changing climate conditions while supporting local biodiversity.

Facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning: Create opportunities for farmers to share experiences and successful adaptation techniques with each other. Establish a local farmer network focused on climate adaptation and resilience, perhaps through regular informal meetings or farm visits to showcase successful practices. Help identify appropriate support organisations and funding opportunities for farmers wanting to implement changes.

Promote balanced agricultural approaches: Work with agricultural businesses in the area to improve practices, focusing on positive engagement rather than criticism. Encourage dialogue around issues like maize production and runoff management in a constructive manner that recognises the economic realities farmers face while seeking environmental improvements.

Recognise and celebrate progress: Create a simple recognition scheme that acknowledges people making positive changes toward more wildlife-friendly, climate-adaptive practices. Share these success stories through local communication channels to inspire wider adoption.



Useful links:

1. [Soil health initiatives](#) | [UK Soil Health Initiative](#)
2. [Land use guidance](#) | [UK Government Land Use Programme](#)
3. [Natural water management](#) | [Environment Agency Natural Flood Management Programme](#)
4. [Hedgerow networks](#) | [Hedgelinek](#)



1.5 - Support green wall and roof creation



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus stops• Council-owned buildings• Community spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)• Sustainable Chard• Chard Gardening Club• Chard Town Council

How:

Learning from others: Research existing green bus shelter projects in Leicester, Derby, Newcastle, Sunderland, Oxford, and Glasgow. Analyse their plant selections, design features, and maintenance practices to identify successful strategies suited to Chard's climate.

Identify suitable bus shelters: Conduct a survey of existing bus shelters to assess their structural integrity for supporting a green roof. This might involve consulting a structural engineer for specific shelters. Prioritise shelters with ample sunlight for healthy plant growth.

Choose a green roof system: Explore modular green roof systems designed for ease of installation on bus shelters and/or roofs. These units often come with all the necessary layers, including drainage, lightweight growing medium, and drought-tolerant plants.

Planting and maintenance: Select low-maintenance, native wildflowers or sedum varieties that thrive in shallow soil conditions and require minimal watering. Consider incorporating a local pollinator mix to attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.

Policy change: Create a policy to replace unsuitable bus stops with green roofed bus stops at the end of their lifespan.

Evaluate the suitability of buildings for green roofs: Assess the structural integrity of the building, its location, and the local climate. The roof must be able to support the additional weight of the green roof system. Check local planning regulations.

Develop a long-term maintenance plan: This should include irrigation, weeding, and periodic inspections. Plan to monitor the green roof for signs of plant health, drainage issues, and structural integrity; regularly remove weeds, trim plants and schedule annual inspections by professionals.



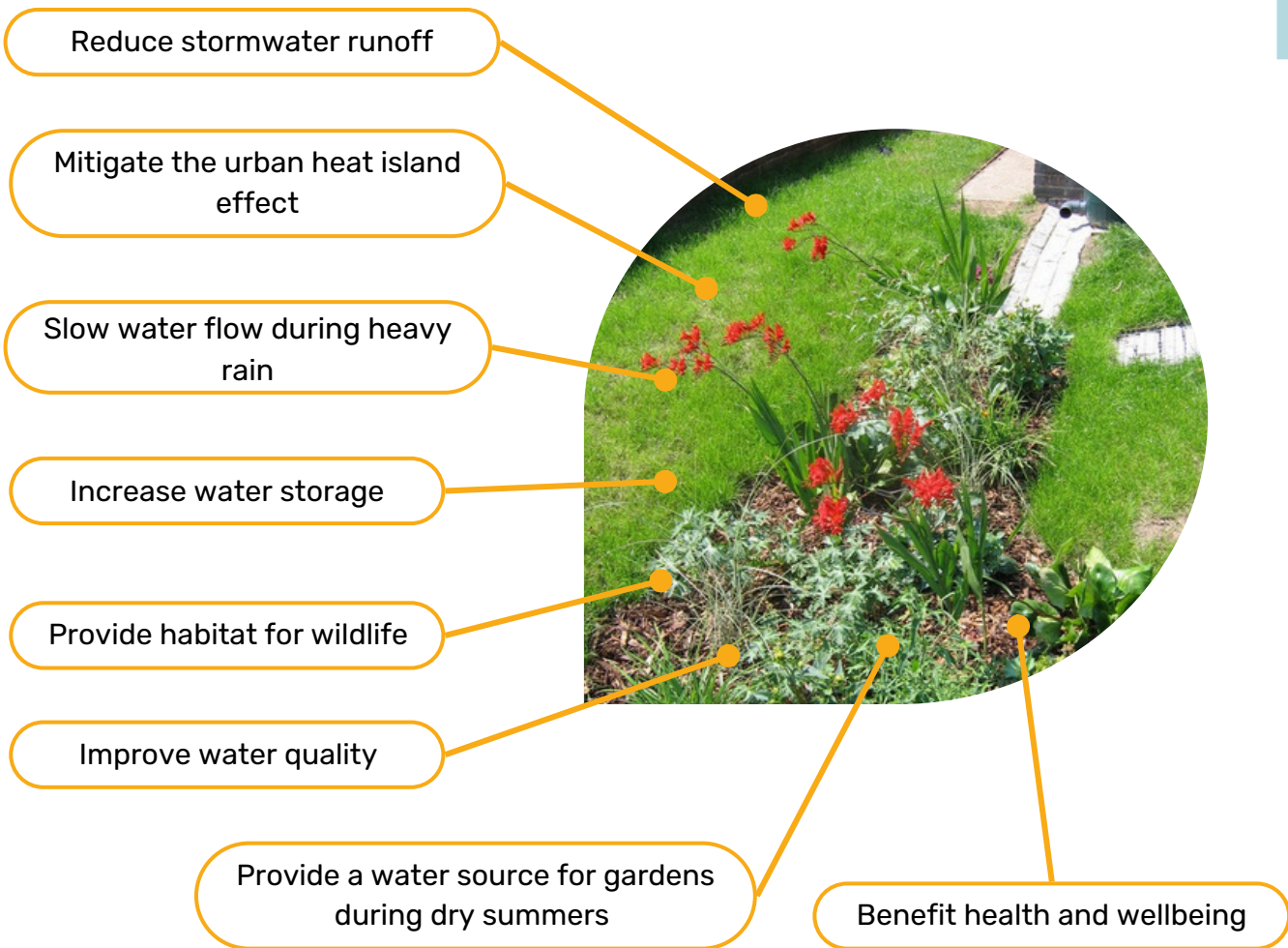
Useful links:

1. [Green roof advice | Royal Horticulture Society](#)
2. [Best plants for a green roof | Homes & Gardens](#)
3. [Biodiverse green roof information | BritishFlora](#)
4. [Creating green roofs for invertebrates | Buglife: The Invertebrate Conservation Trust](#)
5. [The green roof organisation - Guidance for designing, specifying, installing and maintaining a green roof](#)
6. [Modular green roof systems | ICB Projects](#)
7. [Green roof planning permission and insurance | The Renewable Energy Hub UK](#)

2. ADAPTING TO FLOODING



Actions to reduce flooding risks could provide the following adaptation benefits and co-benefits to the local community:



2.1 - Implement sustainable drainage and green infrastructure



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crimchard• Furham Road• Healthcare sites• St. Mary's close• Residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)• Sustainable Chard

How:

Develop a SuDS strategy: Create a comprehensive plan for implementing sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) across Chard, identifying priority areas and potential projects. Consult with local water management experts and the Environment Agency to ensure the strategy aligns with broader flood management plans.

Install rain gardens: Identify suitable public spaces for rain garden installation. Develop guidelines and planting recommendations specific to Chard's climate and soil conditions. Create demonstration rain gardens in high-visibility areas to showcase their effectiveness and aesthetic value.

Promote residential rain gardens: Develop an information pack for homeowners on creating rain gardens, including design tips, plant suggestions, and maintenance advice. Organise workshops to teach residents how to install their own rain gardens. Consider offering incentives or grants for homeowners who implement rain gardens.

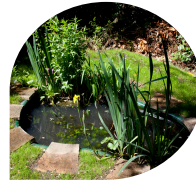
Bulk ordering of water butts: Establish a partnership with local businesses and organisations, like Wessex Water, to promote and distribute water butts. Negotiate bulk purchasing deals to reduce costs. Create an awareness campaign to educate the community on the benefits of water harvesting.

Encourage permeable paving: Develop resources promoting the use of permeable paving. Create an information pack for developers, businesses and homeowners on permeable paving options and their benefits. Consider offering incentives for retrofitting existing impermeable surfaces with permeable alternatives.

Target new builds for SuDS: Collaborate with the planning department to require SuDS integration in all new developments. Provide developers with resources and guidance on effective SuDS implementation.

Engage the community: Organise public events and exhibitions to educate residents about SuDS and their benefits. Use social media and local press to share success stories and tips for implementing SuDS at home.

Monitor and evaluate: Implement a system to track the installation and effectiveness of SuDS across Chard. Regularly assess their impact on local flood risk and water quality.



Useful links:

1. [How to install a water butt | B&Q](#)
2. [How to build a pond | The Wildlife Trusts](#)
3. [Pond creation toolkit | Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)
4. [Permeable paving | PavingExpert](#)
5. [Sustainable drainage systems | Susdrain](#)

2.2 - Promote and strengthen community flood response



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community spaces • Residential areas • Vulnerable areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Crimchard ◦ Furham Road ◦ Healthcare sites ◦ St. Mary's close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG) • Flood Wardens • Somerset Drainage Board Consortium • Somerset Council • Wessex Water • Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)

How:

Establish community flood warden scheme: Recruit and train volunteer flood wardens from the local community, focusing on succession planning for younger members. These individuals act as key contacts during flood events and help disseminate flood preparedness information.

Working with agencies: Work with the Met Office to establish or improve local flood warning systems. Ensure alerts are accessible and understood. Partner with County Highways to improve signage, road closures and warden presence during floods.

Create educational resources: Develop educational materials about flood resilience for residents and businesses, including leaflets, online resources and video guides covering property protection, emergency planning, and insurance. Organise workshops, talks, and events to educate residents.

Investigate water pathways with parish council: Work with surrounding parishes to understand water flow. Map existing water pathways, identify bottlenecks and develop interventions. Document historic flooding patterns and changes. Create a visual resource showing water movement during heavy rainfall, highlighting vulnerable areas and solutions.

Organise community workshops: Host regular sessions to educate residents and business owners about flood risks and responses. Invite experts to share knowledge and demonstrate protection techniques.

Create a flood resilience demonstration area: Set up a space showcasing various resilience measures like permeable paving, rain gardens, and property-level protection as an educational tool.

Conduct regular emergency planning exercises: Carry out flood scenario exercises with emergency services, council, and community representatives to test and improve response plans.

Set up a communication system: Establish a reliable alert method during floods, such as phone trees, text systems or volunteer checks. Ensure accessibility for those with impairments.

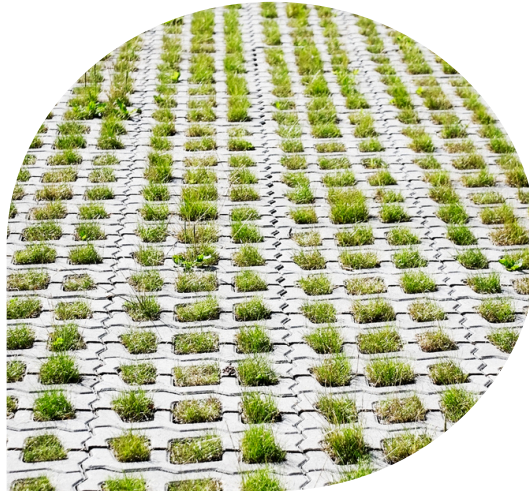
Collaborate with Somerset businesses: Identify local businesses with water management expertise. Organise a forum to discuss potential water retention strategies for the area's needs.



Useful links:

1. [Prepare against flooding | Somerset Rivers Authority](#)
2. [Prepare for flooding | GOV.UK](#)
3. [Check for flooding | GOV.UK](#)

2.3 - Create natural water storage solutions



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private residences • Farmland • Public green spaces • Land surrounding allotments • Community buildings • Schools • Great Mead • Crimchard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG) • Sustainable Chard • Somerset Drainage Board Consortium • Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) • Wessex Water • Somerset Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Somerset Local Planning Authority (LPA) ◦ Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA)

How:

Implement natural water storage at multiple scales: Work with private residences to install water butts and create small ponds in gardens. Identify and restore ghost ponds across the landscape, including old mill ponds that have historically managed water flow.

Engage with farmers about water management: Discuss with farmers the potential benefits of dedicating 10-15% of land to water management features. Though this reduces growing area, it can significantly decrease flooding risks downstream while creating valuable wildlife habitat. Provide information about available grants and support schemes to offset any potential losses.

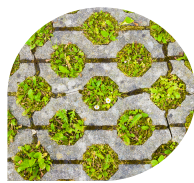
Develop a SuDS strategy: Create a comprehensive plan for implementing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) across the area, identifying priority areas and potential projects. Consult with local water management experts and the Environment Agency to ensure the strategy aligns with broader flood management plans.

Identify community land opportunities: Look for suitable spaces around allotments (without reducing growing areas) and other community land that could accommodate water storage features. Design multi-functional spaces that provide water storage during heavy rainfall while offering other community benefits during dry periods.

Install rain gardens and permeable surfaces: Identify suitable public spaces for rain garden installation. Develop guidelines and planting recommendations specific to the area's climate and soil conditions. Create demonstration rain gardens in high-visibility areas to showcase their effectiveness. Promote permeable paving options through information packs for developers, businesses, and homeowners.

Promote residential solutions: Develop information for homeowners on water storage solutions including water butts, rain gardens, and small ponds. Organise bulk purchasing schemes for water butts and run practical workshops on installation and maintenance. Consider incentives for households implementing multiple water storage features.

Monitor effectiveness and share successes: Track the impact of natural water storage solutions during rainfall events. Document successes and share these examples with the wider community to encourage more widespread adoption of similar approaches.



Useful links:

1. [How to install a water butt | B&Q](#)
2. [How to build a pond | The Wildlife Trusts](#)
3. [Pond creation toolkit | Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)
4. [Permeable paving | PavingExpert](#)
5. [Sustainable drainage systems | Susdrain](#)



2.4 - Collaborate with landowners and authorities



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local farms • Local landowners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Alpine Grove 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local farmers and landowners • Somerset Council • Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) • Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) • National Farmers Union (NFU) • Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium • Environment Agency (EA) • Somerset Drainage Board Consortium • Wessex Water • Met Office • Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)

How:

Identify flood-prone areas: Work with authorities, hydrologists, and experts to assess flood-prone areas and map sites for natural flood management. Prioritise areas upstream of communities, near rivers, or locations with frequent surface water flooding.

Build stakeholder partnerships: Create a forum for regular communication between flood management stakeholders including Highways Authority, Environment Agency, landowners, farmers and residents. Collaborate on identifying problem areas where road drainage contributes to flooding and develop joint maintenance and improvement solutions. Establish clear reporting channels and responsibilities to ensure timely responses to drainage issues.

Develop a natural flood management plan: Create a detailed plan outlining appropriate techniques for each location, such as planting floodplain woodlands, restoring wetlands, re-meandering rivers or creating leaky dams. Include timelines, budgets, and outcomes.

Develop flood plains and water storage: Survey upper catchments to identify floodplain areas and potential water storage sites. Work with landowners to implement sensitive farming practices in flood-prone areas.

Encourage property-level resilience: Provide guidance and potential financial incentives for property-level flood protection measures, such as flood barriers, non-return valves, and waterproof wall treatments.

Establish controlled flooding areas: Identify appropriate locations for controlled flooding. Consult with experts to design these areas effectively. Engage with communities to explain benefits.

Engage farmers: Connect with local farmers about watercourse management and field practices that mitigate flooding. Support accessing funding through Environmental Land Management schemes.

Establish maintenance schedules: Work with councils and volunteers to develop maintenance for natural flood defences, including removing blockages and managing vegetation.

Monitor effectiveness: Set up systems to measure the impact of measures. Use data to evaluate success and make adjustments.



Useful links:

1. [Natural flood management | West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#)
2. [Slow the flow | Shropshire Wildlife Trust Case Study](#)
3. [How nature can help prevent flooding | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

3. BUILDING LOCAL CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION



Building local climate knowledge and action in Chard could provide the following adaptation benefits and co-benefits to the local community:



3.1 - Engage with schools



Who:

- Schools
- Youth clubs
- Chard Gardening Club
- Sustainable Chard
- Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

How:

Establish an education-climate partnership group: Form a dedicated group comprising representatives from schools, the Town Council and environmental experts to oversee educational climate initiatives. Develop programmes and resources to engage young people in climate issues and solutions.

Implement climate adaptation projects in schools: Work with schools to create climate-resilient gardens or outdoor learning spaces. Support the installation of water butts, rain gardens or sustainable drainage features on school grounds.

Organise workshops on individual climate actions: Host regular sessions for community members to learn practical adaptation skills such as creating rain gardens, installing water butts and planting drought-resistant species.

Work with schools to engage young people: Develop age-appropriate activities, from growing plants to creating wildlife habitats. Provide resources and training for school staff on incorporating climate themes into education.

Create a knowledge-sharing system across community groups: Establish regular forums or digital platforms where different community organisations can exchange successful climate adaptation strategies and coordinate efforts.

Engage nurseries in climate activities: Develop simple, age-appropriate activities for young children. Provide resources and training for nursery staff on incorporating climate themes into early years education.

Organise climate action idea competitions: Launch annual competitions for students to submit innovative climate adaptation ideas for Chard, with different age categories to ensure broad participation.

Conduct baseline surveys to monitor progress: Establish metrics to track community awareness and engagement with climate adaptation. Regularly survey residents to measure changes in knowledge and behaviour over time.

Promote citizen science projects: Adapt existing climate-related citizen science initiatives for local implementation or develop Chard-specific projects that allow residents to contribute to environmental monitoring.

Develop a climate champions programme: Train student leaders to become 'Climate Champions' who can guide initiatives and educate their peers about adaptation strategies.



Useful links:

1. [Education is key to addressing climate change | United Nations](#)
2. [Organisations that can help you take action | Let's Go Zero](#)
3. [Schools climate action planner | Transform Our World](#)



3.2 - Host regular climate engagement events



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)• Sustainable Chard• Chard Community Hub• Chard Town Council

How:

Establish regular community presence: Set up weekly information stands at local markets, community centres and high-footfall areas to maintain consistent visibility and engagement. Create eye-catching displays with practical resources, local success stories and opportunities for people to get involved in ongoing climate initiatives.

Design events for diverse audiences: Develop targeted engagement approaches for different community groups, including school visits, workplace presentations and outreach to groups not traditionally involved in environmental action. Create welcoming spaces where people feel comfortable asking questions and exploring climate issues at their own pace.

Create practical action resources: Develop clear, accessible lists of home-based climate actions such as installing water butts, improving insulation and reducing energy use. Provide step-by-step guides, local supplier information and support networks to help people implement these changes successfully.

Build ambitious community projects: Organise events that inspire people to participate in larger-scale local climate initiatives. Present exciting, achievable visions for community transformation and provide clear pathways for people to contribute their skills, time or resources to making these visions reality.

Establish network of community hubs: Partner with existing venues such as community centres, cafes and cultural spaces to host regular climate-focused events. Create a culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration across different locations, making climate engagement accessible throughout the community.

Build consensus and strengthen connections: Create collaborative processes to identify shared values and priorities around climate action, documenting areas of community agreement. Design events that strengthen neighbourhood relationships and provide tools for emotional resilience, recognising that climate engagement requires strong community support networks.



Useful links:

- [1. The power of in-person events: a case study in climate change engagement | Comms2point0](#)
- [2. Five principles for good public engagement PDF | Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations](#)
- [3. Engaging people in climate action | The National Lottery](#)

3.3 - Strengthen volunteer participation



Who:

- Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)
- Sustainable Chard
- Chard Community Hub
- Chard Gardening Club
- Reimagining the Levels
- Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN)
- Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

How:

Develop accessible volunteering opportunities: Design a range of volunteering opportunities that accommodate different abilities, interests and time commitments. Create short, one-off tasks like litter picking or watering plants that can be done independently, alongside longer-term projects requiring more commitment. Ensure volunteering locations are physically accessible and provide clear instructions for all tasks.

Use local communication channels: Promote volunteering opportunities through local channels, such as newsletters, notice boards and community websites. Create an email distribution list to share regular updates about upcoming volunteering needs and successes. Consider setting up a dedicated WhatsApp group for quick communication and coordination among volunteers.

Organise community events to build interest: Host engaging events such as community pond clearing days that welcome parents and children to participate together. Schedule regular "taster sessions" where potential volunteers can try out different activities without long-term commitment. Incorporate social elements like refreshments or picnics to build community connections and make volunteering enjoyable.

Provide training and support: Offer initial training sessions for volunteers to build their confidence and skills. Create simple guides for common tasks that can be shared with new volunteers. Assign experienced volunteers as mentors for newcomers. Regularly check in with volunteers to address any challenges and gather feedback on how to improve the volunteering experience.

Create visible recognition systems: Acknowledge volunteer contributions through multiple platforms, such as certificates of appreciation, features in local newsletters or social media spotlights. Consider an annual volunteer celebration event to thank participants. Partner with local businesses to offer small rewards, like free coffee, for regular volunteers.

Build a skills database: Create a register of volunteers' existing skills and interests to match them with appropriate tasks. This helps ensure volunteers feel valued for their specific expertise while making the most of available community resources. Update this regularly as new volunteers join and others develop new skills.



Useful links:

- [1. Team Wilder | Somerset Wildlife Trust](#)
- [2. Recruiting volunteers | NCVO](#)
- [3. Keeping volunteers | NCVO](#)

3.4 - Establish community-led resilience initiatives



Who:

- Somerset Prepared
- Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)
- Chard Community Hub
- Sustainable Chard
- Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

How:

Create community vegetable gardens and food-growing spaces: Identify suitable public or privately donated land for community gardens. Establish a community group to oversee the project, create guidelines for participation and organise volunteer work sessions. Provide training on climate-resilient growing techniques and drought-tolerant crops. Consider installing water-efficient irrigation systems connected to rainwater harvesting.

Establish a community tool library for adaptation projects: Set up a system where residents can borrow rather than buy tools needed for climate adaptation projects. Secure a location to store and manage the tool inventory. Create a simple booking system and arrange volunteer staffing. Seek tool donations from residents and local businesses. Consider including specialised equipment for tasks like tree planting, pond maintenance and rainwater harvesting installation.

Develop rainwater harvesting demonstration sites: Create visible examples of different rainwater collection systems throughout the community. Work with willing homeowners, schools or community buildings to install demonstration systems. Host open days where residents can learn about installation and maintenance. Develop simple guides on how to replicate these systems at home.

Support residents in implementing home adaptation measures: Create a network of trained volunteer advisors who can help residents assess their homes for climate vulnerability. Develop information sheets on practical adaptation measures like installing water butts, creating drought-resistant gardens or improving home insulation. Consider establishing a group-buying scheme for adaptation supplies to reduce costs.

Create emergency response plans for extreme weather events: Form a community resilience team to develop local plans for flooding, heatwaves and other climate hazards. Identify vulnerable community members who may need additional assistance. Create an emergency contact system and designate community support hubs. Organise regular drills to test and improve the plans. Liaise with Somerset Prepared for guidance and resources.

Establish a local recycling scheme with returnable containers: Create a system for collecting, cleaning and redistributing reusable containers from the community. Partner with local shops and businesses to accept and provide returnable containers. Recruit volunteers to manage collection points and processing. Raise awareness about waste reduction through local communications channels



Useful links:

1. [Climate action plan for parish and town councils | Friends of the Earth](#)
2. [Tackling climate change | National Association of Local Councils \(NALC\)](#)
3. [Creating a climate action influencing strategy | UK100 Toolkit](#)
4. [Top 5 tips for successful political lobbying in the UK | Westminster Insight](#)
5. [Greener transport network to provide highways for Wildlife | GOV.UK](#)



3.5 - Create networks for sharing expertise and resources



Where:	Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Community centres ◦ Local libraries ◦ Farmers’ markets and local events • Online communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Community websites ◦ Social media platforms, e.g., Facebook groups (such as Sustainable Chard) ◦ KIND Chard - local Key Information Network Directory ◦ Email newsletters ◦ Online forums and groups ◦ Local news websites ◦ WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council website (e.g., Chard Area Resilience Group page) • Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN) • Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) • Chard Gardening Club Facebook page • Chard Community Hub • Sustainable Chard Facebook page

How:

Access expert guidance for community action: Identify experts from universities, environmental organisations, and government agencies. Invite specialists to give talks or workshops on climate adaptation topics. Maintain a database of expert contacts for different adaptation areas. Develop ongoing relationships with key advisors who can provide guidance.

Learn from neighbouring communities' successful initiatives: Arrange visits to nearby communities implementing effective adaptation projects. Organise knowledge exchange sessions where representatives can share experiences and lessons learned. Create case studies of successful local projects to share with other communities. Establish mentor relationships between communities.

Share knowledge across Somerset through a regional forum: Participate in existing county-wide networks focused on climate action. Contribute local insights and experiences to regional discussions. Use these forums to identify potential collaboration opportunities and shared resources. Maintain cross-parish coordination to present unified approaches.

Conduct historical surveys to understand past patterns and solutions: Collect oral histories from long-term residents about historical weather patterns, flooding events and traditional adaptation methods. Review historical records for insights into how previous generations managed climate challenges. Document this knowledge to inform current adaptation strategies.

Collaborate to create a communications plan: Form a working group comprising council members, community leaders and communication experts to oversee climate communication strategies. Develop consistent messaging that resonates across communities. Create templates for communications that can be adapted for different channels.

Develop a climate digital hub: Establish an online platform serving as a central resource for climate-related information. Include sections for local news, events, educational resources and links to environmental groups. Ensure the platform is accessible and regularly updated.

Establish regular communications: Develop a consistent schedule for updates through local publications, e-newsletters, and social media. Create a monthly roundup of climate action news and upcoming events. Coordinate communications to avoid overwhelming community members.



Useful links:

1. [Climate resilience demonstrator | Digital Twin Hub](#)
2. [University of Local Knowledge](#)
3. [Climate Ambassadors](#)
4. [Government functional standard | GovS 011: Communications - GOV.UK](#)



4. ENGAGING WITH LOCAL PLANNING AND POLICY



Influencing local planning and policy in Chard could provide the following adaptation benefits and co-benefits to the local community:



4.1 - Improve existing housing



Who:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chard Town Council• Somerset Council• Centre for Sustainable Energy• Local MPs• Local residents

How:

Establish a sustainable housing working group: Form a dedicated group comprising local council members, housing experts, environmental professionals and community representatives to oversee and coordinate housing improvement initiatives.

Create an online information hub: Develop a dedicated section on the Council website for housing improvement resources. Include easy-to-understand guides on different retrofitting options, their benefits and approximate costs. Provide case studies of local homes that have successfully implemented improvements, including details on energy and cost savings.

Organise regular information-sharing events: Host monthly or quarterly talks on various aspects of sustainable home improvements, inviting local and national experts to present. Arrange 'open home' events where residents who have implemented sustainable measures can showcase their improvements to neighbours. Organise practical workshops on topics such as draught-proofing, insulation installation, or setting up water conservation systems.

Develop a retrofitting programme: Create an information pack on energy efficiency and water conservation measures suitable for local housing types. Research and compile a list of local certified contractors experienced in sustainable retrofitting. Partner with local colleges or training providers to develop courses in sustainable construction and retrofitting. Encourage local tradespeople to upskill in green technologies and techniques. Investigate potential funding sources or grants available for home improvements and create a guide for residents.

Promote water conservation measures: Partner with local suppliers to offer discounted water butts to residents. Develop a guide on installing and maintaining rainwater harvesting systems, tailored to local housing types. Create an information leaflet on simple greywater reuse systems that homeowners can implement.

Develop a local green homes grant scheme: Work with the Council to establish a small grants programme for home sustainability improvements. Create a simple application process and clear criteria for eligible improvements. Showcase successful projects to encourage wider participation.

Implement a community bulk-buying scheme: Organise group-buying initiatives for common retrofitting materials or technologies to reduce costs for residents. Negotiate with suppliers for discounts on sustainable home improvement products.



Useful links:

1. [Integrating climate adaptation: a toolkit for urban planners and adaptation practitioners | C40 Knowledge Hub](#)
2. [Glasgow city region case study | Sniffer](#)
3. [A practical guide to climate-resilient buildings & communities | UN](#)
4. [Technical guidance and best practice guidance for adapting buildings to climate change | EU](#)
5. [Adapting buildings guidance | Climate Just](#)

4.2 - Lobby for sustainable development standards for new builds



Who:

- Somerset Council
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Local MPs
- Local house builders
- Developers
- Planning officers
- Somerset Local Planning Authority (LPA)

How:

Establish a sustainable development working group: Form a sustainable development working group of councillors, planning experts, environmental professionals and community representatives to drive climate-resilient developments, prioritising sustainable transport and brownfield sites.

Implement planning application review process: Establish robust evaluation of environmental impact, climate resilience and transport accessibility. Focus on flood risk mitigation through features like underground rainwater collection tanks and greywater recycling.

Update local plan environmental standards: Draft comprehensive updates incorporating mandatory requirements for renewable energy systems, enhanced insulation, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and green infrastructure. Develop clear enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance. Align with Somerset's Local Plan targets through to 2028.

Create a sustainable building guide: Develop a practical guide featuring local case studies and international best practices. Include specific guidance on implementing green and blue infrastructure like rain gardens, water harvesting systems, and green roofs.

Establish green infrastructure guidelines: Create clear requirements for green spaces, sustainable drainage systems and green/sponge roofs in new developments. Include standards for solar panel installation and wildlife-friendly design features.

Ensure community engagement: Facilitate regular consultations on planning policy changes. Establish accessible feedback channels and incorporate residents' views into development decisions, ensuring that projects reflect the community's aspirations.

Create a business climate charter: Launch a voluntary programme encouraging local businesses to commit to sustainable practices, particularly supporting sustainable transport options.

Monitor and evaluate progress: Track climate-resilient features in new developments through regular assessments. Conduct annual reviews of planning policy effectiveness and adjust requirements based on outcomes.



Useful links:

1. [How to respond to planning applications: an 8-step guide | Campaign to Protect Rural England](#)
2. [Influencing the planning process \(England\) | Commons Library](#)
3. [Information requirements for planning applications | Somerset Council](#)
4. [A practical guide to climate-resilient buildings & communities | UN](#)

4.3 - Partner with farmers to explore land management practices



Who:

- Somerset Council
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory group (FWAG)
- DEFRA
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Local MP
- Local farmers

How:

Lobby government to change agricultural policies that contribute to flooding: Identify specific policies that encourage practices like intensive cultivation on steep slopes or removal of natural vegetation. Collect evidence of how these policies impact local flooding risks. Prepare concise briefing documents highlighting problems and potential solutions. Engage with local MPs, councillors, and relevant government departments through meetings, letters, and consultation responses.

Advocate for incentives supporting climate-friendly farming: Research successful environmental payment schemes from other regions. Work with local farmers to understand what incentives would best support their transition to climate-friendly practices. Present proposals to policymakers that outline specific incentive mechanisms and their potential benefits.

Campaign for stronger protection of natural flood management assets: Map existing natural flood management features like woodlands, wetlands, and river meanders. Document their condition and any threats they face. Develop targeted campaigns focused on protecting specific at-risk assets. Build public understanding of how these natural features help reduce flood risks to communities.

Form alliances with other communities facing similar challenges: Identify other parishes and towns experiencing comparable land management issues. Establish regular communication channels to share experiences and coordinate advocacy efforts. Present a unified voice when engaging with higher-level authorities. Pool resources to commission research or expert reports that support policy recommendations.

Engage with farming organisations on climate adaptation: Build relationships with local farming groups and representatives. Organise joint events that bring together farmers and community members to discuss shared climate challenges. Focus on finding common ground and mutual benefits rather than creating adversarial relationships. Explore opportunities for community support of climate-friendly farming initiatives.

Push for long-term policies that support land restoration: Develop proposals for policy frameworks that encourage longer-term approaches to land management. Advocate for planning that spans multiple decades to allow meaningful ecological restoration. Campaign for secure funding mechanisms that give landowners confidence to undertake long-term projects. Highlight the multiple benefits of restoration for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and community resilience.



Useful links:

1. [Natural flood management programme | GOV.UK](#)
2. [Guiding principles for drainage and wastewater management plans | GOV.UK](#)
3. [Nature-based solutions for the water sector | Sweco UK](#)
4. [Building partnerships for nature's recovery | GOV.UK](#)

4.4 - Create funding mechanisms



Who:

- Chard Town Council
- Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)
- Somerset Council
- National Lottery grants
- Government grants
- Somerset Association of Local Councils

How:

Identify local funds to finance drainage and adaptation work: Review existing budgets to identify potential allocation for climate adaptation projects. Consider establishing a dedicated budget line for adaptation work in annual financial planning.

Explore grant funding from environmental organisations: Research grant programmes from organisations like Somerset Wildlife Trust, the National Lottery Climate Action Fund and environmental charities. Create a calendar of application deadlines to ensure timely submissions. Develop a portfolio of shovel-ready projects that can be quickly submitted when funding opportunities arise. Build relationships with grant managers to better understand their priorities.

Consider employing someone to coordinate adaptation projects: Investigate funding models for a paid coordinator role, such as time-limited project funding. Create a clear job description outlining responsibilities and expected outcomes. Calculate the potential return on investment in terms of grants secured and projects delivered. Consider starting with a part-time position that could expand with successful fundraising.

Organise community fundraising events for specific initiatives: Plan targeted fundraising activities with clear goals connected to visible local projects. Develop a calendar of events that engage different segments of the community. Create opportunities for local businesses to sponsor specific adaptation initiatives. Ensure transparency in how funds raised are allocated and spent.

Investigate funding through Somerset Rivers Authority: Connect with SRA representatives to understand their funding criteria and application processes. Identify potential projects that align with SRA priorities for flood risk reduction. Consider how to demonstrate community support and match-funding to strengthen applications.

Create a council climate adaptation fund: Establish a dedicated fund where residents and businesses can contribute directly to local adaptation efforts. Develop clear governance arrangements to ensure transparent management of donations. Consider offering different levels of giving with appropriate recognition. Create regular updates showing how contributions are making a difference to local climate resilience.



Useful links:

1. [Health and wellbeing funding | Somerset Association of Local Councils \(SALC\)](#)
2. [Grants & funding | Somerset Community Foundation](#)
3. [Grant programme | Sustainable Future Foundation](#)

CONCLUSION

This plan shares the priority actions for helping Chard thrive through our changing climate.

Some can happen quickly, like planting trees, to give an instant adaptation boost. Other actions, such as shaping planning policies, are longer-term projects that will significantly enhance Chard's adaptation and preparedness.

Every action in this plan will also bring many other benefits to Chard. These "co-benefits" include:

- Improving community health and wellbeing
- Making space for wildlife
- Mitigating climate change

By working on these actions together, you can also strengthen community links, which is vital for making the parishes well-adapted and resilient.



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Chard's Climate Adaptation Plan should be seen as a living document, at the starting point of a wider process. The plan should:

- Be reviewed regularly
- Be updated as needed
- Reflect the changing climate and the changing priorities and needs of Chard's community

By staying flexible, and continuing to listen to Chard's residents, the plan can best guide the community in adapting to climate change.

Now it is time to act!

Everyone can play a role in making Chard better adapted.

To find out more about how you can get involved in implementing this plan, contact: cultivate@takeart.org



Acknowledgements

A big thank you to Mark Helyar and Ingrid Edginton for all your help in this process and to everyone who shared their ideas to create such a positive and ambitious Climate Adaptation Plan for Chard.

If you are concerned about your individual preparedness to emergency events, check out [Somerset Prepared](#) for detailed advice and support.

For adaptation funding explore the SRA's [Community Flood Action Fund](#).



Published March 2026, Review Date March 2027



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This work is generously funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority.



Disclaimer

The links provided in this document are intended to serve as information and advice, and do not reflect a recommendation from Somerset Wildlife Trust, or our partners and funders, for particular companies, products or services.

Consultation responses to green spaces



Although residents recognise that Chard already has a range of green spaces, there is strong support for expanding and enhancing these areas through community-led initiatives. Responses highlighted the importance of creating more community gardens, food-growing spaces, and sites for outdoor activities, with a focus on educating younger generations about nature and sustainability. Planting more trees and wildflowers, supporting climate-resilient planting, and encouraging local food production were commonly suggested.

There were also concerns around the long-term management, accessibility, and inclusivity of green spaces. Residents stressed the need for proper maintenance and community ownership to ensure spaces remain clean and welcoming. Suggestions included appointing local guardians and making spaces accessible for all users, including children and dog walkers. Concerns were raised about ongoing housing development reducing green space, with calls for stronger planning requirements, including tree planting and biodiversity measures.



Consultation responses to flooding risks



Residents expressed that any future housing developments are designed with sustainable drainage systems that protect existing water pathways. Improving drainage infrastructure was a key theme, with suggestions including permeable surfaces, better water management, and the creation of ponds, reservoirs, and natural storage areas. Tree planting and reducing hard surfaces were also seen as important measures to absorb water and slow runoff.

Concerns were also raised about the maintenance of existing infrastructure and the need for stronger long-term management. Blocked drains, silted systems, and poor road drainage were commonly cited as immediate causes of flooding, with residents calling for more regular clearing and upkeep. There was support for practical household-level actions such as water butts and wildlife-friendly gardens, alongside wider collaboration with landowners and community groups.



Consultation responses to climate action

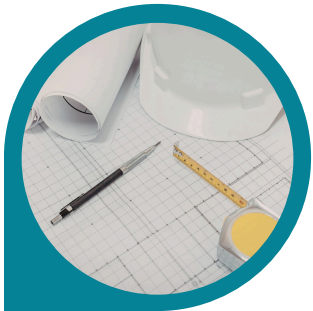


Residents strongly emphasised the importance of education and awareness in building climate knowledge, with schools identified as a key entry point. Many responses highlighted engaging children and young people through assemblies, clubs, forest school activities, and hands-on projects, helping to build early understanding and long-term behavioural change. There was also support for linking schools with community initiatives, such as gardens and local events, to reinforce learning.

Alongside education, there was a clear call for wider community engagement and improved promotion of opportunities to get involved. Residents suggested more visible, high-profile events, workshops, and activities in spaces such as libraries and community hubs, as well as collaboration with local groups, youth organisations, and businesses. Some noted that while people want to support climate action, they are unsure how to engage, highlighting the need for clear pathways and practical guidance.



Consultation responses to local planning & policy



Residents highlighted the need for more transparent, accessible local planning and policy processes, with clearer communication about how to engage and influence decisions. Many felt unsure how to contribute, calling for better publicity, information events, and accessible support to help residents navigate planning systems. There was strong support for greater collaboration between local agencies, communities, and stakeholders, ensuring that local knowledge informs decision-making.

There were consistent concerns about the impact of new housing developments, particularly where infrastructure, services, and environmental considerations are not adequately addressed. Residents called for more sustainable planning, including eco-friendly housing, renewable energy such as solar panels, and improved drainage and flood prevention measures. The need to prioritise upgrading existing housing over new builds was also raised, alongside reusing brownfield sites.

