



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

Act to Adapt

Funded by
Somerset
Rivers Authority

The Poldens Case Study

Case Study: 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 Community Climate Adaptation Plan, the Poldens 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 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 **Community Climate Adaptation Plan**, where we found that locals were keen to get involved with the entire Act to Adapt process!



Talk



Shape



Act

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 Community Climate Adaptation Plan.

To enhance the collective input of ideas into the Poldens Climate Adaptation Plan, a consultation was carried out.

SWT attended the **Puriton Flower Show** to promote the plan to locals. An online survey was also produced to increase the accessibility of feedback.

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 local **MP, Tessa Munt**.

The plan was then handed to the community so that they could begin to implement the outlined adaptation actions.

Priority actions

Each community has identified four unique adaptation priorities that best suit their needs. For the Poldens, these four priority actions are:

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

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

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

Update: April 2026

Since the launch of the Poldens Climate Adaptation Plan, the £1,000.00 seed funding has supported the development of **community orchards** across multiple villages, including Cossington, Shapwick, Bawdrip, and Woolavington. Cossington also had a wassailing celebration at their orchard, bringing people together and encouraging education around nature and food growing - "the energy that it's creating in the village is electric", said Pam from the Polden Environmental Network.

The community continues to build momentum from Act to Adapt, developing relationships with multiple parish councils. One councillor decided to independently hold a meeting on flooding to address the wide issue! **The Poldens News** website has also provided a valuable platform for communication and awareness, with a dedicated page supporting ongoing engagement.

The Poldens are a part of **10 Somerset communities** that are in the process of completing or implementing their Community Climate Adaptation Plan! Our aim is to facilitate Community Climate Adaptation Plans for every community in Somerset.

This case study is intended to raise awareness of climate adaptation and community actions to adapt. If you would like to find out more, please contact the Climate Adaptation team (details below).

Impacts

The Poldens Climate Adaptation Plan has helped to strengthen collaboration between multiple villages, parish councils and local groups, with elected members playing an instrumental role in progressing actions.

The initial £1,000 seed funding has supported priority actions across the area, particularly the development of community orchards, which has created strong local momentum.

The community continues to build its capacity and awareness to deliver climate adaptation, with a growing focus on grassroots action such as wildlife corridors and improved communication via Poldens News.

Useful links

[Act to Adapt - Poldens](#)

[Act to Adapt Project](#)

[Polden Environmental Network](#)

[Act to Adapt - eNewsletter Sign Up](#)

[Climate Adaptation Toolkit](#)

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

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