Flood Monitoring – New Monitoring Station in West Camel

The SRA (Somerset Rivers Authority), working with the EA (Environment Agency) are sponsoring the installation of 8 new radar monitors along the river Cam. These devices are powered by a solar panel and have mobile phone connectivity into 'the cloud'. Six devices are upstream of West Camel and the eighth will be installed at Bridgehampton. The one in West Camel is due to be installed in September on the wall opposite the Walnut Tree about 10m upstream of 'Havengarth'.

All eight devices will be accessible via a phone App (currently in development) and the local one will alarm at pre-set levels, hopefully directly to Flood Wardens and residents' mobile phones.

In addition, WCPC are offering residents 'Height above sea level' (HASL) measurement at their threshold to compare with a similar measurement at the new gauge. This should allow individual residents to enact their personal Flood Plans.

This is an optional 'Extra' and surveys by our Flood Wardens / Councillors over the next few weeks will gather who wishes to take this service and / or will need support erecting flood barriers etc.

West Camel PC - Flood Mitigation Proposals

Flood Mitigation Proposals were outlined at the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) last Friday 31st May. The initial phase will concentrate on the banks of the R. Cam downstream of Frog Lane. The PC is working with the four main Riparian Land Owners (RLOs) to turn the current REACTIVE (following reports to the EA) removal of fallen trees / branches that cause potential flood risks into a PROACTIVE exercise.

Working with the EA dead trees, overgrown branches, self-seeded 'scrub' and briar growth will be selectively removed. Most RLOs will be able to claim grants under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) which will help greatly with the cost of this extensive programme.

The PC have called upon the support of the CBF (Community Benefit Fund) to assist towards the cost of these works and up to £10k has been pledged. The RLOs will also contribute towards the overall costs by disposing of pollarded branches, dead trees, scrub and briar removed in addition to obtaining CSS grants where possible.

These works will mitigate the flood risk to around 27% of our community, some of whom have only just returned to their homes (others have yet to do so) after the horrendous floods of 9th May 2023. The remaining 63% who live on higher ground will hopefully see this as a Community Centric use of CBF monies.

The works will be limited to that which the EA expects RLOs to carry out as part of their Riparian Ownership responsibilities. No changes to river course or bank grading beyond restoring collapsed sections can be undertaken without extensive licence from the EA.

It is envisaged that these PROACTIVE works may take more than one season to complete given the restriction of working outside the nesting period and when the ground becomes too wet to support mechanised activities.

The cost benefit of the initial phase and funding options will be assessed before any commitment is made to a second phase in autumn 2025.

There is nothing to stop other RLOs from carrying out their own works where these are within their scope physically and financially. Anyone requiring help should contact the Clerk clerk@westcamel.org.uk.

Local 'Lengthsman' Scheme

As part of 'Flood Mitigation' West Camel needs to ensure that the complex system of surface water gullies, drains, pipes, manholes and ditches are all in adequate working order.
You will have heard or read about the serious financial difficulties Somerset Council (SC) has encountered and their plans to 'devolve' service delivery and asset ownership to Town and Parish Councils.
SC are offering a 'Highway Steward' scheme, a singleton in an equipped vehicle at an annual cost of £50,000 per year. This cost can be share by a number of Parish Councils.
WCPC are proposing using a local contractor (Jeff Stamp) to carry out a programme of proactive maintenance working as a singleton or with volunteers, to investigate the surface water system and where possible rectify or compile a schedule of works requiring full SC contractor services.

Such works will doubtlessly be prioritised by SC Highways and their response will need to be monitored. As an alternative, where a Community wishes to prioritise its own works, SC are giving Town and Parish Councils access to 'call-off' works from their 'Term Contractor' Kier – paid for by the commissioning TC or PC.

To fund this trial, WCPC have asked the CBF for a grant of up to £5K which has been recommended and authorised.

If successful, budgetary provision will need to be made to fund future maintenance which will inevitably result in a significant increase in the Parish Precept.

During the last 8/9 years of regular CBF payments from the owners of Southfield Solar Park, WCPC have been able to 'share the benefit' across the whole community by not increasing the Parish Precept in most years. Sadly, these payments end in 2025 and 'reality' will inevitably drive some increase in Council tax.

'Bob the Wall'

In an impressive display of Community Spirit, Bob's Wall has risen from its tumbled down state and is nearing completion – which is more than can be said for the once adjoining bridge parapet!

Various people have helped Bob and Jo repair the wall which collapsed following an alleged altercation with a home shopping delivery van and finished off by the 9th May flood last year! Richard Nelson has quickly bult up the new wall from foundations laid by a volunteer working party assisting Bob and Jo.

A shining example of a village community all pulling together to make a triumph out of a disaster!

Well done Richard for his skilled work supported by his labourers Bob and Jo!

Somerset Council S19 Flooding Report Meeting

The team compiling the long awaited S19 report will be visiting West Camel on Wednesday 24th July to gather further information and hear from local residents.
A Public Meeting will be held in the evening starting at 18:30 in the Main Hall of The Davis Hall – please put an entry in your diary and come along to take part.

Weather Records from Mead Farm

MARCH 2024
Maximum temperature: 17.4 C (63 F) on the 17th.
Minimum temperatures: -2.5 C (27 F) on the 3rd and 4th.
Grass level minimum: -3.6 C (26 F) on the 3rd.
Total rainfall: 95.1 mm (3.74 ins)

APRIL 2024
Maximum temperatures: 19.3 C (67 F) on the 12th and 13th.
Minimum temperatures: 0 C (32 F) on the 20th and 21st
Grass level minimum: –4 C (25 F) on the 20th.
Total rainfall: 54.9 mm (2.16 ins)

Regular Events, Clubs & Societies

West Camel Book Group

We pooled our thoughts on the next books to read and these are our suggestions:

Wednesday 12th June	The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O'Farrell
Wednesday 17th July	Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte and / or The Eyre Affair by Jasper Fforde
Wednesday 14th August	Philip: The Final Portrait by Gyles Brandreth
Wednesday 11th September	Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

As ever, anyone is welcome to join us. A telephone call will confirm where we are meeting as The Walnut Tree has not always been open over the last few months. **07967991519**
Happy Reading. Melanie Smallwood

Film Night at The Davis Hall

Friday 21st June - ***The Holdovers***
Friday 26th July - ***The Lesson***
Friday 23rd August - ***Wicked Little Letters***

Trailers can be watched on the Davis Hall website - www.davishall.co.uk - click on the icon for the film you are interested in.
All films - doors open 7 p.m. for 7.30 start;
Tickets on the door - £5 (£3.50 16 and under).
Comfortable new chairs and a warm hall.
Licenced Bar and tea/coffee available.

Davis Hall, West Camel Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for The Davis Hall, Charity number 1070729, will be held on Monday, 24 June 2024, 7.00pm at the Davis Hall, West Camel. All are welcome so please come and support your local amenity and meet the team that help to keep it going. It will also be an opportunity to find out about the regular activities that take place and ask any questions you may have. The hall is there for the benefit of the whole community. Tea and coffee will be available.

WEST CAMEL CHURCHES TOGETHER

The Davis Hall - Friday 19th July. 7.30pm.

An illustrated presentation of West Camel history
by Geoff Chapman
Admission £5 (children free)
Bar: tea, coffee and cakes for donations.
All proceeds for All Saints Church

West Camel Churches Together
The first Sunday of every month
at All Saints Church
4pm. "Sunday @ Four"
An informal united service, with a quiz, favourite hymns, a reading and short reflection.
Followed by a delicious tea.
All warmly welcome.

Sunday 21st July 10am

All ages welcome!
Followed by light refreshments

Local Church contacts: Jenny Clothier 01935 850281, Geoff and Elizabeth Chapman 01935 850838.
Email: Geoff.mead@yahoo.com www.facebook.com/westcamelchurches
Website: www.westcamelchurches.org.uk

West Camel Parish Council

Council next meet on Thursday, 4th July at 19:30 in the Main Hall (due to Polling) at The Davis Hall. As usual, details and an agenda will be posted on the notice boards 3 clear days before the meeting.

WEST CAMEL GARDENERS CLUB

Saturday 8th June at the West Camel bus stop 10am to 4pm - **Annual Plant Sale**
Wednesday 19th June – 14:30 Visit to Corton Denham House

The Churchyard Mowing Team Needs Your Help!

The West Camel churchyard mowing team would very much appreciate some new volunteers. Any additional help would be most welcome. If mowing or strimming don't appeal, occasional general tidying of the area (removal of dead flowers, weeding etc) would also be helpful.

If you think you can help in any way please contact Jane by email: pgsubs@aol.com or by phone 07960035551. Thank you.

Your West Camel Events Diary

Mon pm	Short Mat Bowls @ The Davis Hall **Summer reses**
Tue pm	Art & Craft Group @ The Davis Hall
Tue pm	17:00 - Pilates
Wed pm	Model Railway Group
Thu am	Coffee Morning & Post Office 9:15.
Thu Eve	Scottish Dancing
Sat am	Model Railway Group
8th June	Gardeners Club – Annual Plant Sale
12th June	Book Club
19th June	Gardeners Club visit to Corton Denham House 14:30
21st June	Film Night – *The Holdovers*
24th June	Davis Hall AGM 7:00pm
17th July	Book Club
19th July	Memory Lane – West Camel History with Geoff Chapman
24th July	Flooding Report Meeting 18:30 in The Davis Hall
26th July	Film Night – *The Lesson*
1st Aug	Welcome and Licensing of Revd Caroline Walker @ QC
14th Aug	Book Club
23rd Aug	Film Night – *Wicked Little Letters*
11th Sep	Book Club

Event notifications by email: Register at westcamel.org.uk/communications

Next edition of 'The Chronicle' is scheduled to hit the 'news-stands' in early August 2024. If you have any news item or event you wish to publicise, please provide your draft to 'the editor' by 24th July - OTC.

COFFEE MORNING

At the Davis Hall from 9:15 every Thursday morning. Tea and cake, bakery and post office, collect your meds delivered from the Health Centre.
Pop in for a cosy chat and catch up on what's happening locally.

Now with Barista style choice of coffees and freshly made bacon (and egg) sandwiches!