

Minutes of Neroche APM 9th March 2023 at Neroche Hall 7.15 for 7.30pm

Chairman's Report was given by **Mark Palmer**

This was a well attended meeting with over 40 parishioners present.

James Grischeff from Natural England was the main speaker.

“What we can do for nature and what it can do for us.”

James spoke about the steps needed to help nature recover from its current poor state. To make the environment more resilient it needs:

- Corridors to connect habitats for animals and invertebrates.
- Soils needs to be healthy.
- Water needs to be clean.
- Wildness is more important than neatness.
- As we experience increased and intense rainfall we need more rough ground, and grassy areas with trees that will stem the flood water.
- To achieve net zero we need to protect and enhance areas that store carbon.
- Long term ecological improvement needs larger habitats that are joined up and have more species.
- The environment needs good soil and clean water.
- It needs people who care about their environment.
- Economically these changes will pay for themselves.

What can we all do about climate change? Everyone can play a role at local level; have rougher gardens that are untidy, encourage worms by not using bug killers and insecticides as they will help the soil to breathe. Have surface water around even if it is as small as a bucket. Plant nectar rich flowers and shrubs. Use chemical free detergents to reduce phosphate levels. Embrace the scruffy and connect up the various parts of your garden.

County Councillor Ross Henley spoke about the new Somerset Unitary Authority that is due to commence from April. The old district councils including West Somerset and Taunton Deane will no longer exist. Ross spoke about his work on behalf of parishioners especially relating to the seemingly intractable planning problem at Bakers Field in Curland and also the nearby field that has caravans on it. He acknowledged how frustrating it is not to be able to get answers from the planning department.

Councillor Jane Hole spoke about the Neroche Community Review that is underway. The review is supported by the parish council and was led by a steering group comprising of four parish councillors and four local residents. A preliminary survey was conducted early in the year that showed the top concerns for parishioners are the environment, road speed and traffic, Rights of Way and community life. The subsequent online survey was based on these findings. The online survey runs from 3rd to 24th March. Parishioners were encouraged to

complete the survey. A paper copy was available for those who needed. The Neroche Community Review report and action plan should be available in July following its adoption by the Parish Council.

Open Session for parishioners. The following topics were raised; Road safety issues relating to the speed of vehicles, frequency of heavy tipping lorries delivering their loads, the frustration felt by parishioners relating to the two planning issues in Curland, problems with blocked rights of way.

The need for speed reduction in other areas of the parish, not just the proposed village gateway project in Staple Fitzpaine, were raised. It particularly relates to areas such as Staple Hill where residents have to crisscross the main road from their property to tend to animals, to get to their business and to walk their dogs. In reply to a question on the tipper lorries it is hoped the project will be finished by the end of the summer.

It was recognised by the County Councillor that enforcement for both planning issues and blocked rights of way needs to be implemented. Communication from the planning and ROW departments likewise needs to be improved.

Many parishioners enjoyed a glass of wine whilst mingling and looking at the various local projects on display.