# Aaron Taylor-Johnson secures planning approval for lake at Somerset farmhouse



Aaron Taylor-Johnson, the acclaimed British actor, has successfully navigated a contentious planning situation involving the excavation of a lake at his 16th-century Somerset farmhouse. The retrospective planning permission granted by the local council comes after protests from some neighbours who initially feared that the water feature would be used for recreational swimming rather than for ecological benefits.

The actor, alongside his wife, Sam Taylor-Johnson, who is also a prominent film director known for her work on "Fifty Shades of Grey," procured the historic property, formerly owned by Grand Designs presenter Kevin McCloud, for £1.85 million in 2010. Their efforts have since been acknowledged positively by local residents, with several expressing joy over the unexpected ecological advantages of the project.

A recent council inspection, undertaken last week, concluded that the pond could remain in operation without raising any issues. Among the positive outcomes noted by neighbours is an increase in biodiversity in the area. Resident Amy Fukuyama remarked, "I live to the west of the fields belonging to Great House Farm and am overjoyed at the prospect of the increase to biodiversity in our area." Fukuyama noted significant bird activity, mentioning the presence of flocks of geese and the distinct calls of a Tawny Owl, which had not been heard in the vicinity before.

Another neighbour, Darren Tune, commented on the previous state of the fields, indicating that their transformation from a monoculture to a habitat that supports wildlife is a much more valuable use of the land. "My home looks over the field and my land buts on to the field, I can see the pond and I consider the construction noise was not intrusive," he said.

The project, characterised by the local authorities as a "flood alleviation scheme," was designed to mitigate recurrent flooding issues that had impacted the Grade II-listed farmhouse and the surrounding roads. Planning official Jane Thomas endorsed the proposal, indicating that it would create new wetland features aimed at controlling the flow of water on the estate, thus alleviating flooding risks that have plagued the property for years.

Evidence presented to support the application highlighted that the farmhouse has faced flooding annually since 2011, underscoring the necessity of the water features for both flood management and wildlife enhancement. A Sustainable Drainage Systems inspection conducted last month reported that the flood prevention scheme has functioned effectively during periods of heavy rainfall and that maintenance of the site remains satisfactory.

Further to the lake's approval, the local council has also permitted additional infrastructural enhancements at the estate, including the installation of new pedestrian and vehicle gates, a surfaced bellmouth, a cattle grid, and associated landscaping work. These improvements are seen as facilitating both agricultural management of the estate and ongoing maintenance of the flood alleviation infrastructure.

As the couple continue to adapt their Somerset property, they have won over local support for their efforts to increase local biodiversity and mitigate flooding, with several neighbours expressing hope for the long-term ecological benefits of the lake and surrounding enhancements.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://somerset.moderngov.co.uk/> - Provides access to planning databases and resources for Somerset, which could include information on local planning permissions and decisions.
* <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s32899/Report+-+Planning+Application+17210007.pdf> - Illustrates the process of planning application and decision-making in Somerset, though not directly related to Aaron Taylor-Johnson's project.
* <https://www.somersetcountynj.gov/business/land-development> - Although this relates to land development regulations in Somerset County, New Jersey, it shows how local planning decisions are governed, which could be analogous to the scenario in Somerset, UK.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-and-water-management> - Offers guidance on flood management and water management systems in the UK, which could relate to the flood alleviation aspect of the project.
* <https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/> - Provides information on biodiversity conservation efforts, relevant to the ecological benefits of the lake project.