

**Minutes of the Axe Brue Full Board Meeting Held at Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge**  
**03 November 2015 at 10:30hrs**      **Chairman: Mr Jeff Fear**

The Chairman welcomed Edwin Badman, Phoebe Judah and Ross Whitcombe to the meeting.

- 1 **Attendance and Apologies:** as per register appended
- 2 **Items additional to the agenda: M S Wall:** Comple Rhyne, Lympsham.
- 3 **Declarations of interest:** Cllr A Gilling – all matters relating to planning.  
Mr J Lukins and Cllr L Scott – solar farm application, Townsend Farm, Axbridge.  
Mr Chidgey – proposed works at Woolavington.
- 4 **Opportunity for the public to address the meeting:** No members of the public present.
- 5 **Minutes of the Full Board meeting held on 09 June 2015:** (appended) having been previously circulated the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.
- 6 **Matters Arising: Item 6 Bleadon Sluice** I Sturdy (IDS) advised that works are due to be commenced during the summer of 2016 (ref. Bristol Water Works).  
**Item 12** Members concurred that the wording of this item was confusing; it was agreed to make the following amendment: "in place of" to be amended to show "to deputise for".  
**Item 18** Coastal Catchment meeting scheduled for September 2015 was cancelled.
- 7 **Draft Catchment Minutes:** (appended) draft minutes of previous meetings are for information only. It was agreed that Mr M Smith and Mr R Frost should be invited to attend meetings of the Axe Catchment as well as the Brue Catchment as the parish of Wookey lies betwixt the Axe and Brue catchments.
- 8 **Draft Finance & Governance Minutes:** (appended) draft minutes of the previous Finance & Governance meeting are for information only.
- 9 **Board membership – Co-option of Members:** The Assistant Clerk, C-A Porter (C-AP) advised that meetings had been held with recommended landowners, to which Mr E Badman, representing Mr M Tibbs of Highbridge, Mrs P Judah of Glastonbury and Mr Whitcombe of Meare have expressed an interest in becoming members of the Board.  
**Proposed M Watts, Seconded A Chidgey "that Edwin Badman representing Morley Tibbs is co-opted for Highbridge Phoebe Judah is co-opted for Glastonbury and Ross Whitcombe is co-opted for Meare for the remainder of the current Axe Brue member term." Unanimous RESOLUTION 1**
- 10 **Finance Report:** (appended) S Gee (SMG) briefed members on the report. Members accepted the report as submitted with the following points of note:
  - £167k completed works, of which £100k had been raised in previous years
  - £200k of works to be completed by year end
  - SRA – all works to be 100% re-charged
  - SRA - £40k staff backfill previously agreed
  - SRA – Heads of Agreement and letter of intent has been received from Somerset County Council (SCC), which may provide a model for future agreements
  - Concern was expressed by members for SRA accounting practices
  - SRA works need to continue to ensure they are completed within a sensible time scale
  - Balance Sheet: outstanding rates £11,500 of which £4,200 are accounts with land/owner queries.
  - Approximately 40 rate payers are to be summonsed for Liability Order hearing on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015**Somerset Drainage Board Consortium Budget 2016/17:** SMG advised that there is a reduction in costs to the Boards, despite significant pressures, including additional staff resource to be re-charged to the SRA, and increased costs to the pension scheme and National Insurance. Members were advised that Professional Fees include consultants for items such as planning, audit, area operational management and accountancy.  
The report was accepted by members.
- 11 **Engineering Report: a) Maintenance and Improvements:** MSW advised that maintenance is up to date.
  - 1) **South Drain:** members were advised that the South Drain is currently at 1.50 AOD, the Environment Agency (EA) has no immediate plans to return this to 1.58AOD, however it may be held at 1.50 AOD until Winter Penn is due at 1<sup>st</sup> December. The general consensus of members was to hold the South Drain at 1.50 AOD, or consider a staged reduction to Winter Penn.

Action

RES 1

- Members were advised that raised water level areas will be raised to 2.1 AOD prior to Winter Penn.
- 2) Northwick Road:** Members are satisfied with works undertaken in this area.
- 3) Badger Setts:** Members were advised that the cost of additional staff resources will be borne by the Board. Operations will be carried out in agreement with Natural England.
- 4) Maintenance works:** A Dowden (AJD) advised that new contractors D Rowsell and M Stott required verbal warnings during the undertaking of contracts. Future works will be monitored.
- 5) Pesticide Licence:** Members were advised that MSW has recently undertaken training and received a lifetime licence to spray pesticides on structures on watercourses (qualification PA6/W).
- 6) Brent Broad Track:** NWS advised that a complaint of nuisance has been received from local residents regarding spoil deposit.
- The Land Drainage Act 1991 states that spoil may be placed by one operation to the top of the bank but must not cause a 'nuisance'
  - Public view of 'nuisance' is changing
  - It was agreed after discussion that this matter should be reviewed and reported at a future meeting
  - Spoil: if only vegetative material, re-growth will occur in approx. 6 months
  - Public perception of 'nuisance' appears to be a surface water issue rather than pollution
  - Brent Broad watercourse is a concrete channel with weed growth on banks, therefore the spoil will mainly be silt
  - Development on neighbouring bank has encroached on the maintenance strip
  - The weed cleaning contractor has been requested to place arisings on opposite bank, where necessary
  - A spoil/arisings policy should be considered
- 7) Warren Farm proposed fencing:** members discussed this application at length with the following points of note:
- Although the application deviates from Board policy, it was considered acceptable as a result of safety concerns for this amenity land as long as a 6 metre maintenance strip is provided, with fencing to be erected at an agreed distance from the watercourse and appropriate consents are conditioned with regard to deposit of spoil and Board operations..
- Proposed N Lukins, Seconded C Ainge 'that the Axe Brue IDB in this one instance approves fencing to be erected 1.5 metres from the watercourse subject to spoil disposal as and when necessary with provision of a permanent 6 metre maintenance strip and for conditions as deemed necessary by the Board.'** **Vote: 15 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions. Motion carried by majority verdict. RESOLUTION 2**
- 8) Reeds and Chilpitts Rhyne, Woolavington:** A Chidgey declared an interest. Members were advised that this matter had been discussed at length at the Brue Catchment meeting; a recommendation had been made to increase the length of this in-view watercourse following riparian works to upgrade a stretch of the watercourse.
- Proposed R Adlam, Seconded N Lukins 'that the Axe Brue IDB approve riparian works to upgrade a section of Reeds and Chilpitts Rhyne and then to take this section into view.'** **Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 3**
- 9) Laburnham Rhyne, Cheddar:** AJD advised that the Chairman of Cheddar Football Club has refused access to the Board for maintenance purposes. Watercourses within the district have been improved and upgraded recently. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed again at the next scheduled Axe Catchment meeting.
- 10) Wick Lane:** MSW advised that requests have been made to the riparian owner for works to be undertaken, but to no avail. The SRA has however approved funding for culvert works at this location works; scheme details to be agreed.
- 11) Padlock procurement:** (appended) MSW briefed members on the paper, advising that the Parrett IDB have agreed to purchase padlocks with the Axe Brue, to reduce the cost. All padlocks may be utilised by both Boards.
- Proposed P Thorne, Seconded Cllr MacKenzie 'that the Axe Brue IDB in conjunction with the Parrett IDB procures an initial 300 locks as recommended.'** **Vote: 0 against, 1 abstention. Motion carried by majority verdict. RESOLUTION 4**
- 12) Comple Rhyne, Lympsham:** MSW advised that this matter has been discussed at length at the previous Brue Catchment meeting, reminding members that extensive culverting is against Board policy but recommending a deviation from policy on this occasion by exception. Discussions have been held with all landowners and the pre-school.

RES 2

RES 3

Axe  
Catchment

RES 4

RES 5

**Proposed R Cook, Seconded D Tratt ‘that the Axe Brue IDB approves in principal to allow the application with conditions relating to the headwall, access chamber, and swale to simplify future maintenance.’ Unanimous RESOLUTION 5**

**13) Edingworth Rhyne, re-routing footpath:** Mr & Mrs Hopkins have applied to the Department of Transport to re-route a footpath to a bridleway. NWS advised that the IDB has no powers within the Land Drainage Act 1991 to refuse/consent this application.

If the application is successful, maintenance spoil can be placed on the bank, however de-silt material would be placed over the proposed fence into the field. These arrangements would need to be in a formal agreement to be in place in perpetuity.

NWS advised that the diversion would be reasonable for this location due to the frequency of works required, therefore the Board would not adversely comment on the application.

Board members were content with the discussion, however the matter was not voted upon.

**Improvement Works: (appended) IDS updated members on the report as necessary:**

- 1) Brent Knoll:** IDS advised that contributions have been secured from Wessex Water, SCC Flood Mitigation Fund and the Parish Council. Five tenders have been invited with the project expected to be in the New Year.
- 2) Mill Green:** IDS advised that structural works are now complete. Final works and culvert cleaning are to be undertaken after winter penn.
- 3) Staff Resources:** IDS advised that as resources allow, works will be completed within the works programme i.e. Wick Lane Culvert.
- 4) Dog Leg Ditch:** members were advised that if this particular scheme is not completed, Westhay Moor Drove could be considered as an alternative scheme. It was agreed that local landowners are to be consulted with scheme proposals.
- 5) Godwin's:** it is necessary for Godwin's to resolve their planning issues for mineral extraction and restoration works, however an application has not yet been submitted.
- 6) SRA:** as report, a recent SRA workshop identified areas that would benefit from additional works on main rivers and other areas i.e. Hixham Rhyne, Mark Yeo and Cripps River.

**Questions on the report included:**

**Q: 1 Decoy Rhyne De-Silt:** What is the timescale for this work and has this been included within SRA work schemes?

**Q: 2 Decoy Rhyne, Westhay:** the north side of the bank has access gates installed; could this be considered for inclusion in the 5yr plan?

**A:** This has not been included within the IDB programme or works, however the Board is involved in creating the SRA 5yr programme of works, including banks at Westhay; the EA new safety guidance has increased bank area, therefore work is to be prioritised.

**Q:** Mark Yeo: what and where will work be undertaken?

**A:** There is no work identified for this area, however it has been reported that access is not good and there are overhead cables. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed out of meeting.

**Development Control:** (appended) having previously been circulated the reports were taken as read.

- 12 **Policy:** (appended) NWS briefed members on the recommended policy.

**Proposed M Watts, Seconded J Healey ‘that the Axe Brue IDB adopts the policy document as presented’ Unanimous RESOLUTION 6**

- 13 **Somerset Rivers Authority:** NWS advised that the SRA produces a regular newsletter entitled The Stream, which is disseminated by email to members by the Assistant Clerk. The production will not be posted to keep costs to a minimum. Members with no email were encouraged to submit an email address for Board purposes only.

**Bridgwater Barrier:** Invitations to tender have been invited from WEM framework consultants for undertaking final appraisal work and applying for the Transport and Works Order. Funding is available to carry this project forward.

**Funding:** members were advised that the SRA Chairman and Vice-Chairman are to meet with the Secretary of State to discuss interim funding, as precepting will require new legislation. Interim funding for dredging will be received from Local Enterprise Partnership and SRA Funding, however it is unknown which LEP funding will be utilised.

**Lincolnshire Partnership:** members were advised that although the Lincs Partnership bears similarities to Somerset, the Lincs Partnership did not seek additional funds, they agreed methods of working in partnership.

Members opined that SRA is detrimental to landowners; NWS advised that ADA accepted

e option of primary legislation and precepting.

- 14 **Special Correspondence:** None
- 15 **Any Other Business:** Sedgemoor District Council: Long Term Development Plan – members were advised that the consultation deadline is 18 December, to which the Board will make a submission. The Board response will be drafted at a strategic level.
- 15 **Date and venue for next meeting:** As stated on agenda. Unless stated all future meetings will be held at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge TA9 3BW commencing at 10:30hrs.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending;  
the meeting was closed at 13.20hrs.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE