

Minutes of the Parrett Board Meeting held at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge on Tuesday 01 November 2016 at 2.15 pm. **Chairman: Mr P Maltby**

- 1 **Attendance & Apologies for Absence:** as per register appended.
- 2 **Items Additional to the Agenda:** None.
- 3 **Declarations of interest:** Cllr A Gilling for any matters concerning planning and Ashfords Solicitors. Members were asked to declare matters of interest as necessary as the meeting progressed.
- 4 **Opportunity for members of the public to address the Board meeting:** No requests to address the meeting.
- 5 **Finance Reports:** S Gee (SMG) advised that
- a **External Audit Report:** (tabled 1a) the report states that Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return, although separately considered, approved and signed, should be separate minute points before the accounting statements. Also, that the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors' Rights did not allow any days between the inspection of the books and records and the audit date, there should be at least one day between these dates. With these two matters, the External Audit was duly noted.
- b **Direct Debit:** (appended 1b) SMG advised that the Direct Debit process is a long term scheme which will provide savings financially as well as staff time which could be deployed elsewhere within the Administration Department. For the process of Direct Debit guarantee, the Board will need to provide an indemnity to the bank. The process had begun for providing Direct Debits as an alternative method of payment for drainage rates. An information letter had been received favourably by rate payers at The Dairy Show, held at the Royal Bath & West Showground in October. Due to changes within the banking structure at Nat West Bank, a tendering process is being considered for alternative banks. Members accepted that Direct Debit should be offered as an alternative method of rate payment.
- Proposed P Maltby, Seconded T Bradford 'The Parrett IDB approves the provision of an indemnity to Nat West Bank in line with the Direct Debit Guarantee to enable the Parrett IDB to generate Direct Debits as an alternative method of drainage rate collection. It is also agreed that Stephen Gee and Carrie-Anne Porter may sign the application form and act as the Primary Security Contacts and any corrections made to it.' Vote: RESOLUTION 1**
- Budget headlines for 2017/18 inc SDBC Budget:** (appended 1c) SMG advised that the accounts had been discussed in full at the P, F&G meeting of 06 September 2016 at which time a recommendation was given to the Full Board to adopt the accounts. The SDBC budget has provision for a new Development Control Officer, two Engineers and two Trainee Technicians. The SDBC recharge to the Boards is reduced from the previous year. J Lang requested to see a long-term works programme to indicate the necessity of additional staff. Concern was expressed for the longevity of SRA funding as precepting had not been progressed through Parliament. N Stevens (NWS) advised that a 5 year works programme has been devised for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), and that the Secretary of State has been briefed on SRA precepting. Priorities are being considered for a presentation to the SRA Board to be held in January 2017. The SRA Board will view the Enhanced Programme for 2017/18 in February I Sturdy (IDS) advised that IDB and SRA works to be managed by the IDB have been identified which far exceeds current staff resources available to undertake it.. The expectation is that the IDB will remain an active delivery partner of the SRA with the funding provided. At a previous SDBC meeting it was agreed that additional staff could be recruited. IDBs are being encouraged nationally to assist the EA with operations under PSCAs and take up the opportunities offer by the SRA partnership where possible. Cllr A Fraser stated that for the current financial year Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) provided SRA funding from Council reserves, however for the forthcoming year this will be an addition to council tax bills. Accounts need to be scrutinized carefully to justify additional demands on costs such as employment; the IDB should be seen to save money where possible.

Action

RES 1

T Bradford expressed concern that disaggregation, if implemented, may reduce IDB income, IDB members are not consulted on SRA schemes, and that no PSCA's have been signed in the South West.

IDS responded that bespoke PSCA's have been signed for works on main river: Parrett dredging and maintenance trials. A further general PSCA has been signed for routine works by both Boards. The Board does not have the capacity for the in-house workforce to undertake EA channel maintenance works.

There is currently an open invitation to the EA for a meeting with the IDB to discuss future maintenance operations.

At the beginning of the last financial year it was agreed that additional staff would be employed on fixed term contracts to match the foreseeable workload, therefore if the funding ceased the contract could be terminated.

Cllr N Weeks supports the Board in the view that additional capacity is required to get the work competed, as in a years' time if there is another flood people would be asking why nothing was done. It seems sensible to recruit in a professional and prudent manner, i.e. fixed term contracts. Cllr Gilling concurred with this statement.

J Lang asked what professional fees within the SDBC budget includes. SMG advised that the breakdown includes consultants i.e. A Dowden Axe Brue Area Manager, A Sherwood Development Control Officer and B Watkis Legal Advisor.

Proposed P Maltby, Seconded Cllr A Gilling 'that the Parrett IDB approve the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium accounts for year ending 31 March 2017.' Vote: 11 For, 2 Against (J Lang), 3 Abstain; motion carried RESOLUTION 2

For full disclosure and understanding, members agreed that the Chairman of the Policy, Finance & Governance Committee should sit on the SDBC Management committee.

Proposed J Lang, Seconded T Bradford 'that the Chairman of the Parrett Policy, Finance & Governance Committee should be co-opted as a non voting member to the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium Management Committee if acceptable.' Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 3

Financial Regulations – 2016 amendments: (appended 1d) SMG advised that in line with a previous years external audit recommendation the Financial Regulations will be reviewed on a triennial basis rather than quinquennial.

SMG summarised the recommended amendments to the Regulations, advising that 'the Board' refers to the Axe Brue as lead Board of the Consortium.

Proposed C Passmore, Seconded J Healey 'that the Parrett IDB approves and adopts the amended Financial Regulations as submitted.' Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 4

T Bradford requested the financial reports for future meetings, be printed in black and red for clarity and understanding.

6 Engineering Report: Fly Tipping: Members were shown images of fly tipping around watercourses and structures to highlight an increasing problem. The District councils are very good at collecting the debris, however costs of collection are a concern.

Culprits identified can be charged £400, therefore members were encouraged to remain vigilant in identifying and reporting fly tipping. It is believed that charges at local refuse yards may be one reason that there has been an increase to fly tipping.

Somerset Waste Partnership are aware of fly tipping and the problems caused to the Boards; an invitation has been extended to the IDB to attend the SWP meeting to work through these issues.

It was requested that an estimate of costs for Expenditor time in dealing with fly tipping is considered for future discussion.

a Maintenance Works: (appended 2) P Ham (PSH) provided a brief overview of the maintenance report with the following points of note:

- **Minehead Moat:** Kingcombe Aquacare has removed silt n by tracked vehicles and trees have been pollarded and tidied up. Cllr Maitland-Walker thanked the Board for their assistance in progressing this project
- **Minehead, Wet Lagoon:** (phase 2) members were advised that the SRA appreciated the works undertaken by the Board
- **Minehead, Morrison's Rhyne:** The Board has supplied plans and correspondence. The site management team have been asked to arrange maintenance of their riparian watercourse
- **West Somerset Council:** a request has been made by the Board for a Purchase Order number to enable re-chargeable works to be invoiced accordingly

T Bradford requested that Minehead works be contracted out to enable in-house operatives to be deployed around the main Board area to undertake cleaning works that fit with the farming

RES 2

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RES 3

RES 4

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calendar. It was agreed that this request is to be discussed at a Works Committee meeting. The report was duly noted by members.

B Improvement Works Programme: (appended 3)

Pawlett Hams Water Supply Pipes: (as report 2.2) IDS advised that a budget of £18.5k had been agreed for a temporary solution. To date temporary works have cost approx. £17.5k with additional costs for pumps, fuel etc. of approx. £40k due to complications in providing the works. The favoured solution for a permanent repair, at this time, is directional drilling, however the EA have not yet decided on the bank repairs; they may need to realign or replace the current structure.

It was agreed to investigate the principal of directional drilling and create an in-principal design. As Pawlett Hams water supply pipes are the only supply to a protected area, there is justification to apply for funding from the Water Framework Directive. Natural England and Viridor are also assisting with funding this project. NWS advised that the target for delivery of this project is April 2017, which is achievable with assistance.

Members agreed that it was necessary to assign delegation of authority to a sub-committee to enable discussions and decisions of risk, project details and awarding tender for the works to be held in a timely manner.

Proposed J Lang, Seconded J Healey ‘that a sub-committee be set up with delegated authority of the Board to discuss project details, design and risk and to award the tender as appropriate.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 5

Sub-Committee members: Chairman or Vice-Chairman - T Bradford, Cllr I Dyer, D Spicer, W Barnard, B Rowe and C Passmore. P Maltby agreed to deputise for T Bradford when necessary.

Flooding at Huish Episcopi (Ducks Hill): (as report 2.9) IDS confirmed that delivery of works undertaken in investigating historic flooding have been re-charged to the SRA.

SRA Enhanced programme (report 3.1) IDS advised that the IDB has been allocated to undertake further de-silting and tree works, which are potentially main river works.

Concern was expressed by members regarding Somerset County Council (SCC) works being undertaken by the SRA i.e. highway culverts.

IDS advised that considerable dialogue had been held, but we have been unable to reach an accord on some culverts so far. SRA funding is for works that would otherwise not be funded and that we are working with professional partners to first inspect and then repair and replace as necessary.

NWS advised that service pipes in the highway fall to the statutory undertaker using them i.e. Wessex Water or British Gas and SCC Highways are applying the same principal to drainage crossings.

T Bradford would like the IDB to request that road cleaning and highway culvert works are removed from the 5 year works programme.

IDS advised that the programme is devised with IDB officers and member involvement, and that the process has so far been approved by the SRA Board..

Members opined that SCC are abdicating their responsibilities, however when a flood occurs residents will want to see action. Therefore Highways England should identify the culverts that are not SCC responsibility.

Parrett and Tone Maintenance Dredging Trials: (report 3.3) IDS advised that the works are proceeding under a PSCA, and following a tender process with cost/quality criteria analysis, the tender has been awarded to Van Ord Ltd for water injection dredging. They will use a water injection dredger known as the “Borr”.

Monitoring – Parrett and Tone: (report 3.4) IDS advised that monitoring is a very important part of the project and we are installing fixed point monitors as well as carrying out water based monitoring. The dredging should have limited environmental impact. The channel will not be increased beyond the original cross-section. The trial will seek to show the method can move material effectively and cost efficiently.

17.00 Cllr A Fraser and Cllr P Stone left the meeting

Development Control: (appended 4) the report was accepted by the meeting.

7 Policy: Infilling of Urban Watercourses: (appended 5) NWS advised that the Works sub-committee in September 2016 had reviewed the policy in-line with a presentation indicating where ditches had been infilled without consent.

Proposed J Lang, Seconded Cllr N Weeks ‘that the Parrett IDB adopts option 4.5 – Apply its powers to consenting all applications and enforcing on all unconsented activity to prevent any further infilling of ditches or swales where they meet the definition of a watercourse but allowing culverting of urban ditches and swales due to their potential but probably limited drainage benefit - when controlling works proposed on historic ordinary watercourses in urban areas.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 6

NWS

RES 5

IDS

RES 6

