

<p>The Clerk opened the meeting. For information purposes: prior to this meeting a pre-meeting had been held to address concerns received from R Adlam. It had been agreed by those members present that this matter should be deferred to a special meeting of the Axe Brue IDB, date to be confirmed.</p>	Action NWS
<p>During the pre-meeting members agreed that draft minutes of all full Board and sub-committee meetings should where possible, be disseminated within 14 days of the meeting.</p>	C-AP
<p>1 Attendance and Apologies: as per register appended. In addition: Mr C Gunn, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) and Mr C Passmore, Parrett IDB member.</p>	
<p>2 Items additional to the agenda: C Passmore – Parrett IDB proposal to amalgamate the Parrett and Axe Brue Boards.</p>	
<p>3 Declarations of interest: none at this time.</p>	
<p>4 Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman: 2 year term to December 2018. The Clerk called for nominations for Chairman of the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium: Nominated by M Watts, Seconded by A Franks – Tony Bradford Nominated by M Winslade, Seconded by M E Wall – Jeff Fear There being no other nominations, a secret ballot was held – thirteen (13) votes were cast in total, Jeff Fear –six, Tony Bradford – seven. The Clerk declared Tony Bradford Chairman for the ensuing two year term to December 2018. T Bradford (TB) took the chair, thanking members for their support and P Maltby for his hard work over his term as Chairman of the Consortium. TB stated that he would like to move the Boards forward in a harmonious way, and that there is a need for members and officers to work together to address boosting the attendance of members at meetings to prevent the demise of the Boards. TB called for nominations for Vice Chairman: Nominated by B Rowe, Seconded by W Welland – Jeff Fear With no other nominations, Jeff Fear was duly elected Vice Chairman for the ensuing two year term to December 2018.</p>	
<p>Meeting Attendance: members were encouraged at this time to discuss the decline in attendance, the following list is not exhaustive:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can the IDB be publicized in the local press?• Previous attempts have failed, as the press has an interest in happening events rather than routine works.• IDB appears to receive little credit in SRA reports, if mentioned, even though the IDB are responsible for most projects.• SRA have a public relations officer to prepare press releases and organize other media releases.• SRA has an agreed protocol, whereby SRA and all organisations involved are included in press meeting.• Would like to see a timed agenda to prevent meetings going on so long.• Should question members to find out why they do not want to attend meetings. Some say it is becoming too bureaucratic.• The Board sometimes is perceived as another EA• Concern that what the members talk about and would like to see done, officers do in a different way; need to get back to grassroots and get the work done.• Get press releases out to find out what the public want to hear; concerted effort to budget and have a strategy for press releases.• Meetings are no longer held at Westonzoyland – this could be one reason for lack of attendance.• Other Boards hold an annual meeting and inspection finishing with a meal in a local pub – the Parrett IDB used to do this, however this event is no longer held.• The biggest problem is time; people who work on the land have a lot of input. Policy and Governance reports should be taken as read rather than the depth of detail experienced at meetings.• Get local people involved with schemes to encourage younger people to take an interest.• Meetings used to be held in the evenings (Parrett Board), however the format would need to change to cut the meeting time down.• Too much repetition of information at meetings.• Members have too much distrust in politicians. There is frustration with meetings and expectation for change.	

I Sturdy (IDS) advised that officers recognise member involvement, however he is concerned for the comment that officers work contrary to member wishes.

N Stevens (NWS) expressed concern for member's expectation of how a modern public body should be run, and that members should recognise the consequences of not having in place a system of proper administration and governance. ADA has encouraged Boards to have standard policies in place to help prevent a reoccurrence of problems similar to Caldicott & Wentloog IDB. Policies and Governance documents need to be considered and approved by members, despite members feeling that they are overloaded with paperwork.

Members were concerned with the repetition of information. They were advised that due to the structure of the Boards, many items are developed through sub-committees to then be ratified at Full Board; where members sit on more than one committee they may experience repetition of papers/reports.

TB advised that the meeting structure would be discussed further.

12:00 C Ainge and W Welland left the meeting

- 5 **Finance Report – current financial position:** (appended Enc 1) S Gee (SMG) briefed members on the report.

M Watts expressed concern that staff costs had risen considerably.

SMG: this was largely due to additional engineering on SRA projects, however by year end the costs are expected to be under budget; £341k recoverable staff costs from SRA and NSLIDB.

M Watts: will pensions need to increase contributions to cover the SCC recent losses?

SMG: SCC funding is not relevant to pension contribution, it is a stand-alone scheme reliant on trustees of the scheme to run it accurately.

TB: SRA precepting was to be in the Autumn Statement – did this happen, as there is concern of over-committing to works?

SMG: the Boards have not recruited additional engineering staff and are not committed to any SRA scheme that does not have an approved budget commitment.

NWS advised that SRA Management papers contains an update of precept legislation. This item is on the agenda for this meeting.

TB: if SRA members could see the SRA Management meeting papers then comments from the IDB can be taken forward.

SMG: the SRA is funded by public funds in excess of £2m per year. Members are responsible for properly managing the funds. He then warned that ignoring finance is a collective responsibility of members and officers and that financial regulations have been approved for risk management.

C Passmore (CP): where are the risk assessments for Pawlett Hams? A small budget was agreed and funds paid out have exceeded this.

SMG: reports are created and meetings held for member understanding. All decisions are taken with reference to members and Chairman.

- 6 **Engineering Programme Update:** IDS briefed members on the following points of note:

Planning for the future: progressive works, resource and budget on a similar level to the current year.

Pawlett Hams: following the bank slip on the southern side of the river, a permanent solution in-line with EA bank repairs is being investigated.

Improvements to Structures: an extensive programme of health and safety of structures and other works continue.

Axe Brue: a challenging scheme has been completed with substantial funding contributions. East Brent is being developed to deliver flood risk reductions.

Long standing aspiration for West Rhyne, Coastal Catchment, with modelling completed.

Parrett: Dredging Strategy is being developed with SRA for the Parrett, Tone and Brue – focus on dredging trials being undertaken by Van Oord. To encourage member involvement, all Board members were invited via email to visit the dredging site, however only 10 members, across both Boards, attended. Publicity was held in the press and television. Social media and the Board website actively promotes the work of the Boards which receives positive feedback from members of the public. Members who attended the visit found it to be interesting and informative.

SRA: the IDB are managing works in collaboration with other organisations. Currently preparing programme of works for the next year; identified works to be prioritised. IDB SRA members have received prioritising methodology, and their views have been forwarded to the SRA.

- 7 **Staffing:**

- 7a **Flexible retirement applications:** written applications have been received from P Ham (PSH) to reduce to 3 days per week and NWS to reduce to 4 days per week both from 1st April 2017.

Implications to other staff: PSH to become an internal engineer funded by PSCA or outstanding Board scheme funded projects, to be replaced by a full time Technical Supervisor.

Members were reminded that the Board has experienced difficulty in appointing external

engineers with an understanding of land drainage, therefore PSH would work on reducing the backlog of small projects and schemes.

The Clerk was asked what would happen if the Board refused either application; PSH will either remain in the current post full-time or resign.

CP: the new Technical Supervisor should be provided a small van for mobility and should be the first point of contact for public and Board members. NWS advised that PSH is currently the first point of contact for the public and Board members.

Members expressed concern for the output of work as a result of the Chief Executive's reduced hours.

Members were advised that legislation does not permit them to put a 'time limit' on the length of reduced service.

Proposed P Maltby, Seconded J Taylor 'that the SDBC Management Committee approves that P Ham reduces his working week to three days per week and transfers to the engineering department as of 1st April 2017 and that N Stevens reduces his working week to four days per week as of 1st April 2017.' Vote: 8 for, 0 against, 2 abstain – motion carried
RESOLUTION 1

RES 1

It was further agreed that the Chairs and Vice Chairs would hold a review meeting to discuss member concerns.

NWS

12:35 P Maltby left the meeting

7b **Succession planning for senior staff:** NWS advised that in the near future P Ham, S Gee and himself will be reducing their working week with a view to full retirement there

P Ham - Technical Supervisor: a draft job description is to be circulated for members' approval. The position will be advertised on the Board website as well as websites of ADA, Environment Agency (EA) and Indeed, a national on-line recruitment platform. Members requested that Board members are included within the interview panel.

RES 2

Proposed R Adlam, Seconded A Franks 'that the Technical Supervisor position is advertised on prominent on-line websites and that the interview panel consists of the Chairmen Vice Chairmen and Finance & Governance Chairmen of both the Axe Brue and Parrett IDBs as well as the Clerk and Chief Engineer.' Vote: unanimous
RESOLUTION 2
N Stevens – NWS advised that he will reduce to four days per week as of 1st April 2017 with full retirement as of 31st March 2018.

TB recommended that the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen should meet to discuss the position with a view to advertise the role of Chief Executive mid-summer 2017.

It was also recommended to undertake visits to other IDBs to review alternative procedures and processes in-line with their staffing structures.

Proposed B Rowe, Seconded M Winslade 'that the role of Chief Executive is widely advertised from mid-summer 2017 and that visits to IDBs of a similar size are undertaken by the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Axe Brue and Parrett IDBs to review staffing structures and procedures.' Vote: unanimous
RESOLUTION 3

RES 3

7c **Trainee Technicians Update:** NWS advised that Engineering Technician

12:50 B Watkis left the meeting

NWS advised that one Trainee Technician had been appointed and had settled in well. A second Trainee will be appointed in April 2017, for both to begin appropriate civil engineering training at college from September 2017.

7d **Work for the Somerset Rivers Authority:** Members were advised that R Kidson continues as external engineer on SRA projects and V Fursland has been appointed as an Asset Inspector on a temporary contract, both 100% funded by the SRA.

S Bunn, Development Control Officer, works predominantly from the Highbridge office but includes cover for the North Somerset Levels IDB office and is a valuable addition to IDB staff resources.

7e **Shared engineering services with South Somerset DC:** Cllr N Weeks, Vice Chairman of the Parrett Works Committee, has requested consideration to link opportunities of the IDB and SSDC. NWS advised that the IDB has a large workload at present, however there is a synergy with organisations, and the Board should consider future working.

Members were supportive of the suggestion; it was agreed that a meeting should be held with SSDC for potential shared engineering services.

Delegated authority was awarded to the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer to investigate the proposition of shared engineering services with South Somerset District Council. Although no formal proposition was made this matter was voted unanimously.

NWS/IDS

7f **Temporary Staff Contracts:** The Boards' Planning and Administration Support officer, S Purchase, is the only temporary contacted staff member; contracted to May 2017.

	<p>A Sherwood, Consultant Planning Officer, is due to leave the Board January/February 2017 at which time the support to S Bunn will be reviewed.</p> <p>The contract with J Inman, Temporary Planning Assistant NSLIDB, will cease on 21 December 2016.</p> <p>13:00 B Rowe left the meeting</p> <p>8 Public Sector Co-Operation Agreement and other Agreements:</p> <p>8a North Somerset Levels IDB: G Oliver continues providing planning and engineering support which is 100% re-charged to NSLIDB.</p> <p>8b Environment Agency: a meeting has been held to discuss PSCA's; the EA have been involved with their new allocation system.</p> <p>Precept could be the mechanism by which additional projects and joint schemes could be reimbursed either fully or partially, with operation of new structures by IDBs however responsibility and liability remains with the EA.</p> <p>Potential works programme to be provided for individual Board approval.</p> <p>9 Health & Safety Report: no accidents, incidents or near misses have been reported.</p> <p>Basic water safety training, a DEFRA recommended syllabus, has been undertaken and passed by 14 staff members. Stage II water safety training will be provided accordingly.</p> <p>10 Report from the Internal Auditor – Procedures for amending the rating variations: C Gunn, SWAP, apologised for not providing the report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Members were advised that the Axe Brue IDB had instructed the report: Special Investigation Rate Setting, therefore it was agreed to defer this item to the Axe Brue Finance & Governance meeting of 19 January 2017, which would allow members time to read the report. All agreed.</p> <p>11 Minutes of the last meeting held on 30 August 2016: (appended Enc 2)</p> <p>Having been previously circulated, the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.</p> <p>12 Matters Arising: Item 4 Employment Costs: it is noted that SMG intends to reduce to three days per week as of April 2017, however no written submission has been received. It was agreed to defer consideration to the next meeting.</p> <p>13 Any Other Business:</p> <p>a SRA Scrutiny Committee: a joint scrutiny committee is to be set up with members from Somerset County Council, the District Council and IDBs, however an invitation to appoint members for the inaugural meeting has not yet been received.</p> <p>It was agreed that if a SRA scrutiny committee is not set up within six months the IDB would give consideration to setting up its own committee for this purpose.</p> <p>b Member Travel: members opined that travelling to and from an event on the day is not acceptable i.e. 4/5 hours travel, 2/3 hours of conference/event followed by 4/5 hours return journey.</p> <p>For Flood-Ex 2016 the contingent travelled 4 hours on the morning of the event, so were exhausted on arrival. The hotel was not satisfactory – <i>upon booking the overnight accommodation the Clerk and Assistant Clerk viewed websites of limited hotels with group room availability to which the chosen hotel was considered the best option. However, at the earliest opportunity hotel staff were asked to re-assign rooms and were told that the accommodation was not as specified and was not acceptable. Several emails were exchanged with the hotel Manager over the following week to express the views of the guests.</i></p> <p>Members requested that for future events, comfortable travel is undertaken the day before an event with accommodation provided accordingly, reducing the number of attendees if necessary.</p> <p>C Amalgamation: The Parrett IDB has expressed an interest in amalgamating with the Axe Brue IDB as they feel it is in the Boards' long term interest to become one Board.</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the proposal to the Axe Brue Finance & Governance Committee for consideration, for recommendation to the Axe Brue Full Board if necessary.</p> <p>CP requested inclusion of NSLIDB in amalgamation discussions, however NSLIDB have not expressed an interest in amalgamation.</p> <p>d SRA: NWS provided the agenda of the next scheduled meeting of the SRA, highlighting matters to be discussed by the organisations involved.</p> <p>13:20 M Watts left the meeting</p> <p>NWS asked if SRA members considered they were adequately briefed to put the view of the IDBs at the SRA meetings.</p> <p>Members opined that the processes and system of prioritising works is not satisfactory; NWS advised that the feeling of members has been expressed in correspondence to the SRA.</p> <p>It was agreed that members require full understanding to enable influence of the process.</p> <p>It was stated that practicalities and timescales will prove difficult to update all members adequately. After much discussion it was agreed that information would be disseminated to the four IDB representatives and their views/comments would be taken to the SRA Management meetings by</p>	<p>IDS</p> <p>Axe Brue F&G</p> <p>SDBC agenda</p> <p>C-AP</p> <p>Axe Brue F&G</p>
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NWS and IDS. Although no formal proposition was made this matter was agreed unanimously.

14 **Date and venue for next meeting:**

- Management Committee 21 February 2017, 10.30am
- Salaries Committee 14 March 2017, 10.30am
- SWADA 26 April 2017, 10.30am – format details to be confirmed

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 13.33hrs

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE