

Minutes of a Brue Catchment Meeting Held at Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge
on Tuesday 25 April 2017 at 10.30 am **Chairman: Mr J Fear**

1	Attendance and Apologies: as per registers appended. Apologies also received from M Watts and S Gee. Members agreed that Mr Fear should take the chair in Mr Watts' absence.	Action
2	Items additional to the agenda: Cllr McKenzie – SRA Scrutiny Panel update	
3	Declarations of interest: None at this time	
4	Opportunity for the public to address the meeting: None	
5	<p>Finance – overview of expenditure and budget: members were provided an overview of the report appended with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no increase to Brue Valley maintenance works contracts price this year re: CPI • Modifications to the tractor have resulted in efficiencies to the Board by providing greater output and productivity • H&S Schemes includes on-going projects i.e. asset inspections and reports for prioritised works programme • Grant for H&S schemes is not available via EA/Defra any more. <p>The report was accepted by members.</p>	
10.40	A Franks joined the meeting.	
6	<p>Maintenance programme – including a complaint on the Brue Catchment Desilting Programme 2017: M S Wall (MSW) advised that water levels in the North Drain had been raised to 1.85AOD, and that the South Drain currently has a level of 1.55AOD but would be increased to 1.58AOD; all agreed. Bargeman's Cabbage is to be flailed as previously agreed, in an attempt to reduce the spread of this invasive weed. Consideration would be given to cutting Brassica during October to March to prevent agitated growth; A Dowden (AJD) will consult with P Brewin (PAB) the Board's Ecologist for guidance. Future consideration would be given to the invasive weed control budget.</p>	<p>MSW</p> <p>AJD AJD/ PAB</p>
10.45	<p>N Lukins joined the meeting.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam growing throughout the district is to be monitored. EA are conducting a study to remove weeds using steam – IDB to investigate</p> <p>Complaint: M E Wall and S Stamp have submitted a complaint regarding the Brue Catchment desilting programme. The desilting was briefed as follows: High silt levels within the channel had been identified by channel cleaning contractors and investigated by the Board. Officers complied with the Board procurement procedures for the two contracts which included sealed tenders opened by 2 officers. Awards were authorized by the Clerk and the decision recorded. The contract was awarded on cost to Spratt Plant Hire with completion date of 1st March following confirmation that they could complete both contracts within the winter period to 1 March. Landowners felt dredging had taken place rather than desilting due to amount of clay and material removed, banks pulled excessively, deeper channels may result in bank slippage and that works are contrary to member wishes. Landowners were also highly dissatisfied with the liaison that had taken place by the Board's local manager. The Board ecologist advised that environmental impacts had been considered to minimise effects of the works, and this scheme was conducted in a sensitive manner to protect habitats, degrading of environment and farm land. The contract includes reinstatement in the summer, including re-seeding. Members were shown pictures of the 600 culverts that still exist on the Southwick and the previous silt levels in the pipes with the bed now below pipe inverts. Members also considered the adequacy of the existing pipes.</p> <p>Brue Catchment members are satisfied with works undertaken and pipe sizes within culverts.</p> <p>Queen Sedgemoor: desilting has been undertaken by J D Pope & Sons with a silt pump; the local Board member is very satisfied with the results and improved supply of water.</p> <p>Black Ditch: the east side is not suitable for access; future consideration to install three access gates on the western side of the watercourse as the bank is more stable and suitable for channel cleaning operations.</p>	<p>MSW</p> <p>Future meeting</p>
7	<p>Improvements and capital works programme: I Sturdy (IDS) advised that works at the ROF Fishing Club (ROF) have been completed by Ken Marsh at £9.9k. The Fishing Club will assign an operator agreement for daily operation control. The current water level is considered satisfactory but will be monitored by the local member.</p>	

Health & Safety Phase 3

- a) **Swallows:** debris screen, walkway and fencing installed, cost £3.3k by Spratt Plant Hire. Satisfactory standard.
- b) **Long Drove, QSM:** Gauge boards and telemetry installed for water level monitoring.
- c) **Bason Bridge Investigations:** Many Church Street properties have floor levels below road level with some over 300 mm below road level. There is a record of flooding to properties possibly caused by poor drainage at the rear of the properties and a damaged outfall pipe. Improvements to the existing Factory Lane outfall are also being proposed by a developer and once completed may offer the opportunity to link the Church Road drainage and Factory Lane drainage to improve flood risk. Investigations continue into finding the most cost effective solution.
- d) **Meareway Investigation:** property owner has approached IDB and SRA for options to reduce localised flooding concerns – SRA has asked the IDB to investigate; Investigations and camera surveys have revealed slight damage to pipe under a downstream property and faulty non-return valve which had seized. The system operates effectively but is constrained by high river levels in the River Brue preventing the local surface water from discharging; recommendation to the SRA will be for the property owner Mr Moseley to construct a floodwall outside his property. Meareway watercourse to be included within the future maintenance programme. Improvement and formalization of the spillway from Meareway into the adjacent agricultural field to be undertaken by IDB with agreement of the landowner.
- e) **Tootle Bridge, Barton St David:** From viewing photographic evidence members agreed the riparian structure at the Mill Stream could be improved with a structure platform and the culvert desilted. AJD advised that investigations are on-going to develop an appropriate scheme in partnership with the riparian owner, parish council, EA and Highways England.

MSW

IDS

MSW

AJD

Proposed N Lukins, Seconded A Chidgey 'that a scheme is developed to improve the riparian structure at the Mill House Barton St David with contributions invited from all partners.' Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 1

RES 1

8 **Development Control: (appended) ID 900 and 901** agricultural buildings, although within 9m of an ordinary watercourse will be in-line with current agri buildings, approx. 6m from the watercourse. **ID 599** Mr & Mrs Cooke, a meeting was held on 10 April to determine this application; The committee resolved to refuse the application and enforce removal of three storage containers. The Board has a policy for shared arbitration costs, if required.

9 **National Audit Office report:** the report found that the Axe Brue and Parrett IDBs have the largest Board membership nationally; the RFCC is co-ordinating a Governance Review of the Somerset Drainage Boards. NWS is to prepare a report for Governance Review Group consideration in consultation with auditors and partner organisations. N Lukins requested that the report includes Board members give their time voluntarily. Members felt that Axe Brue members cover all aspects preferred by the report and opined that the area is diverse and members provide appropriate expertise, concern was expressed for retaining local knowledge if membership was reduced.

10 **Main River Work: Dredging and Tree Works:** IDS advised that dredging on the River Brue and associated works link to SRA funding and programme of works. IDB does not have powers to undertake the works on Main River, however evidence is to be provided by impact and improvement modelling with EA. IDS to continue investigations via SRA Technical Group.

IDS

Unsafe Banks: narrow/unstable banks prevents maintenance being carried out in some locations. A paper is to be presented to the SRA for consideration to create safe 'set back' banks to promote safe working practice, A paper will be presented to the SRA Board to agree a strategy for the area and if SRA funds should be supplied for any identified works.

IDS

River Sheppey/Decoy Rhyne: members requested that the EA be advised that this area is silted and recommend investigation/monitoring.

IDS

11 **Minutes of the Brue Catchment meeting held on 22 November 2016:** Item 8 Tootle Bridge (line 5) "...not on their access register" should read "...not on their asset register"
Item 10 Dredging Trials (line 3) "...biometric survey" should read "...bathymetric survey"
Having previously been circulated and with these two amendments the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.

13.00 hrs C Ainge left the meeting.

12 **Minutes of the extra Brue Catchment meeting held on 10 April 2017:** Having previously been circulated the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.

- 13 **Matters Arising: 22 November 2016:** Item 9 ID 554 Hawk & Owl Trust, consent approved however funding has not been concluded.
Item 7 Somerset Wildlife Trust, meeting to be arranged for June 2017, if possible.
- 14 **Special Correspondence and meetings:** No report at this time
- 15 **Any Other Business: SRA Scrutiny Committee** – Cllr McKenzie advised that draft copies of the SRA Scrutiny Committee minutes will be made available upon request.
- 16 **Dates of next meetings:**
 - Full Board 13 June 2017, 10.30hrs
 - Brue Catchment 05 September 2017, 10.30hrs

MSW

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending and closed the meeting at 13.10 hrs.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE