

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN, JEFF FEAR

Although this past winter has not suffered the heavy rainfall of the previous two winters, the work of the Axe Brue Board has not diminished. In fact, senior staff members and Board members have been heavily involved in researching various methods of setting up and funding the Somerset Rivers Authority, and the latter part has certainly not yet been resolved. However, the Board's more traditional work has not been neglected.

For example a new structure on the outfall of the lower part of Wick Rhyne and a similar one is planned on the outfall of the Old River Axe, Culverting at Ivy Down Ditch with contributions from riparian owners, lengthy de-silting along Brent Broad and Forge Rhyne as well as a major culvert de-silt at Mill Green Close, West Huntspill, where an estimated 150 tons of silt was removed.

Reinstatement of structures on East and West Waste is in progress with funding contributions from the Environment Agency.

The Somerset Consortium of Drainage Boards have now moved to refurbished premises at Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge. I thank you for your patience during the transition period.

There have been a few staff changes over the course of the year, and I am pleased to welcome Nicky Cornish as our new Administration and Finance Support Officer. We are all looking forward to another busy year.

Right: Burnham Level De-silting
Picture courtesy Axe Brue IDB



WHAT IS THE SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY?

Launched on January 31, the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) will work effectively to reduce the frequency, severity and duration of future flooding in Somerset, by unifying the efforts of the drainage boards, the Environment Agency, councils and communities to be better prepared.

The SRA will work to provide a long-term, sustainable solution to the problem of flooding in Somerset, by securing sustainable funding streams, co-ordinating and strengthening efforts to improve flood protection and drainage systems, and by strengthening the resilience of those communities in Somerset that are most vulnerable to flooding. This work will secure the future well-being not only of residents in Somerset, but also those in Devon and Cornwall who were indirectly impacted by the 2013/14 winter flooding.

Please visit the www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk website to learn more about SRA's work, how it is being funded and key Flood Action Plan achievements in the past year. The website also lists the dates, papers and location of SRA board meetings, all of which are open to the public.



Signing the Local Memorandum of Understanding: (seated L~R) **Somerset County Council** Cllr John Osman (Chairman) and **Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board** Jeff Fear (standing L~R) **Taunton Deane Borough Council** Cllr John Williams, **Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board** Ray Adlam, **Mendip District Council** Cllr Harvey Siggs, **Parrett Internal Drainage Board** Tony Bradford (Vice-Chairman), **South Somerset District Council** Cllr Ric Pallister, **Sedgemoor District Council** Cllr Dawn Hill, **Parrett Internal Drainage Board** Peter Maltby, **Natural England** Mark Jones, **West Somerset Council** Cllr Tim Taylor, **Environment Agency** Nick Gupta and **Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee** David Jenkins.

CHANGE OF LAND OWNERSHIP

The Board would like to take the opportunity to remind rate payers that when there is a change in land ownership, the Board must be informed of the changes. This allows the Board to keep its information up to date and provide accurate drainage rates.

**Bradbury House
33-34 Market Street
Highbridge TA9 3BW**
T: 01278 789906
F: 01278 792914

E: admin@somersetdb.co.uk



WEIGHT LIMIT CHANGES FOR AGRICULTURAL VEHICLES

New regulations from 9 March 2015 state that an agricultural tractor towing an agricultural trailer will be able to travel at a higher combination weight limit of 31 tonnes and at 25 mph.

However, these increased loads and speeds will have an impact on roads and droves, and more importantly the bridges and culverts underneath. Consequently the gateway culverts into fields are likely to suffer even more than they do already, so it will be important to check your culverts to find out what condition they are in and plan replacements before they collapse.

Where the culverts are breaking under droves you should consider working with the other landowners who use the drove to get to their fields, to replace the culverts before they inconvenience everyone. Please remember that any culvert replacements or new accesses require Land Drainage Consent from the Board so that we can make sure that the correct size pipe and headwall details are used.

MILL GREEN CLOSE

When a watercourse is culverted its condition and capacity can deteriorate over time without this being recognised until a problem occurs. It is for this reason that we see culverting as a last resort.

One example of this problem has been our recent work at Mill Green Close, West Huntspill as mentioned earlier by the Chairman.

Here a culverted watercourse (done as part of a development) has deteriorated with a partial collapse and a serious reduction in its capacity caused by siltation.

The Board working with contractors Glanville Environmental, Spratt Plant Hire and RJ & AD Duckett have repaired failed sections of the culvert and removed over 150 tonne of fluid silt and debris. Without this work there was a substantial risk of blockage and flooding. This project will ensure that rainfall and flows from a large area of land to the west of the A38 at West Huntspill can drain across the A38 to discharge into the River Brue upstream of the railway bridge.



New Structure at East & West Waste 2014. Picture courtesy Axe Brue IDB

NEW RATING SYSTEM & DIRECT DEBITS

From 1st April 2016 your drainage rates may be paid by Direct Debit. As a system that is simpler to operate, it will help to keep costs down and allow more work to be done "on the ground". Forms will be sent out later this year, so when you receive it please fill it out and send it back to us in the pre-paid envelope provided.



EXPENDITURE

The Board has resolved to set the rate for the current financial year:

**Axe Brue Drainage Board:
6.608p in the £**

This year the Board will maintain approx. 592,000m (368 miles) of watercourse as part of the annual cleaning programme

TELEMETRY

We now have several water level monitoring stations operating across the Boards area. The information is available to us online and used by the IDB to adjust structures when needed. This information can be accessed from your own computer and is available on the Consortium website: www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk/operations/telemetry

PROSECUTION

It is an offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000, if any person without the consent of the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board, interferes with any sluice, or other water control or structure or appliance for controlling or regulating the flow of water in, into or out of a watercourse (Section 66(6) Land Drainage Act 1991).

Neither the Axe Brue nor Parrett IDB's will tolerate tampering with Board sluices or structures. As an example of this policy the Parrett IDB successfully prosecuted a Hambridge resident for contravention of Byelaw 19 concerning unauthorised operation of a sluice. The offender was fined £1,000 with £1,000 costs and compensation of £415 for the damage caused.

MEETINGS CALENDAR 2015/16

Dates of the Full meetings are:

Tues 09 June 10.30am

Tues 03 November 10.30am

Tues 19 January 2015 10.30am

For the complete meetings calendar: www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP

(all elected members are unpaid volunteers)

<u>District</u>	<u>Member</u>
Brean & Berrow	W Welland
Brent Knoll/ East Brent	E Champion
Lymsham	D Tratt
Burtle/Polden	C Pople
	P Thorne
Cheddar & Axbridge	R Cook
	J Lukins
	B Stinch
Glastonbury	R Clapp
	P Judah
	M Watts
Highbridge & Burnham	Vacancy
Huntspill	N Lukins
	M E Wall
	D Watts
Mark	C Durston
	J Fear
	R Wilcox
Meare to Street	R Adlam
	M Churches
	A Franks
	A Neale
North of Axe	M Boley
Wedmore	C Ainge
	T Tincknell
Wookey	C Dennis
	R Frost
	M Smith

Appointed Members

E Badman, D Banwell,
Cllr D Baker, H Case, A Chidgey,
Cllr N Cottle, Cllr J Denbee,
P Duckett, Cllr A Gilling, Cllr P Ham,
Cllr A Hamlin, J Healey,
Cllr D Hill, P Holms, S Hughes,
Cllr N Jones, Cllr T Killen,
C Mowat, Cllr J Parham,
Cllr D Poole, Cllr J Savage,
Cllr E Scott, R Shaw, Cllr K Smout,
Cllr G Steer, M Tibbs
and Cllr C Williams.

ENQUIRIES

For general enquiries please call:
01278 789906

(09.00hrs – 17.00hrs Mon-Fri)

Out of hours: 07887 687746

Email:

admin@somersetdb.co.uk

www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

For enquiries please contact:

Clerk/Legal: Nick Stevens

Engineering: Iain Sturdy

Finance: Stephen Gee

Rate Collection: Carrie-Anne Porter

Kendra Kingston

Environment: Phil Brewin

**Flooding incidents out of hours
should be reported to the
Environment Agency on:
0800 807060**