



NEWS

AMALGAMATION

From the 1st April 2012 our partner boards of the Lower Axe and Lower Brue have amalgamated with the Upper Axe and Upper Brue to form the new Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board. Both the new Axe Brue Board and the Parrett Board have formed a new Consortium that will provide the administrative, financial and engineering services for both Boards.

The formation of a separate Axe Brue Board has ensured that adequate representation will still exist on the Board for the local ratepayers, residents and businesses. The new arrangements will provide a clear link for local residents in understanding which Board member represents their local area.

POST FLOODING OPERATIONS DURING 2012

We have experienced a very dry winter and spring and are now recovering from the floods and high water levels in late April and early May. Sluices that are normally penning water at this time of year will be left lower than usual to allow water to drain off the land and to dry out.

In order to allow the grass in the flooded areas to recover as quickly as possible it is important that dished fields have gutters or gripes that discharge to the nearest ditch. Water will not drain through the soil to the ditch very quickly. Drainage across the surface and fine weather will dry up the ground quickest.

If you are intending to stock your fields in the higher parts of some moors please check water levels as we may be holding them lower to allow water in lower parts of the moor to drain completely.



Peter Maltby shows Defra Minister Richard Benyon a new tilting weir water control structure on West Sedgemoor.

Board officers will be meeting with the Agency to have a post flooding review and to look at any lessons learnt as well as suggestions for future actions.

If you have observations or ideas for consideration then please pass those onto the Area Engineer or Expenditors.

MINISTER VISITS THE AREA

Richard Benyon MP, Minister for the Natural Environment and Fisheries, visited a number of Parrett Drainage Board sites on 24 April to inspect works carried out as part of our programme of improvements to help achieve favourable conditions on Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Minister was taken to see the RSPB site at West Sedgemoor, as well as Southlake and Greylake with our other partners in the projects from Natural England, and the Environment Agency. During his visit the Minister commented very favourably on the degree of partnership and collaboration that was occurring on the projects and felt it was an example for other projects and authorities around the country.

FAVOURABLE CONDITION PROJECTS

This summer will be the third year of Favourable Condition improvement works. The Board has been trialling the operation of the structures already installed over winter. This year's work has been designed and will be built between July and October in Kings Sedgemoor, Wet Moor, Moorlinch, Northmoor and West Sedgemoor.

CONTACT WITH THE BOARD

As postage rates continually rise, we would like to make our website the main form of communication with past members, ratepayers, local residents and businesses. We plan to place all information about our meetings and the agenda on the website and therefore we encourage those people who would like to keep in touch with the activities of the Board to obtain access to the internet.

If you have internet access and an email address it will allow you to contact us and also allow us to send you information directly about issues the Board wish to pass on.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO STRUCTURES

We are now in the fourth year of our programme to improve or replace structures that can no longer be operated safely to manage water levels. This work has already improved 45 of the Board's structures and this year a further 14 structures will be improved ensuring that water levels can be managed effectively and safely.

WATER LEVEL INFORMATION – ONLINE

We now have several water level monitoring stations operating across the Board's area. These monitor and record water levels and send the information automatically to our Telemetry system. The information which is available to us online sends warnings of high water levels to officers so that they can adjust structures if necessary. Details of how this information can be accessed from your own computer will be made available on the Consortium Website.

RIPARIAN MAINTENANCE

It is important for landowners and tenants to maintain their own channels and gateway culverts. This improves the drainage and water feed to your land and neighbouring fields and is part of the farm payment requirements. Private ditches and rhynes are often neglected and will not function properly so that the land cannot benefit from the Board's annually maintained system. This leads to wet or dry areas, poor crops and damaged soils.

Bridges and gateway culverts are a constant problem, mainly because agricultural machinery weight has increase massively over the last couple of decades and the existing accesses were never built for these loads. On Viewed rhynes any replacement culverts should be at least 900mm (3 ft) diameter or a minimum of 450mm (18") on other ordinary watercourses. If you are planning to replace any culverts

please ensure you apply to the Board for consent so that we can ensure these are constructed properly – these applications are free. If the Board needs to use gateways over viewed rhyme for access then a contribution to the culvert may be available.

LAND DRAINAGE CONSENT

The Board has jurisdiction over all watercourses within the Boards district (with the exception of Statutory Main River which is under the authority of the Environment Agency). This means that you must apply for Land Drainage Consent from the Board for any improvement works you intend to carry out in, under, over or within 9 metres of any watercourse (except Main River). Please contact the Board or visit our website for details of the Land Drainage Consent and forms.

EXPENDITURE

The Board has resolved to set a rate in the pound of 5.994p for the current financial year. The Board has four principal areas of expense:

- Channel maintenance
- New works and improvements
- Contributions to the EA
- Administration costs

This year the Board will maintain approximately 507,000m (317miles) of watercourse as part of the annual cleaning programme.

MEETINGS CALENDAR 2012/13

The dates of the Main Board meetings this year are:

- **Tues 12th June 2.15pm**
- **Tues 24th July 10.30am (venue TBC)**
- **Tues 27th November 2.15pm**
- **Tues 29th January 2013 2.15pm**

All meetings except that of **Tuesday 24th July** are held in Westonzoyland Community Centre starting at 2.15 pm.

MEMBERSHIP

(All elected members are unpaid volunteers)

District	Member
Aller Moor	P Maltby
Bridgwater & Pawlett	M Young W Barnard
Cannington & Wembdon	R Marchent A Rowe A Sparkes R Roberts A Gothard
Chedzoy	
Curry Moor	
Dunster	
Kings Sedgemoor	A Bradford B Bryer D Vigar
Langport	J Lock R England R Coombes
North Moor	M Bere J Winslade
OMW	M Winslade C J Betty
Stanmoor	P House
Stockland	C Passmore
West Sedgemoor	D Perrin G Theed

Appointed Members:

R Archer, Cllr. D Alder, Cllr. A Chick, Cllr. D Durdan, Cllr. I Dyer, Cllr. A Fraser, Cllr. A Gilling, Cllr. S Goss, P Gooding, Cllr. A Hamlin, J Healey, Cllr. D Hill, Cllr. S Kingham, Cllr. M Lewis, Cllr. N Jones, Cllr. R Mills, Cllr. P Palmer, S Parker, R Roe, Cllr. P Stone, D Spicer, Cllr. J Taylor.

ENQUIRIES

For general enquiries please call:
01278 789906

(09.00hrs – 17.00hrs Mon-Fri)
Flooding incidents out of hours should be reported to the Environment Agency on: 0800 807060

Email: drainage.boards@btconnect.com
Or visit:
www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

For enquires please contact:

Clerk/Legal:	Nick Stevens
Engineering:	Iain Sturdy/Phil Ham
Finance:	Stephen Gee
Rate Collection:	Carrie-Anne Porter Kendra Kingston
Environment:	Phil Brewin

Expenditors:

Mark Hill
Nick Lockyer (OM&W, Aller & Stan)
Alan House (B&P)
Mike Phillips (KS&CV, Chedzoy)
Mike Snook (C&W, STK)
Joy Thorne (Lang & W Sedge)