

NOTICE TO LAND OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS REGARDING WINTER PENNING

All in-view watercourses, outside of Raised water level schemes, will be set at winter penn level on 1st December.

This is the usual target date for setting winter levels but unlike some previous years there will be no extension of summer levels into December. You are advised to take this into account when planning farming activities after this date.

The Boards' Favourable Conditions programme is in the final year of a five year programme

The current Favourable Conditions Projects across the Parrett, and Axe Brue Boards are reaching the end of a 5 year programme of works. Over £7.8m has been invested in hundreds of new and improved structures to provide better water level management. There remain a few areas to finish and some remedial works to be done but all the projects are expected to be completed within the approved grant aided sums provided by the Environment Agency. It is intended that from this winter, structures will be operated and water levels will be managed in accordance with the Water Level Management Plans agreed by the Boards.



Piles being inserted at Henley Corner, Kings Sedgemoor

Somerset Rivers Authority

Your Boards have been working with professional partners including the Environment Agency, Somerset County and District Councils and others to develop proposals for a new Somerset Rivers Authority as part of future plans to reduce flood risk in Somerset. This action comes from the Somerset Flood Action Plan following the flooding of 2012/13 and winter 2014.

The Somerset Rivers Authority's work will focus on enhanced maintenance of river channels, important ordinary watercourses and river flood banks over the whole of Somerset, to reduce flood risk and include dredging, and maintenance of dredged profiles. The following link provides information on progress towards the formation of the Somerset Rivers Authority along with answers to frequently asked questions. Further information can be found at:

<http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/meetings/results.asp?ccode=3>

New Rating System & Direct Debits

The Consortium has purchased a new Drainage Rating System, which is only the second rating system utilised by the Boards. The system, known as DRS is supplied by the Drainage Boards in Kings Lynn, and used by the majority of Drainage Boards nationally. The system will keep costs to a minimum by reducing administration on collection of the annual rates by providing the opportunity to **pay by Direct Debit**. This functionality will not only keep our costs down, but yours too as the payment of rates will be automatic.

Direct Debit mandates will be forwarded shortly; please complete and return it to the office.

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 rhyes 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 increased massively over the last couple of decades and the existing accesses were never built for these loads. On Viewed rhyes 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 rhyes for access then a contribution to the culvert may be available.

Christmas Opening Times



Christmas Eve: December 24th—Open 9am to 5pm

Christmas Day: 25th December—Closed

Boxing Day: 26th December—Closed

Monday 29th December—Closed

Tuesday 30th December—Closed

New Years Eve 31st December—Open 9am-5pm

New Years Day 1st January 2015—Closed

Open as usual from 6th January 2015

Bradbury House Update

Bradbury House is the new office for the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium, bringing all office staff under one roof. The office will be operational from 1st January 2015.

**The new address is:
Bradbury House
33-34 Market Street
Highbridge TA9 3BW**



Thorney Ring Bank

Work to construct the new Thorney Ring Bank flood defence is now substantially complete. The embankment core is up to full height along its entire length and the associated structures are functioning correctly, with flap valves and penstocks in place and fully operable. The finished bank core is slightly higher than the original design, so the level of flood protection is greater.

Our contractor is no longer on site, as all efforts are now focused on progressing the nearby 'Thorney Pottery Ring Bank' scheme for the Environment Agency. We will return to complete topsoiling and spreading of grass seed as soon as possible but this may not be until the spring.



Work in progress at Thorney Ring Bank



Work in progress at Thorney Ring Bank

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW!

As you are aware events happen all the time and a newsletter once a year is just not enough. We would like to keep ratepayers up to date with news and information more frequently. Our preferred method to do this efficiently and economically is to send information via e-mail; individual letters take time to prepare and are costly to send, bearing in mind the Consortium has in excess of 3,500 ratepayers. **We would therefore ask all ratepayers to let us know your e-mail address, so that we may update you with important news and information as it occurs. We will not pass it to any commercial organisations. Please email your name and Board (either Axe Brue or Parrett):**
drainage.boards@btconnect.com



1 CHURCH STREET, HIGHBRIDGE, TA9 3AE

Tel: 01278 789906

Fax: 01278 793443

Email:

drainage.boards@btconnect.com

Change of Land Ownership

The Board would like to take the opportunity to remind land owners that when land ownership is passed on, they must inform the Board of the changes. Additionally the Board would ask that the previous owner passes on the details of the new land owner. This allows the Board to keep its information up to date and provide accurate drainage rates.

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. Details of how this information can be accessed from your own computer will be made available on the Consortium website: www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

PARRETT MEMBERSHIP

(All elected members are unpaid volunteers)

| <u>District</u> | <u>Member</u> |
|----------------------|---|
| Aller Moor | P Maltby |
| Bridgwater & Pawlett | M Young W Barnard S Austin A Moore |
| Cannington & Wembdon | J Irish R Marchent A Rowe |
| Chedzoy | R Roberts |
| Curry Moor | R Barrington A Gothard |
| Dunster | A Fewings |
| King's | A Bradford |
| Sedgemoor | B Bryer D Vigar |
| Langport | R Coombes R England |
| North Moor | J Lock M Bere |
| OMW | J Winslade P Betty |
| Stanmoor | M Winslade |
| Stockland | P House |
| West Sedgemoor | C Passmore G Theed |

Appointed Members:

Cllr D Alder, R Archer, Cllr S Austen, D Ayers, Cllr D Durdan, Cllr I Dyer, Cllr A Fraser MBE, Cllr A Gillling, P Gooding, Cllr A Hamlin, Cllr D Hill, Cllr S Kingham, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr R Lillis, Cllr R Mills, Cllr A Moore, Cllr C Morgan, Cllr P Palmer, S Parker, D Spicer, Cllr P Stone and Cllr J Taylor.

ENQUIRIES

For general enquiries please call:
01278 789906

(09.00hrs – 17.00hrs Mon-Fri)

Out of hours: 07887 687746

Email: drainage.boards@btconnect.com

www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

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

For enquiries please contact:

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

