

### **A message from the Chairman, Peter Maltby**

I thought this year I would start with a few statistics:  
The Board area is 24,607 hectares, 60,805 acres.  
Number of water level control structures operated: 279.  
Length of watercourse maintained: 584 km (360 miles) and  
Number of homes/businesses within IDB area 10,887.

Work on the 20 year Flood Action Plan continues, with our priorities being to get all the major watercourses in our area working to a high standard.

Two projects that have taken time to come to fruition are the damaged water feed to Pawlett Hams which is now moving forward as well as works in the Minehead area, in conjunction with West Somerset Council, to improve the evacuation of flood water.

The Board has had to increase the rates by 1% this coming year to help finance our own schemes, but also because of inflationary pressure and an increase of 2% to the precept paid to the Environment Agency. Our team working for the Somerset Rivers Authority have overseen the maintenance dredging trials on the Parrett between Burrowbridge and Westonzoyland Pumping Station. Preliminary results on these look very promising, being not only cost effective but also appearing to have minimal environmental impact.



### **River Parrett Dredging Trials**

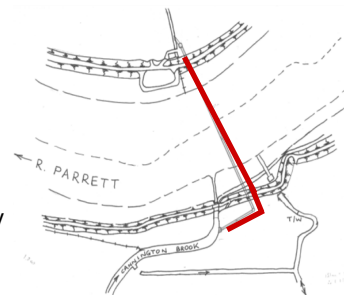
The River Parrett is tidal for over 20 miles from the mouth at Burnham to Oath Sluice near Langport. The extreme tidal range of the Severn Estuary generates very high incoming tidal velocities that bring with it large volumes of silt that accumulates on the banks of the Rivers Parrett and Tone. The Board is working with the Somerset Rivers Authority and the Environment Agency to determine if there are cost effective methods for maintaining a better river channel capacity and so reducing the risk of flood damage to property and businesses.



Last year Van Oord, a Dutch company, was employed to conduct de-silting work using a water injection method on a length of the River Parrett from Westonzoyland Pumping Station to Burrowbridge (approx. 2.5 miles). Low pressure jets of water agitate silt particles on the river bed causing them to become suspended in the water and flow downstream into the outer estuary. This type of dredging had never before been used by the Board however the Environment Agency has utilised an earlier version in the early 2000's. In order to determine the effectiveness and impact from the work, monitoring and testing of the river water was undertaken before work started and for up to a month after it finished. The results have revealed a wealth of information about how the silt moves around the Parrett Estuary allowing future dredging work to be targeted at the best places and undertaken at the most appropriate time.

### **Pawlett Hams Water Supply**

In the autumn of 2015, the summer feed water supply pipe to Pawlett Hams was badly damaged and inoperable when part of the tidal flood bank slipped and failed during spring tides. The Board's engineers are currently finalising a scheme for new pipeline which will be drilled to go underneath the river, giving the pipe protection from erosion or any future damage. This is a relatively new technique which was not available when the last pipeline was constructed in 1982. The image on the right shows the proposed route under the river which will be entirely underground apart from an inspection chamber on each side of the river which will be used for maintenance and supplementary pumping in very dry summers. Water will still be taken from Cannington Brook but via a new inlet structure.



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### **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.



## Annual Channel Works

The Board will maintain approx. 584,000m (360 miles) of watercourse as part of the annual works programme

## Income

The Board has resolved to set the rate for the current financial year:  
**Parrett Drainage Board: 6.513p in the £**

## Flow Gauging

In early February this year Somerset experienced several days of heavy rainfall which resulted in bankfull conditions on many rivers included the Rivers Parrett and Tone in the Burrowbridge area following the trialling of an experimental method of dredging called water injection dredging. Flow gauging was carried out to measure the rate of flow of the river at several places in the area to determine the capacity before and after dredging. The flow was gauged at Burrowbridge where it was in excess of 26 Tons of water passing through every second. Two further gaugings were undertaken upstream showing that the River Tone made up one third of this flow and the River Parrett made up two thirds of this flow.



Staff carrying out monitoring on the River Parrett during the Van Oord Dredging Trials.

## Prosecution

It is an offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000, if any person without the consent of the Parrett 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.

## Dunball Culvert Collapse

Following heavy rainfall in late November 2016, a hole appeared in the tarmac of the footpath outside the Admirals Table public house at Dunball. After some excavation and safety work the Board's engineers were able to inspect the hole more closely and it was established that an old brickwork culvert had collapsed leaving nothing to support the tarmac above. The Board brought in an emergency repair team from Crestmoor Construction to assist in repairing the culvert and reinstating the footpath outside the public house. The total length of culvert that had to be replaced was 5.3 metres. This was achieved by rebuilding the culvert whilst temporarily diverting water through the culvert to allow works to proceed. The image below shows the cover slabs laid on top of the new blockwork. A membrane was then laid on top of the slab to stop any future problems from water and de-icing salt before a layer of tarmac was laid and joined into the original surfacing.



## Beer Wall Sluice

It has taken almost two years but Beer Wall is finally complete. Phase three of the site was managed by the Environment Agency (EA) and was finished near Christmas 2016. This new system allows floodwater to be diverted from the Soway and Langacre through much wider new concrete box culverts. These works were undertaken after the 2013/14 floods which damaged around 600 homes and about 17,000 acres of farmland. The two new culverts have also both been fitted with new, state of the art, tilting weirs giving maximum control over the amount of water flowing through.



Fishing platforms and eel passes have also been installed, trees have been planted and grass has been sown in an effort to make the landscape look as natural as possible. The erosion damage to the downstream banks that occurred from high flows earlier this year will be repaired by the Environment Agency when ground conditions allow. The Board has requested that the repaired banks are surcharged to allow for future settlement of the peaty fill material.

## Enquiries

For general enquiries please call:  
01278 789906

(09.00hrs – 17.00hrs Mon-Fri)

Out of hours: 07887 687746

Email: [admin@somersetdb.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersetdb.co.uk)

[www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://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**

## Meetings Calendar 2017/18

Dates of the Full Board meetings are:

**20 June 2017 2.15pm**

**14 November 2017 2.15pm**

**06 February 2018 2.15pm**

**Venue: Bradbury House, Highbridge**

For the complete meetings calendar:

[www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk)

## Telemetry

Information from water level monitoring stations can be accessed from the Consortium website:

[www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk/operations/telemetry](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk/operations/telemetry)

Username: SDBC

Password: SDBC

## Direct Debits



From 1st April 2017 your drainage rates may be paid by Direct Debit. A mandate is included with this newsletter, please complete it and send it back in the pre-paid envelope provided.

## Membership

(all elected members are unpaid volunteers)

### District

### Member

Allermoor  
Bridgwater & Pawlett

P Maltby  
M Young  
W Barnard

Cannington & Wembdon

C Day  
J Irish  
B Rowe

Chedzoy  
Currymoor  
Dunster  
King's Sedgemoor  
& Cary Valley

R Horsington  
R Barrington  
A Fewings  
T Bradford  
B Bryer  
D Vigar

Langport

R Coombes  
M Heywood  
J Lock  
T Stanbury

Northmoor

M Bere  
J Winslade

OMW

P Betty  
M Winslade MBE  
P House  
C Passmore  
G Theed

Stanmoor

Stockland

West Sedgemoor

## Appointed Members

R Archer, Cllr A Bown,  
Cllr M Caswell, Cllr R Caswell,  
Cllr D Durdan, Cllr I Dyer,

Cllr A Fraser MBE, Cllr A Gilling, J Healey,  
Cllr S Kingham, J Lang, Cllr M Lewis,  
Cllr B Maitland-Walker, Cllr A Moore,  
Cllr C Morgan, S Parker, Cllr L Perry,  
Cllr J Roundell Greene, D Spicer,  
Cllr P Stone, J Swayne, J Taylor &  
Cllr N Weeks.