

Minutes of the Axe Catchment Meeting Held at Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge
Friday 08 May 2015 at 10:30hrs **Chairman: Mr Jim Lukins**

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| 1 | Attendance and Apologies: as per register appended | Action |
| 2 | Items additional to the agenda: Any other business: Update of Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) | |
| 3 | Declarations of interest: None at this time. | |
| 4 | Opportunity for the public to address the meeting: no members of the public present. | |
| 5 | Minutes of the Axe Catchment meeting held on 28 November 2014: (appended) having been previously circulated, one amendment was made: Item 6 Hall Road should read haul road. With this amendment the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held. | |
| 6 | Matters Arising: Item 6 National Grid - N Stevens (NWS) advised that National Grid is no longer seeking to have most of our byelaws dis-applied, they will only seek to have those with limited impacts dis-applied, such as storage on banks.. The development consent order (DCO) is proceeding within the Board's Byelaws and regulations. A Statement of Common Ground has been presented to the Planning Inspector, an issues specific hearing is to be held, from which a satisfactory conclusion is expected.
Item 6 Bleadon Sluice – Concern has been expressed for water levels at Brean Cross; N Stevens (NWS) advised that the Environment Agency (the Agency) are managing water levels, however to amend levels would prove detrimental to structures throughout the area. Members were advised that the Brean Cross structure was not designed to be operated daily. Local members opined that if Bleadon Sluice is not repaired, a stone bay may be required at the River Yeo.
Item 6 Hixham Rhyne – members were advised that maintenance of this Agency watercourse has secured funding within the SRA Enhanced Maintenance Programme. Investigation of lower sections of the Hixham Rhyne will be undertaken by M S Wall (MSW) and A Dowden (AJD).
Upper sections (above the old pumping station at Rodney Stoke) may require re-profiling due to cattle pounding and a lack of maintenance. It was agreed that recent weed cutting has improved the watercourse, however the original profile would provide better conveyance and evacuation of water. NWS advised that telemetry is available on this watercourse to enable monitoring of water levels.
Item 6 May Ditch – members were advised that Spratt's are currently undertaking works in this area, to a satisfactory standard.
Item 6 Labourham Drove – AJD advised that works to repair the damaged headwall of a culvert has not been completed; AJD was instructed to investigate.
Item 8b Future Maintenance: Should read: Tenders at March 2015 to be awarded as Coastal 1yr, Axe 2yrs and Brue 3yrs. | MSW/
AJD |
| 7 | Finance – overview of expenditure and budget: (appended) S Gee (SMG) briefed members on the report, advising that routine maintenance is currently within budget, engineering schemes are under budget due to engineering resources being utilised to assist on the Thorney ring bank projects. Members noted the report as submitted. | |
| 8 | Engineering Report: a) Maintenance and Improvements: 1) Tenders: MSW advised that no tender was received from R Duckett for maintenance in the Axe area, however a new contractor to the Board, D Rousell had submitted a tender. Tenders awarded to Tucker, Stott, Spratt and Rousell on a two year contract. All contractors are encouraged to contact landowners prior to entry. Members were informed that the Clerk is seeking to arrange with the Highways Agency (Highways) that maintenance to the motorway channels would be re-charged by way of an agreement to be drawn up between the Board and Highways.
2) Bailiffs Wall: following maintenance work the contractor is due to return to raise the bank in one corner as necessary.
3) Lower Rhyne AX01: following damage to a section of gabion baskets work has been undertaken by Ken Gordon to re-profile the banks and install stakes to hold the baskets in place and help protect contractor's equipment. The access has been improved to the structure for health and safety purposes.
4) Ivy Down Ditch: MSW advised that works have been completed to improve the capacity within the culvert and revetment works. A contribution to the works has been received from the landowner. A survey of the house was undertaken prior and post works to protect the Board from claims for compensation for damage. An agreement has been drawn up stating future liability for the structure lies with the householders, not the Board.
5) Biddisham Lane: a weed screen has been installed by the Board, which the Parish Council is | AJD |

being encouraged to maintain.

6) Old River Axe Outfall BA02: the original structure of a single penstock with 600mm pipe has been replaced with works being undertaken by the Board; this involves the installation of a 4m piles to support a box culvert with split door to allow overshoot or undershoot flow and evacuation of water from the Old River Axe system. The works will be completed shortly.

MSW

7) Castle Mill MOT Centre: A request has been made to a riparian owner to repair or replace a damaged culvert at Castle Mill MOT Centre, however no response has been received. It was agreed that officers should proceed with enforcement by serving Notice for the works to be completed within a set time period.

b) Future maintenance contract strategy: MSW advised that following a tendering exercise and a meeting of the Tenders Committee maintenance contracts have been awarded as follows: Coastal Catchment 1 year, Axe Catchment 2 years and Brue Catchment 3 years. Tenders will be invited next year for the Coastal catchment as a 3 year contract. Members concurred that staggered 3 year contracts would encourage new contractors to tender and allow contractors to plan investment in plant and equipment.

Sperts Rhyne: members gave consideration to a request from the Agent of a landowner to award compensation for 'damage caused whilst undertaking routine maintenance':

- Board has chain harrowed grass seed to a small area
- Area was in poor condition; believed to be from previous grass keep tenant
- Board is entitled to spread spoil from maintenance

Although no vote was taken, members agreed that in this instance no compensation is due, and that all contractors would be encouraged to be mindful of private property when undertaking entry and maintenance.

9 **Invitations to previous Board members:** It had been agreed at amalgamation that members from the Lower Axe, Lower Brue and Upper Axe and Upper Brue boards that did not become Axe Brue members would be invited to attend Catchment meetings, however no previous members attend meetings. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the previous members to advise that invitations will no longer be sent out, however as members of the public they are welcome to attend and address the committee.

NWS

10 **Any Other Business: 1) Webbs Rhyne, Knowle Moor:** AJD advised that a landowner has requested this watercourse is re-routed to reduce maintenance issues; the work would include installation of 2 access gates and associated culverts. AJD was instructed to investigate the necessary work and cost to report at a future meeting.

AJD

2) Somerset Rivers Authority: NWS advised members that the SRA has a website which provides information and has a question & answer section that is helpful.

A Common Works Programme and Enhanced Maintenance Works Programme have been formulated; a meeting will be held by members of the SRA to discuss additional works at the end of May 2015.

Post Code Lottery funding has been received to enable a number of land management project works to be undertaken.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is not be appropriate for the funding of maintenance works as it is mainly project specific.

The next meeting of the SRA joint working group sub-committee, (12 Axe Brue and 12 Parrett Board members), is 11 May 2015.

11 **Date and venue for next meeting:** unless stated all future meetings will be held at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge TA9 3BW commencing at 10:30hrs.

Finance & Governance 02 June 2015

Full Board 09 June 2015

Axe Catchment 28 August 2015.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending; the meeting was closed at 12:20hrs.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE