

- 1 **Attendance and Apologies:** as per register appended. The Chairman welcomed C-A Porter and R Adlam, both returning from absences.
- 2 **Items additional to the agenda:** EFRA evidence request, Highways England Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and SRA Funding.
SRA Funding: the four IDB members of the SRA Board consider it appropriate for a contribution of £10k to be made from each Board to the SRA funds for 2016/17, as per last year, to enable the IDB to be fairly represented in the SRA decision making process.
NWS advised that SRA budget estimates for next year remain as the current year with an item of £40k for IDB backfill costs.
It was agreed that this decision should be approved by each Board.
- 3 **Declarations of interest:** none at this time.
- 4 **Finance Report – current finance position and income to expenditure to year end:** (appended) S Gee (SMG) briefed members on the report, advising that at 10th February there is a surplus of £83k which will reduce to an estimated £45k by year end. The report was duly noted by members.
- 5 **Engineering Programme Update:** I Sturdy (IDS) advised members that a 3 year programme of works will be devised in place of the previous 5 year plan, to be beneficial and achievable, however additional resources are required to deliver the programme.
Progress to be monitored and reported to the Board as necessary.
Axe Brue – programme delivered more work than intended, allowing works from previous year to be completed
Parrett – programme delivery is as scheduled for the year
Pawlett Hams: a twin pipe water supply to Pawlett Hams which runs under the tidal River Parrett has failed due to bank slip on the southern side of the river resulting in the loss of approximately 80m of the pipeline d; investigations are being undertaken by officers with the assistance of Crestmoor Construction. IDS advised that £100k has currently been put aside for the repair of this scheme, however full costs and liability will not be known until investigations and negotiations with the Environment Agency (EA) have been continued.
Options for water supply to the area are being considered to ensure that fresh water is available during the summer months.
- 6 **Staffing:** The Chairman expressed the gratitude of the Board to K Kingston for providing administration cover in the absence of C-A Porter.
a) Planning and Development Control: NWS advised that A Sherwood, Planning Consultant, has expressed a desire to leave the Board in the near future. Current recruitment searches have proven unsuccessful, therefore requirements have been placed with recruitment agencies to actively seek suitable candidates to fill a full time position.
Members were advised that one full time Development Control Officer is the preferred option, which will assist in supporting our services to North Somerset Levels IDB and their development requirements.
Members approved the recruitment process for appointing a full time Planning Officer, this item was not voted upon.
b) Trainee Technicians: NWS advised that in line with Resolution 4 of the previous meeting, Engineering Technician apprenticeships are being pursued with two local colleges, Bridgwater and Taunton (Somerset College).
Somerset College has access to a Government database of apprenticeship applicants.
Funding may be available in full, for the duration of training, if training begins while the apprentices are under 19 years of age.
Members were encouraged to submit names of potential candidates.
Proposed B Rowe, Seconded E Champion ‘that the Board implements an apprenticeship programme for two Engineering Technicians.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 1
c) Temporary Staff: NWS advised that S Purchase, Administration Support Officer, is on a one year temporary contract to enable a review of the Planning Officer position.
Engineering staff – some members expressed the view that recruitment of more experienced staff was a greater priority due to the longer time required to train apprentices to become competent and fully productive. Due to concern expressed about resources the Clerk recommended recruiting an extra engineer to undertake Board and SRA work.
Members were in general agreement, this item was not voted upon.

Action

RES 1

- 7 **Business Planning – Proposed 5 year business plan:** NWS advised that it would be of benefit to the Boards to prepare a 5 year business plan to include such items as recruitment and succession.
- Members agreed the necessity of a business plan and were encouraged by the Clerk to submit items for inclusion
 - In line with Resolution 3 of the previous meeting, Tony Bradford reported advice from ADA that the Somerset IDBs should seriously consider increasing their staffing resources to be able to undertake more work commissioned by the SRA and take up the opportunities offered by PSCA arrangements with the Agency. T Bradford recommended contact with Innes Thomson, ADA Chief Executive. It was agreed that the Clerk would discuss this matter with I Thomson at a meeting scheduled for week commencing 22 February
 - Members accept that there will be a cost implication to employing any additional engineering capacity
 - Members recommended that the EA are consulted in discussions to formulate a business plan, so that our plan may incorporate any potential of the EA withdrawing from some maintenance and asset management
 - Members concurred that the IDB must be involved with the SRA and resources should be provided as necessary
 - The 5 year business plan will be an on-going project to be reported at future meetings
- It was agreed that the Clerk would prepare a paper for member perusal prior to a future meeting.
- 8 **Public Sector Co-Operation Agreement and other Agreements:** NWS advised that the following agreements are in place:
- PSCA with the EA: schemes and individual works to be agreed
 - EA: bespoke agreement for dredging contract being undertaken by WM Plant
 - SCC: funding agreement for dredging contract being undertaken by WM Plant
 - The previous two agreements will be superseded by new agreements with the EA for any future works on Main River. This type of work may be included within a PSCA in future.
 - SCC is developing a general agreement for works undertaken for the SRA
 - MoU – IDB has been successful in securing a MoU with Highways England (HE) for routine works on motorway ditches. The IDB is now a registered supplier to HE for any works related to motorway drainage channels at contract rates plus a percentage for on-costs. This will allow flexibility to employ the IDB to undertake other works for HE.
- 9 **Adoption of IT policies for staff:** NWS advised that staff were consulted in December 2015, with a four week consultation period. One comment has been received regarding personal equipment linking into the Board system.
- Personal equipment is not included within the policy, however this will be considered in due course with regard to virus imports, theft or loss of device, etc.
- The policy enables the Board to monitor internet use of individual users.
- Members agreed that the policy was necessary; this was not voted upon.**
- 10 **Committee members, deputies and date of the AGM:** NWS and C-A Porter advised of vacancies on this committee for both Boards following Board election and changes.
- The Committee has an arrangement of 7 Axe Brue and 6 Parrett members, currently there are the following vacancies: Axe Brue – 1 member and 2 deputies, Parrett – 1 deputy.
- Proposed J Fear, Seconded M E Wall ‘that each Board decide its representation to the SDBC Management Committee with one Local Authority appointed member as a minimum.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 2**
- Date of AGM:** members had previously requested a review of the meeting date, however it was agreed that early winter would be appropriate.
- NWS advised that a meeting in Spring would be a burden due to the high work rate at this time of year with the addition of disseminating the annual rate demands and newsletters.
- Members expressed that the meeting should be clearly advertised to provide ratepayers an opportunity to attend, however due to the cost it will not be advertised in the local press.
- It was further agreed that the Clerk would explore the possibility of inviting a guest speaker.
- Proposed T Bradford, Seconded B Rowe ‘that the SDBC Annual Meeting is held in early winter with the date quoted on the annual newsletter and the Boards’ website.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 3**
- 11 **Salaries Committee meeting and representatives:** the Salaries Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 10.30am.
- After a short discussion representatives were agreed as: **Tony Bradford, Jeff Fear, Alan Franks, Cllr A Gilling, Peter Maltby, Martin Watts and Mervyn Winslade MBE.**
- Deputies: **Ray Adlam and Brian Rowe.**
- Mr Bradford submitted his apologies for the meeting; R Adlam will deputise.

- 12 . **Minutes of the last meeting held on 08 December 2015:** (appended) Item 14 Dredging Strategy and Fordgate Ring Bank were queried for accuracy, as the minutes were deemed to be confusing; it was agreed that the audio recording would be reviewed out of meeting and members advised accordingly.
Having been previously circulated, with regard to the enquiry, the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held. C-AP
- 13 **Matters Arising: Dredging Strategy: *Previous minute:*** *Members were advised that an SRA meeting is to be held in December to set up a committee to review a dredging strategy. Two IDB members as well as SRA members are invited to attend to formulate the strategy. NWS advised that officers have met to devise the strategy with IDB member involvement. Members opined that they were not satisfied with the short notice and lack of consultation from the SRA.*
Updated minute: Members were advised that an invitation had been extended to the IDB to provide a representative to sit on a Dredging Strategy Board, the next meeting would be 09 December the following day. There would be two SRA members on the Strategy Board, one IDB member and the SRA Chair, as well as NWS, IDS and PAB as officers.
NWS advised that officers had attended a number of previous meetings to prepare information to enable formation of a strategy. The Clerk apologised for the short notice but time was very limited in organising member involvement and the meeting today offered an opportunity to decide the IDB representative. The meeting on 09 December is to discuss a possible scoping document to help formalise the strategy.
Members were not satisfied with the short notice, 24 hours, and all gave apologies due to prior commitments.
Fordgate Ring Bank: J Taylor declared a personal interest.
Previous minute: *Members were advised that the SRA disapproved of the design submitted for a ring bank at Fordgate rather than the principal. It is understood that this matter is still under consideration.*
Updated minute: Northmoor Ringbanks: Julian Taylor declared an interest and advised members that the summary document produced by the Agency on behalf of the SRA stated that there appeared to be insufficient interest from the community at Fordgate for a ringbank scheme. J Taylor advised that the community had made comments about a possible alternative scheme that had not been reflected in the document. The SRA had been asked to reconsider the project. PCM confirmed that the SRA were not against the scheme, concerns had been expressed about the design.
Lincolnshire Presentation: members expressed their gratitude to Mr Bradford for arranging the Lincolnshire meeting held in January, as it was found to be useful and informative.
- 14 **Any Other Business: 1) Bio-security:** NWS reported that he had noted concerns that had been expressed about the impacts increased biosecurity would have on the IDB maintenance works programme. Increasing levels of guidance recommended increased biosecurity measures Wendy Welland reinforced the Clerks comments and expressed concern for TB cross-contamination, particularly on farms with High Health Status. NWS advised that he would seek advice from ADA, as disinfection of machines and contractors may need to be factored into maintenance contracts and, if required, the cost of additional access gates would result in increased cost to the Board. NWS
2) EFRA: NWS advised that EFRA are seeking evidence regarding flood risk management practices in England and any changes that should be considered. NWS will respond to Defra however any member with comments for inclusion should speak to the Clerk.
3) National Grid: IDS advised that the Hinckley agreement, final version, retains relevant Byelaws. Costs for regulating, inspecting and approving works will be re-coverable.
4) Flood Re: members were advised by Julian Taylor that this service will promote the availability and affordability of flood insurance for homeowners across the UK who are at risk of flooding. C-A Porter will forward the information to all Board members with email. C-AP
5) SRA: members requested a meeting of the joint SRA Working Group to address the MoU and funding in detail. It was agreed, if possible, to schedule a meeting between an SRA workshop and SRA Board meeting in March 2016.
6) Management Committee Meetings: a request was made for meetings to be equally spaced throughout the year. The Clerk reminded members that in previous years Board members had requested no meetings be held during the summer as attending was difficult due to work commitments. It was agreed that an additional meeting could be arranged if necessary. NWS/
C-AP

- 15 **Date and venue for next meeting:** unless stated all meetings will be held at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge TA9 3BW commencing at 10:30hrs.
- Salaries Committee Tuesday 22 March 2016
 - Management Committee Tuesday 30 August 2016

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending;
the meeting was closed at 12.37hrs

.....
CHAIRMAN

.....
DATE