

**Minutes of the Parrett Works Committee held on Tuesday 28 February 2017, at 14.15hrs  
at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3BW Chairman: Cllr Nick Weeks**

1. **Attendance and Apologies:** as register appended – B Rowe and M Winslade MBE.  
Expenditors Nick Lockyer and Richard Vaux were welcomed to the meeting. Members were advised that the sub-committee is authorised to invite the attendance of non-members with relevant experience or expertise to assist in the work of the Board it considers necessary.
2. **Items additional to the agenda:** None
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None at this time
4. **Finance – overview of expenditure and budget:** (appended) Stephen Gee (SMG) advised that he is confident the Board maintenance programme will be within budget at year end.  
J Lang expressed concern that emergency highway culvert repairs at the Admirals Landing, Dunball may be funded by the Board.  
I Sturdy (IDS) advised that contributions are being sought from the Highway Authority and the developers of the Hinkley Freight Management Centre near the A38 roundabout.  
The report was accepted.
5. **Engineering Report:** (appended)
  - a) **Maintenance Report** (inc Expenditor's programme of works): P Ham (PSH) provided an overview of the report for members with the following points to note (this list is not exhaustive):
    - The JCB has an additional 37 hours usage; members concurred that the JCB is an emergency machine and should be retained
    - All Parrett areas have been completed within the programme
    - Photo presentation of additional works and works/repairs to be undertaken
    - **A38** Admiral Landing culvert collapse: cause has been investigated, and identified as unconsented gully connection made. Discussions with Highway Authority in progress.
    - **Stearth Marsh scheme:** the EA are monitoring bank erosion on the Parrett right bank near Black Rock outfall and siltation that is occurring at the outfall near Dowell's Farm Stearth.
    - **Pawlett Hams** bank erosion, opposite Combwich is being monitored by the EA
    - **Walpole solar farm:** fence has been erected incorrectly; PSH to contact site management
    - **Tuckett's Clyse, Combwich:** the EA will be replacing the damaged Clyse
    - **Straight Drove, Chilton Trinity:** spoil from Cannington FAS transportation via track causing bank damage. Culverts under the drove to be monitored and investigated
    - **Minehead:** weed cutting has been undertaken however there is still additional work required in the Moat that needs to be undertaken by Bourne Leisure (Butlins)
    - **Nythe Road Culvert:** headwall continue to deflect; SCC are aware but will not currently take any action.
    - The Sowey is over topping downstream of Beer Wall and flowing through a temporary bagwork defence on the downstream right bank into the KSD area EA will be working on the repair during April 2017, this will cause summer penn to be delayed by approx. 2 weeks.
    - **Beer Wall tilting weir:** members expressed concern that this structure had been operated without consultation with the Board or in conjunction with KSD operation and other watercourses. I Sturdy (IDS) advised that the EA have telemetry information identifying the gate operations in the flood event which shows operations to Monksleaze and Dunball were in accordance with the pre improvement procedures. More flexible operation of Monksleaze was now possible due to the additional capacity that exists with the new culverts under the A378. The incomplete scheme should be operated as historically, unless in an emergency situation following consultation with the IDB. The Clerk asked that members give consideration as to when the new weir should be operated so that officers discuss the proposal with the Agency. It was agreed that the critical level and freeboard should be agreed with the EA, and that further discussion is required with Allermoor members and upstream residents to determine this level. Outcomes of these meetings to be reported at the June meeting of the Full Board.
    - **Parrett work contract tenders:** PSH advised that contractors had been invited to express an interest in tendering for maintenance contracts. There are nine contractors on the preferred supplier list. Schedule and plans are available for member perusal.
    - All contractors will be required to complete a supplier's assessment questionnaire to comply with the Board procurement procedures and regulations.
    - The meeting was asked by a member if the Board was content that contracts include enough in-house works and whether it would be cheaper to undertake Dunster works by

Action

IDS/NS

- contractors; historically there have been no contractors in the Dunster area and the cost of reaching the area would be much greater than moving the in-house machines.
- PSH advised that if a PSCA is agreed the IDB may undertake some EA watercourses in June prior to the scheduled Board maintenance programme.
- Members requested a tender review meeting to assess the areas.

**Proposed T Bradford, Seconded J Winslade ‘that the Parrett Works Committee hold an additional meeting to discuss the areas included within the rhyne cleaning tenders.’ Vote: For 7, Against 0, Abstain 2 motion carried RESOLUTION 1**

RES 1  
PSH

**Expenditors N Lockyer (NIL) and R Vaux (RCV):** The Expenditors were welcomed to the meeting and invited to address the members (this list is not exhaustive):

- All contractors have finished on time with no problems
- Fly tipping is taking much more of Expenditors and Operators time, the situation is getting progressively worse
- TB advised that ADA has taken this matter to government
- JW advised that approx. 350 tyres had been dumped at Saltmoor
- Farmers are now being re-charged for removal of fly tipped material
- Riparian owners are taking responsibility for tree works; NE had sent letters to landowners to say contractors will assist at riparian cost
- Raised water levels have worked, although some tampering has occurred on Westmoor

Further to an enquiry, members were advised that NIL and RCV had been invited to attend as a trial, as they are Supervisory Expenditors whereas M Hill and A House are predominantly machine operatives

The Chairman thanked N Locker and R Vaux for addressing the meeting.

**b) Improvement Works Programme:** IDS provided an overview and update of the Engineering report (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Chadmead Scheme:** slide presentation – this scheme was funded by SCC at no cost to the Board
- **Fordgate Drainage Improvements:** improvement works to replace a collapsed retaining wall, bank stabilisation and channel clearance secured by three way funding
- **A38 Culvert Repairs at Dunball:** a viewed rhyne at Dunball which flows through a culvert alongside the A38 at the Admirals Table, experienced a wall failure and partial collapse. The culvert was rebuilt with the help of Crestmoor Construction. The repair was undertaken by the Board as the collapse affected the culvert capacity and the hole in the tarmac was a safety concern for pedestrians and vehicles pulling off the road. As a professional public body we undertook the repair due the risks to people and road traffic and our likely liability. Being adjacent to the highway the Board had to comply with all highways regulations. Initial investigation has shown the damage was probably caused by two surface water connections through the damaged length, however a full investigation with CCTV is required. At a time when public safety was paramount, the IDB took a responsible approach to the situation; the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were satisfied with the approach of the Board
- **Fordgate:** JW advised that the twin leaf gate on Park Brook had an operating issue, possibly gear box; IDS advised that he was not aware of operating issues and that an investigation would be undertaken as the structure may have to be replaced
- **Minehead investigations:** modelling has produced contradictory results, so more investigation will be conducted to see if the proposed new culvert will reduce upstream flood levels. A meeting may be held with consultants and local members.
- **Pawlett Hams Supply:** the EA have identified the preferred option for bank repairs, which will not affect the Board proposals for pipe repairs. Design of the pipeline can now be completed i.e. contract strategies for directional drilling and principal contractors. Environment Impact Assessment has been completed and submitted to the EA
- Cllr M Caswell advised that Truespeed of Bath would like to install fibre optic cable via Board pipe across Pawlett Hams; they have been advised to contact NWS

IDS

IDS

**6 Asset Management:** Nick Stevens (NWS)

16:00 hrs Cllr M Caswell left the meeting

**6a Culverts under highways:** NWS advised that there are over 600 culverts under highways in the IDBs areas in Somerset which have a vital role in the management of water levels and flood risk.

The liability for these culverts is uncertain and the Board has promoted the use of an inspection programme to assess the level of risk. The SRA has agreed to fund the inspection programme. The survey so far has produced some interesting information and indicates that many culverts are in a reasonable condition.

Historically it has been difficult to rectify problems on culverts under highways in conjunction with local authorities when issues have occurred on culverts that are not listed on that body's asset register. The SRA is funding the investigation as other partner organisations are unable to fund it. The Board has been informed by SCC that it does not have the financial resources to undertake works to culverts that are not on their asset database. The County takes the view that other pipes and ducts within the highway are the responsibility of that service provider

Members expressed concern that changes to the policy as resolved in Item 6 of the Works Committee meeting held on 20 September 2016 had not been carried out as instructed. NWS advised that the matter was raised and subsequently rejected by the SRA as a County Council and IDB matter.

J Lang (JL) is not satisfied that the SRA is acting reasonably.

IDS advised that the Board is undertaking works on West Sedgemoor and Allermoor rhyne maintenance funded by the SRA. Culverts under highways that are not on an asset register have proven problematic over a number of years and would recommend that the Board does not stop investigations of highway culverts. The resolution of the Board in September was for the Chair and Vice Chair to take the matter up with the SRA. The SRA has provided funding and thus the means by which issues can be addressed and is a way for the Board to work with other organisations to reach a favourable outcome for all partners. There is currently no cost to the Board for this inspection work.

NWS advised that the Board's legal advisor had been asked to investigate whether there are any precedents or any legal basis for a decision that the Board may need to make, however no response has yet been received.

It was recommended that advice is sought from ADA as to how IDB's nationally approach highways culvert works. It is understood that in Lincolnshire, the Environment Agency, County Council and IDB's have identified all culverts and contribute proportionately as a shared responsibility.

NWS advised that members would need to seek an agenda item at a future SRA Board meeting to enable discussion on this matter; the Clerk was requested to secure an agenda item.

It was recommended that members refer to the 20 year Flood Action Plan to remind them of the work streams, including resilient infrastructure i.e. highways – keeping highways clear of flooding, which was signed off by all parties in February 2014. Therefore members need to ensure that their current demands are consistent with their historic decisions.

**6b Flood banks:** NWS advised that officers are seeking to identify any raised bank by a rhyne or watercourse that should be categorized as a flood bank. IDB flood banks do exist at a number of locations eg Thorney and Perrymoor Bank. An inventory of flood banks will be compiled as there will be an expectation that the Board is responsible for their future maintenance.

**7 Development Control:** appended. IDS advised that applications for discharge under the Development Consent Order (DCO) have been received from Hinkley, for sites around Bridgwater, in particular Junction 23.

A Sherwood, Development Consultant, leaves the Board today having completed a handover with S Bunn, who assumes fulltime responsibility with administration assistance from S Purchase.

S Bunn is conducting meetings with SDC Homes in Sedgemoor, to ensure their developments in the vicinity of watercourses receives the appropriate guidance and advice from the Boards.

All applications are dealt with within timescales; planning applications within 3 weeks and land drainage consents within 2 months. If land drainage consents are not consented within two months they are deemed to have been consented. S Purchase therefore ensures that all applications, planning and consents, are disseminated, collated and responded to accordingly.

**7a Significant applications and sites:** nothing to report at this time.

**8 Health & Safety Monitoring Report:** NWS advised that no accidents or near misses have been reported.

**9 Staff matters:** NWS advised that the Parrett Full Board meeting of June 2016 gave authority for Expenditor and Operator salaries to be considered by the SDBC salaries committee to enable a consistent approach to cost of living and regrading; members of the Parrett Board sit on the salaries committee with Axe Brue members.

Supervising Expenditors are anxious to develop their career potential, and the Board has encouraged this in the past. Continued personal development is to be encouraged by appropriate, adequate training, which will also act as an incentive to retain services in an increasingly competitive market.

Appropriate training courses may be held in-house or externally as necessary for all staff. An

NWS

SMG

invitation may be extended to colleagues in neighbouring Drainage Boards to join training courses with costs re-charged accordingly.

The Board are actively seeking to recruit a Technical Supervisor and Project Engineer, however the response has been limited.

Consideration should also be given to retention of staff with regard to retirement, Hinkley, etc.

**10 Machinery and vehicles:** (appended).

**a) Usage:** mileage and hours as per enclosed report.

**b) Asset replacement:** PSH advised that there is no contingency once a machine has broken down, therefore delays may occur while repairs are undertaken. No asset renewals currently proposed.

Members expressed concern for future maintenance; do the machines get replaced or will the rhyne works go to tender? PSH explained this is why a large number of approved contractors are necessary.

SMG advised that the machinery fund will have approx. £160k at year end.

PSH was requested to provide a report on the future procurement of works operations and replacement machinery to the next scheduled meeting. Consideration should be given to any future commitment of transfers from the EA i.e. de-maining.

PSH

**11 Somerset Rivers Authority Programme:** NWS advised that the next scheduled meeting of the SRA Board will be held at Mendip DC on March 13<sup>th</sup>, to include budget for the forthcoming year, enhanced works programme for the forthcoming year, Memorandum of Understanding to be refreshed and calendar of meetings to be agreed. There will also be a Sowby/KSD update. The proposed programme was available for members to peruse, or direct from the SRA website.

Public question time is an agenda item, however questions need to be submitted in writing at least two days prior to the meeting.

**12 Minutes of the last Works Committee meeting 20 September 2016:** having previously been circulated were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**13 Matters Arising:** None

**14 Special Correspondence:** NWS advised that ADA has provided updates and a response to the work of the Environmental Select Committee that Neil Parrish MP Chairs, to gather information of the outcomes of the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act and the failure of government to implement section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act on SUDs, which has caused concern. ADA has also provided reminders to IDBs of the importance of strong governance policies and procedures.

Flood Ex will be held in Peterborough 17 & 18 May. Members were encouraged to attend. A flyer for the event will be included with the annual rate demands in April 2017.

C-AP

**15 Any Other Business:** none

**16 Date of next Board meetings: Policy Finance & Governance 06 June 2017**

Full Board 20 June 2017

Works Committee 12 September 2017

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending and closed the meeting at 16.45hrs

.....  
CHAIRMAN

.....  
DATE