

**Minutes of the Axe Catchment Meeting, held at Bradbury House, Market Street on  
Tuesday 18 April 2017 at 10.30am**

**Chairman: Mr Jim Lukins**

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| <p><b>1 Attendance and Apologies:</b> as per register appended. Dr R Burden, EA will be in attendance during the meeting.</p> <p><b>2 Items additional to the agenda:</b> N Stevens (NWS) National Audit Office (NAO) report</p> <p><b>3 Declarations of interest: Cllr A Gilling</b> – all matters relating to Ashfords Solicitors and Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) planning.<br/><b>Cllr L Scott</b> – all matters relating to land within Axbridge, Cheddar and Compton Bishop.</p> <p><b>4 Opportunity for the public to address the meeting:</b> None present</p> <p><b>5 Finance –overview of expenditure and budget:</b> (appended) members were advised that the report includes schemes completed to year end to provide an accurate report. NWS advised that funding is being drawn down from the funds set aside for improvement works resulting from the flooding in 2012/2013 as necessary i.e. Old River Axe Outfall. The report was accepted as submitted.</p> <p><b>6 Engineering Report:</b> a slide presentation was provided of Health &amp; Safety works completed.</p>  | <p><b>Action</b></p>                       |
| <p><b>6a Biddisham Drainage Improvement Scheme:</b> this is a scheme to bring improvements to an area poorly served by Viewed Rhynes. Matthew Wall (MW) identified that the first stage for improvements in the area was the reconstruction of The Old River Axe Outfall which is now completed. This new scheme will provide flood risk improvements to the low lying area around Manor Farm and land to the east of Biddisham Lane. The work is designed to provide for 2km of viewed rhyne connecting Badgeworth Great Rhyne and Old River Axe on Biddisham Lane. The works will include channel improvements including tree works and vegetation removal with reprofiling as necessary and replacement of some gateways to provide a summer water level of 4.95AOD. The principal landowner has been consulted and is in agreement to the proposals of the scheme, which would provide a new viewed rhyne with a better outlet to the Old River Axe Outfall, in an area that has no Board maintained watercourses. The work would encourage riparian owners to improve their watercourses.</p> <p>The original estimated cost is £27k, however following further investigation and including contingency, a new estimate is £48k. Officers recommend additional funding be taken from Board reserves.</p> <p><b>Proposed Cllr A Gilling, Seconded Cllr P Costello ‘that the Axe Catchment recommends approval of a 2km scheme to provide improved drainage and associated works at Biddisham with an estimated cost of £48,000 with £21,000 from Board reserves.’ Vote: unanimous RESOLUTION 1</b></p> | <p><b>PF&amp;G</b></p> <p><b>RES 1</b></p> |
| <p><b>6b Operational and Works updates:</b></p>  |  |
| <p><b>6c Update from Tenders Committee:</b> Members were advised that ten contractors were invited to tender for the three year annual channel works contracts with the process set up to encourage new contractors to submit tenders.</p> <p>The three year channel works contracts were awarded in-line with the Board Procurement Policy to John Tucker &amp; Son Ltd, JD Pope &amp; Son, Spratt’s Plant Hire, Mr D Rousell and Mr H Stott with a total contract cost of £35,575. Members were reminded that the Procurement Policy to encourage new contractors allowed awards to non-lowest tenders so that no contractor was awarded more than 50% of work to any one contractor where possible.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>6d Development Control:</b> (appended) A Sherwood has now left the organisation and S Bunn is leading the Boards Development Control Department and is also undertaking development control work in the North Somerset Levels IDB as part of our co-operation agreement with them.</p> <p>Ref 847 outline permission for 80 dwellings at Houlgate Way, Axbridge: J Fear expressed concern for flash floods within the area; A Dowden (AJD) concurred that run-off from the development is a concern to the Board.</p> <p>Ref 870 formation of new access at Holly Tree Cottage, Weare: M S Wall (MSW) advised that there is no major concern to the Board, however details of any culverting would be required with a Land Drainage Consent application.</p> <p>Ref 863 Extension of gypsy site at Yeo Bridge Farm, Lower Weare: members were surprised to see this application had been granted by SDC despite Board objections; there is no main sewer in this area.</p> <p>Pint Pot Cottage and infilling at Badgeworth: see Item 9 matters arising.</p>  |  |

**7 Bleadon Sluice – Update from Dr Rachel Burden, Environment Agency:** NWS advised that Bristol Water and Environment Agency (EA) had been invited to attend the meeting. Bristol Water provided a short letter setting out the current position with the approval of tenders residing with their Board of Directors. They also advised that future liaison should be with the Environment Agency.

The EA are committed to working with Bristol Water (BW); the work to the structure remains on BW capital works programme. A meeting has been held with BW/EA however no information from that meeting has been received to date. Clarification is to be sought regarding point of contact.

BW may not be aware of the scale of difficulties that landowners and businesses are experiencing; all involved to be encouraged to write to BW with concerns.

**8 Minutes of the Axe Catchment Sub-Committee meeting 18 November 2016:** (appended) having previously been circulated, the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.

**9 Matters arising: Item 7b Pint Pot Cottage:** the Clerk is awaiting legal advice regarding correspondence and the possible use of warrants to gain entry as the Land Drainage Act 1991 does not facilitate warrant of entry.

Consideration to employing services of a hand contractor was discussed to remove weed from the centre of the watercourse to prevent obstruction to conveyance. It was agreed to await the original legal response and also ask Ashfords Solicitors if other legislation could be invoked to facilitate works of the Board.

Mr Sperring has accused officers of victimisation; action undertaken by officers to be reviewed by members.

**Item 7g Land Drainage Consent application to culvert 60m of ordinary watercourse at Badgworth:** members were advised that no works have taken place and the pipes have been removed. Letter has been received from James Heapey MP enquiring of the matter to which the Clerk has responded.

**10 Any Other Business:** 1) A Dowden (AJD) Panborough Sluice: repair or replacement is now required for the structure which has an undershot door which keeps jamming, preventing correct use. AJD to investigate estimated costs for solutions.

2) T Tincknell advised that land in Wedmore Moor, previously sold by Greenslade Taylor Hunt is now for sale via David James & Partners.

3) National Audit Report (NAO) was not particularly well received by ADA as there had been a limited take up of amendments following comments to the NAO by ADA. The report highlights that the Axe Brue and Parrett are the largest Boards nationally (by membership) which exceeds Defra guidelines.

In conjunction with the RFCC Chairman a governance review of the Axe Brue and Parrett Boards is being undertaken.

4) Cllr Scott commended officers for the information letters included with the annual rate demand. A request was made for the newsletter to be made available to SDC Democratic Services for dissemination to council members.

**11 Date of next meetings:**

- **Full Board 13 June 2017**
- **Axe Catchment 29 August 2017**

All present were thanked for attending, in particular Dr Burden.

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 11.55 hrs

NWS

AJD

C-AP

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Chairman

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Date