

Minutes of a Brue Catchment Meeting Held at Bradbury House, Highbridge on Tuesday 16 May 2018 at 10.30 am

Chairman: Mr M Watts

The Chairman introduced the New CEO Roger Burge (RGB) and asked members to introduce themselves stating the area they represent.

- 1 **Attendance and Apologies:** As per registers appended.
- 2 **Items additional to the agenda:** Charlie Ainge (CA) Drove Crossing – Phil Brewin (PAB) would give an update.
- 3 **Declarations of interest:** None
- 4 **Opportunity for the public to address the meeting:** None
- 5 **Minutes of the Brue Catchment meeting held on 05 December 2017:** Having previously been circulated, the Chairman asked for an amendment of item 12 which should read “76p” not “26p”. With this amendment, the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting held.
All in favour
- 6 **Matters Arising:** - None
- 7 **Finance – overview of expenditure and budget:** (appended) Members were provided with an overview of the report with the following points of note: Jeff Fear (JF) asked for an explanation on the shortfall on the South Drain Favourable condition figure. Iain Sturdy (IDS) explained that the figure was shown as a shortfall as the funds had not yet been drawn down from the grant.
- 8 **Maintenance Programme:** Anthony Dowden (AJD) reported that the routine maintenance in the upper area had been completed.
Work was being carried out on Bargemans Cabbage which is a problem over the whole catchment. Flailing had been carried out on the yellow flower which had not been eradicated but seemed to be under control.
10.40 Phoebe Judah joined the meeting
Matthew Wall (MSW) reported that the routine maintenance in the lower area had been completed. Slides were shown of the Heath Rhyne before and after the desilting work. A video was shown of the silt pump (which was owned by the SDBC) carrying out part of the 4000m desilting. The cost of the work was £1744. Alan Franks (AF) was concerned that the spoil could kill the grass on the banks. There was a risk that this could be the case on modern grass but older grass would survive. The work was undertaken under notice.
MSW showed a slide of the tenders received for the Rhyne contract works on Area R. A new contractor had tendered, A Wall, whose tender was the cheapest. He would need to apply to be included on the Approved Supplier List. IDS explained that this was the procedure the Board followed in compliance with government regulations. If Mr Wall was not accepted, the contract would be awarded to the next lowest tender, Spratt Plant Hire.
CA asked if the new contractor would have to have a probationary period. The contract was awarded for 3 years but if the work was unsatisfactory the contract would be revoked.
Proposed: Pam Thorne (PT), seconded: Adrian Chidgey (AC) “that A Wall is awarded the 3 year contract for cleaning of Area R”. 11 For, 0 against, 2 abstentions. Motion carried.
RESOLUTION 1
David Banwell (DB) and CA reiterated their concerns regarding a probationary period. Members were reassured that the terms of the contract would cover this.
MSW asked Phil Brewin (PB) to give an update regarding the crossing at Jacks Drove, Tealham. The scheme had been passed over to PB as work was carried out under the Favourable Condition scheme. He reported that a sum of money was available. A number of culverts had been identified in need of work. Peter Struck was currently working on the design and work could be completed within the financial year.
- 9 **Improvements and capital works programme:** I Sturdy (IDS) provided an update of the works programme with the following points of note (this list is not exhaustive):
H&S was now into phase 3 – all in progress
There was pressure from EA to complete the favourable condition works on North and South Drains. The FRM 8 was still to be completed. This would go to EA and Defra which would enable the Board to be audited on these projects.
Bason Bridge – factory site was ongoing. A solution had been agreed with the developer to improve the drainage in the area.
11.10 Noel Lukins joined the meeting

Action

Course Ditch had been delayed due to weather conditions. Now scheduled for the end of June.
Meareway – A meeting was held with Mr Moseley. A spillway into an adjacent could be a solution. IDS had discussion with the Highways Agency and the SRA may be asked for a contribution to the cost of the works. The cost was in the region of £8-10k approximately
Tootle Bridge – now safer and easier to operate. The sediment had been cleared from the outlets to the culvert and had reestablished some spillways on private land. Landowners felt there was a better solution. As a result of this £15k had been secured from SRA to review and design.
Blackford Moor – Pumping Station – A PSCA agreement had been assigned with the EA. Schedule 3 within the agreement lists of items the EA as happy for IDB to carry out. The tilting weir was on that list. If it was not done through the PCSA it would be done through a flood risk permit.
RGB and IDS to meet with EA to set up regular strategic meetings. Discussion would be with Rachel Burden.

The programme of works was agreed at the rate setting meeting and progress was good.

10 **Development Control: (appended) –**

Planning – 1137 – travellers camp – objection had been removed

1101 – Query on foul drainage from mobile tea rooms – ongoing

Consents – R Clapp and A Franks declared an interest.

Rookery Farm – Containers going into field with caravans

MSW updated members regarding the Crown Inn at East Huntspill.

Slides were shown of the container that was removed. Nick Stevens wrote to Mr Cook to thank him for removing the container in question and also stated that any proposal for works, activities or storage within the 9m byelaw zone was subject to an application to the board for land drainage consent. Since then a mobile home/caravan had been put in its place with no application to the Board.

A temporary caravan is permitted by the planning authority but generally only while work was being carried out impacting on accommodation. The adjoining neighbour had also expressed concern as the land was in joint ownership. Members also raised concerns over the foul drainage arrangements if any. IDS suggested writing to the Cooks to find out their intentions.

It was agreed to contact Mr and Mrs Cook again. **Proposed: Jeff Fear, seconded: Charlie Ainge “that the Board follow a staged approach and a letter is sent to Mr and Mrs Cook regarding the siting of the mobile home/caravan and asking for their intentions”. All in favour.**

RESOLUTION 2

11 **Special Correspondence and meetings:** RGB gave an update regarding the reconstitution of the Board. The scheme was sent by the EA to the Defra Minister earlier this year. The order had gone for signature and Defra is expected to make the order in August. Target for reconstitution is 01 November 2018. RGB would attend a meeting on 16 May 2018 with the EA for a further update. An extraordinary meeting of the Full Axe Board would take place on 24 May 2018 to discuss the elected membership. 12 members had expressed their interest in remaining on the Board.

A discussion followed with the following points to note :

Some members stated they had not received this information.

Alan Franks - information was included in previous paperwork, where it asked member to let the office know of their interest.

DB - only 1 council member present and this needs to be addressed.

CA - recently met with Defra management who informed him that the reconstitution was as a result of the Boards' requirements. Members were concerned with the handling of the issue.

RGB explained that everyone had been given a chance to comment prior to agreement to reconstitute to follow a statutory process.

Noel Lukins (NL) - NAO does not realise that the members time is given for nothing, councillors are paid for their attendance, but appointed members were not.

Roy McKenzie (RM) - some councillors were given an allowance, but they also volunteer.

IDS - the observation from the NAO was the Axe Brue was too big compared with other Boards and it would be better for the members to take control rather than having it controlled.

JF - the NAO could not compel to reconstitute but could advise. They would advise Defra (land drainage is a very small part of Defra) and it would go to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee who are the masters of the EA in that area. A lot of pressure came from SDC who objected to the amount of LA membership and extent of meetings. In 2012 when the Boards amalgamated, Defra said they would support the amalgamation at the time but would ask it would be looked at again in 5 years. There was a suggestion that the Axe Brue merge with the Parrett Board. Members felt it was too soon for the Axe Brue.

CA - the NAO had no idea of the numbers or ratepayers in the Somerset area which is very different

in Lincolnshire. He felt the situation had not been handled very clearly.
AC - would be a guarantee that Council appointed members would attend.
AF - concerned regarding the age of the members, in 5 or 10 years time, there would be a big problem as the younger generation do not have the same knowledge.
RGB – all the above issues and concerns would be taken cognisance of during the reconstitution of the Board

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RM would attend a meeting of the SRA Scrutiny Panel as an MDC representative and also the whole county, and asked if members wished him to raise any concerns:

MSW - highway culverts and who would carry out the maintenance.

IDS - SCC had an asset register listing all the culverts that they thought were their responsibility. The IDB had an asset database with the culverts that had been built and are responsible for. There remained several 100 culverts under highways that were on neither register. These were the ones using SRA money to rectify any problems with them.

CA – desilting the Brue – ask SRA where does Brue desilting fit within the developing Brue plan which was now a key SRA project

JF – money designated for Brue was diverted to River Isle at Westport, objection was raised at the time

AF – Dog Leg Ditch – hoping for a meeting with Godwins. PAB trying to get in touch with County Council. Update would be given at full meeting

- 12 Dates of next meetings – extraordinary full board – 24 May 2018
Coastal Catchment 9 October 2018

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for attending, and closed the meeting at 12.12hrs.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE

BRUE CATCHMENT MEETING

Date: Tuesday 5 December 2017 Venue: Bradbury House, Highbridge

BOARD MEMBER	RETURN MILEAGE	PRESENT	APOLOGIES
ELECTED			
Ray Adlam	20	R.G. Adlam	
Charlie Ainge	14	CPHA	
David Banwell	14	<i>[Signature]</i>	
Adrian Chidgey			
Bob Clapp			✓
Alan Franks	20	<i>[Signature]</i>	
Jeff Fear		<i>[Signature]</i>	
John Frost	30	<i>[Signature]</i>	
Phil Holms			✓
Steve Hughes			
Phoebe Judah		<i>[Signature]</i>	
Noel Lukins			
Roy McKenzie Cllr			✓
Steve Mewes			
Alvin Neale			✓
Graham Noel Cllr			
John Parham Cllr			
Colin Pople			
Richard Shaw			
Martin Smith			✓
Pam Thorne		<i>[Signature]</i>	
Martin Watts	30	<i>[Signature]</i>	
Ross Whitcombe			
Richard Willcox			✓
Tim Youngs		<i>[Signature]</i>	