

MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON 21 JUN 21

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr J Fear Mr A Franks Mrs P Thorne Mr D Tratt Mr M E Wall Mr M Watts Mrs W Welland	Appointed Members: Cllr P Clayton Cllr J Cousins Cllr B Filmer Cllr A Gilling (C) Cllr A Hendry Cllr W Human Mr R Keen Cllr M Martin Cllr A Matthews Cllr M Murphy Cllr C Riches Cllr L Scott	Officers: Mr R Burge (Clerk) Mrs M Hammond Mrs C-A Morgan Mr I Sturdy Mr R Kidson Mr M S Wall Mr P Brewin Mr P Struck Mrs N Johnson Mr A Dowden	Public:
Approved Apologies:			
Mr B Clapp Mr N Lukins	Cllr M Healey	Mr R King	
Non-Approved Apologies:			
Mr C Durston Mr R Stitch			

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1. Apologies as per the above Attendance List.	
2. Items additional to the Agenda	2.1. Approval of Amendment to Board Standing Orders: The Clerk provided an overview of three minor amendments recommended by DEFRA to uplift the Standing Orders to allow for the continuation of remote Meetings where necessary. 2.2. Mrs P Thorne proposed, seconded by Cllr P Clayton, <i>'To approve the Amendment to Axe Brue Board Standing Orders – V1.2.'</i> Vote: All Agreed.	RESOLUTION 1
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1. Mr Watts specifically commented that he currently supplied a number of Contractors with building materials.	

	<p>3.2. Cllr a Gilling declared an interest in any and all matters relating to Ashford's Solicitors.</p> <p>3.3. Members were requested to submit declarations as necessary throughout the Meeting Agenda Items.</p>	
4. Opportunity for Members of the Public to address the Meeting	<p>4.1. There were no Members of the Public present at the Meeting.</p> <p>4.2. The Clerk reported that, following the Local Authority Elections, Appointed Member representation had been changed, and welcomed the following appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outgoing: Cllrs Polly Costello, Nick Cottle and John Woodman • New: Cllrs Jon Cousins, Bob Filmer and Mark Healey. 	
5. Approval of Minutes	<p>5.1. The Full Board Minutes of 16 Apr 21 were accepted unanimously and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting.</p>	
6. Matters Arising	<p>6.1. Cllr M Martin reported that he believed all Board Members had received a document at the weekend written by Mr R Adlam regarding the Grievance hearing from Oct 20, and requested an extraordinary Meeting be held, no sooner than 19 Jul 21 to discuss the content.</p> <p>6.2. Cllr Human recommended that the Board note receipt of the document and that no further action was taken as the Board had discussed the matter in the fullest detail at a previous Meeting held on 30 Oct 20.</p> <p>6.3. The Clerk excused himself from the Meeting room.</p> <p>6.4. Following much discussion, Cllr M Martin proposed, Seconded by Mr M Watts, that “That the Axe Brue Board conducts an extraordinary Meeting on 19 Jul 21 to discuss the content of the document received from Mr Adlam.”</p> <p>6.5. Mr Fear stated that, following the Board Meeting of 30 Oct 20, Mr Adlam chose to resign from the Board.</p> <p>6.6. Cllr Martin expressed serious concern for possible individual Member liability should legal action ensue.</p> <p>6.7. The Deputy Clerk reported that she had not received a copy of the document being discussed. However, she provided an overview of the Staff Grievance Procedure, reporting that legal guidance had been sought; the Board decision of Oct 20 had found 6 of 7 serious breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct claimed within the</p>	

Grievance letter, and the Election process was currently underway for the Westhay to Glastonbury catchment following Mr Adlam's subsequent resignation. She further reported that no legal action had been received at this point in time and that due process had been followed.

6.8. Cllr Human proposed an amendment to the proposal, Cllr M Murphy seconded "**That the Board note the document received from Mr Adlam and take no further action at this time.**"

The Chairman requested a vote to accept the amendment. Mr Watts asked for a registered vote:

For 11:

- Cllr A Hendry
- Cllr M Murphy
- Cllr P Clayton
- Mr R Keen
- Cllr a Matthews
- Cllr L Scott
- Cllr C Riches
- Cllr W Human
- Mrs P Thorne
- Mr J Fear
- Cllr a Gilling

Against 5:

- Mr M Watts
- Cllr M Martin
- Cllr J Cousins
- Mr M Wall
- Mrs W Welland

Abstain 3:

- Mr A Franks
- Mr D Tratt
- Cllr B Filmer

6.9. The Chairman declared the amendment accepted to become the substantive motion, and requested a vote on the substantive motion as proposed by Cllr Human and seconded by Cllr M Murphy "**That the Axe Brue Board note the document received from Mr Adlam and take no further action at this time.**"

Vote: Motion carried - Majority to accept. Mr Watts requested a recorded vote:

For 12:

RESOLUTION 2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr A Hendry • Cllr M Murphy • Cllr P Clayton • Mr R Keen • Cllr a Matthews • Cllr L Scott • Cllr C Riches • Cllr W Human • Mrs P Thorne • Mr J Fear • Cllr a Gilling • Mr D Tratt <p>Against 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr M Watts • Cllr M Martin • Mr M Wall • Mrs W Welland <p>Abstain 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr A Franks • Cllr B Filmer • Cllr J Cousins <p>The Clerk re-joined the Meeting.</p> <p>6.10. <u>Review of Actions</u></p> <p>Action AB/20201016-02: Clerk to re-issue the Register of Members Interests for signature by those Members not-held and return within 28 days: The Clerk reported this action as complete.</p> <p>Action 20201016-4: The Clerk & Asst Clerk to provide Options for the recovery of outstanding rates for persistent non-payers additional to Liability Orders secured at Magistrates Court. The Deputy Clerk reported that the ADA Policy & Finance committee had discussed this matter and determined that no other Board currently used this process. However, the Committee would be interested in any result. The matter would be dealt with as a joint Board discussion by the SDBC Management Committee. The Clerk reported this specific Action complete</p> <p>Action: AB/20210201-02: The Clerk to provide a short monthly email update to Members of key issues. The Clerk reported that this Action remained extant due to the relatively short timescales between meetings to date. He remained fully cognisant that an interim email update to Members would be beneficial prior to the next full</p>	<p>Action AB/20201016-02: Closed</p> <p>Action AB/20201016-04: Closed</p> <p>Action AB/20210201-02: On-going</p>
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	<p>Board Meeting due to long-gap between Meetings. This Action therefore remained extant.</p> <p>Action: AB/20210416-01: The Clerk to prepare a Press Release for consideration of the Chair, to summarise the successful prosecution and Enforcement Policy. The Clerk reported a draft press release had been shared with the Chairman for issue in due course. He reported the Action complete.</p>	<p>Action AB/20210416-01: Closed</p>
<p>7. Health & Safety</p>	<p>7.1. The Clerk reported that the latest H&S (Joint Board) sub-Committee Meeting was held on 07 May 21 with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axe Brue Committee Membership: Mr N Lukins, Cllr C Riches and Mr R Keen. • H&S training for Staff and Members – ADA had produced a number of generic 15-min on-line presentations which would be available prior to the full Board Meetings from Oct 21. • Internal audit process. The first Internal Audit process for COSHH had been conducted by Board Members with some minor recommendations to process having been identified. Health & Well-Being of Staff Audit to be conducted in due course. <p>The next H&S sub-Committee Meeting was reported as 03 Dec 21.</p>	
<p>8. Governance Updates</p>	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>8.1. The Clerk presented an overview of correspondence received with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) were actively recruiting for a Riparian Responsible Officer to work with all Partner Organisations. He stated that although the Boards interface regularly with landowners, there remained a gap in general public understanding of Board business and the Byelaws. • ADA and Defra were formulating new model Byelaws. • The Boards were actively involved with a national Lowland Peat Taskforce. • ADA and CLA River Summit; Dir Ops reported that he was presenting a short overview of the River Parrett post-2014 dredging works as an example of the benefits of good river conveyance, and using the River Brue as an example of concerns. • The ADA Conference and AGM would be conducted remotely on 10 Nov 21. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA would be producing 'Remote Meeting Guidance' in due course to complement the uplift of Standing Orders. <p><u>New Appointed Board Members and Committee Membership Review</u></p> <p>8.2. The Clerk reported that, following the Local Authority Elections, there had been a change of Appointed Members, and that there would be a vacancy on the Environment Committee.</p> <p>Following a call from the Chairman for volunteers, two nominations were received.</p> <p>The Chairman requested a vote, with the results as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Welland - 3 • Cllr Scott – 10 <p>Cllr Scott accepted the position.</p> <p><u>Westhay to Glastonbury Election Process</u></p> <p>8.3. The Clerk reported that Notice of Election was issued to all rate payers within the Westhay to Glastonbury district in accordance with the Election Regulations timeline, for return by noon on 16 Jul 21. If a poll was necessary, this would take place at 1500 on 03 Aug 21.</p> <p>Following a question from Mr Watts, the Clerk commented that if the election was unsuccessful, the Board would operate with a vacancy until the post could be filled following due process in accordance with the LDA.</p> <p>8.4. The Clerk recommended that the Deputy Clerk was specifically designated as the Returning Officer for the Westhay to Glastonbury Election process.</p> <p>Vote: All agreed</p>	
9. Finance Report	<p>Quarterly Reconciliation of Bank Statements</p> <p>9.1. Dir Fin, as the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), reported that a full bank reconciliation by Officers had been completed. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the internal reconciliation by Cllr Human had been delayed.</p> <p><u>End of Year 2020/2021</u></p> <p>9.2. SDBC Accounts: Mrs M Hammond, RFO, provided an overview of the End of Year Report with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-End SDBC surplus had been divided between Axe Brue, Parrett and North Somerset Levels in accordance with the Consortium 	

	<p>Agreement share to enable a zero balance; Axe Brue £29k.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure variance was primarily due to vacancies in SDBC Staffing. • I&E Report and Notes to Accounts were accepted 'as read'. <p>9.3. Axe Brue IDB Accounts: The RFO provided an overview of the Balance Sheet with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I&E Report: surplus £176k. • Income variance due to rechargeable works, legal fees recovered, land drainage contributions and SDBC income. • Positive Expenditure variance due to out-sourced maintenance, reduced plant & machinery costs, reduced overheads and Board schemes with funds raised in previous years. • I&E Report and Notes to Accounts were accepted 'as read'. <p>9.4. Following a question submitted by Mr Clapp, the RFO reported that 'Miscellaneous Purchases' included income received from other contributions i.e. Staff costs re-charged from National Grid.</p> <p>New Action: AB/20210621-01: The RFO took an Action to detail 'Miscellaneous Income' on future Year End reports.</p> <p>9.5. Following a question from Mr Watts, the RFO reported that additional pension was required as a result of a 3-yr review where an expected pension's deficit was identified and uplift in payments required.</p> <p>9.6. <u>Section 1 Annual Governance Statements 2020/21:</u> The Board acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring that there was a sound system of internal controls in-place, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements and answered 'Yes' to the eight Accounting Statements at Section 1 of the AGAR.</p> <p>Cllr J Cousins proposed, Cllr P Clayton seconded that 'the Axe Brue Full Board at its Meeting held on 21 Jun 21, endorse approval of the eight Accountability Statements within Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.'</p> <p>Vote: Unanimous</p> <p>9.7. <u>Section 2 Accounting Statements:</u> The RFO provided an overview of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 to ensure Member understanding.</p> <p>Mr D Tratt proposed, Mrs P Thorne seconded that 'the Axe Brue Full Board at its Meeting on 21 Jun 21, endorse approval of Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.'</p>	<p>New Action: AB/20210621-01: RFO</p> <p>RESOLUTION 3</p> <p>RESOLUTION 4</p>
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	<p>Vote: Unanimous</p> <p>9.8. <u>Board Reserves</u>: The RFO provided an overview of Board Reserves in each section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Reserves • Commuted Sums • Bradbury House • Works Reserve • Non ring-fenced Reserves <p>9.9. Following a question submitted by Mr Clapp, the Clerk reported that there was no specified limit of Reserves, however, currently the Board’s Risk Register determined the recommended level.</p> <p>He further stated that the Boards Investment Strategy being drafted would address the holding of Reserves.</p> <p>9.10. Following a question from Mr Keen, the RFO stated Bradbury House was shown as a ‘depreciating asset’ for accounting purposes and strongly recommended not re-valuing the property at this time due to reducing property market values as a result of Covid-19.</p> <p>9.7. <u>Outstanding Rates</u> The Deputy Clerk provided an overview Rates to-date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £58,563.73 outstanding, being 25.8% of total Drainage Rate demands. • £1,282.35 from 2020/2021 still being enforced by Bailiffs (included in total outstanding Drainage Rates). 	
<p>10. Engineering & Operational Report</p>	<p><u>In-Year Maintenance</u>:</p> <p>10.1. Dir Ops requested that the Engineering & Operations Paper be taken ‘as-read’ unless there were any questions arising from the Report which included an update on the current in-year maintenance.</p> <p>10.2. The Chairman commented that the new format of the Report was excellent.</p>	
<p>11. Environment Committee</p>	<p>11.1. The Clerk reported the Environment sub-Committee met in Apr 21 and discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) – concern for abundance of plants; being tracked to combat the spread. • Badger Licence requirements had been agreed. • The new Environment Bill would increase Biodiversity and enhancement requirements on the Board. This matter was reportable annually to DEFRA via an IDB1 form. • The Boards’ Bio-security Policy highlighted the need to clean machines and have good communication between contractors and landowners. 	

	<p>11.2. Following questions from Mr Watts, the Ecologist stated that, although not an aquatic species, Japanese knotweed along watercourses in the Upper catchment should be reported to the Area Supervisors.</p> <p>11.3. Following a report of reduced wildlife in Tealham and Tadham from Mr Watts, the Ecologist agreed to discuss out of Meeting and report back at a future Meeting.</p>	
<p>12. Somerset Rivers Authority</p>	<p>12.1. The Clerk reported Board membership as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr J Fear • Mr M Wall <p>12.2. The next Meeting of the SRA Board was reported as 23 Jul 21. An update would be provided at the next scheduled Meeting.</p> <p>12.3. Following a question from Mr Tratt regarding two consultations for which the SRA were consultees (the local government review of County Councils and local government in Somerset, and the Somerset Water Forum in conjunction with Somerset Catchment Partnership and EA), the Clerk reported that the Board had not been formally contacted as part of the Consultee process.</p> <p>New Action: AB/20210621-02: The Clerk took an Action to investigate why the Board had not been consulted on recent Catchment Partnership events and report at a future Meeting.</p>	<p>New Action: AB/20210621-02: Clerk</p>
<p>13. Risk Review</p>	<p>13.1. The Clerk had distributed the updated Risk Register with the Calling Notice and provided an overview of the Top 10 Risks as they stood at the Meeting which been updated following implementation of the Strategic Review.</p> <p>13.2. <u>Machinery Budget</u>: The F&W Committee recommended to retain the Axe Brue Plant & Machinery for a further 6-months to enable confidence in the capability of contractors for all out-sourced maintenance work.</p> <p>13.3. Following a question from Cllr Cousins, the Clerk stated that the full Risk Register was available to Members upon request.</p>	

	<p>New Action: AB/20210621-03: The Clerk took an Action to provide the full Risk Register to all Board Members as an excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>13.4. Following a question from Cllr Gilling, Dir Ops reported that bio-degradable fuels was a preference expressed within Board Contracts to encourage contractors to use bio-oil, however it was not compulsory.</p> <p>Mr M Wall, Contracts Manager, reported that all oil spills were recorded for monitoring purposes, and all spills cleaned-up and disposed of using dedicated spill kits.</p>	<p>New Action: AB/20210621-03: Clerk</p>
<p>14. Any Other Business</p>	<p>14.1. Following concern expressed by Mrs Welland for damage to the bank at Pitland Rhyne, it was agreed an Officer would visit the area to assess the damage.</p> <p>The Clerk stated that out-of-hours contact with the Board should be via the Main-Office number which diverts directly to the 'Duty Officer'. He reminded Members that the Board does not have a 24-hour 'on-call' capability.</p> <p>14.2. Dir Ops stated he had attended a Meeting of the South West Peat Task Force, where discussions were held on environmental solutions for peat protection at a strategic level. Members who had attended were content with the outcome of the Meeting.</p> <p>14.3. Mr Watts stated that he reported a clapper had been installed by Glastonbury Parish Council removing flood storage area and that a local resident had undertaken infilling of a field. Cllr Cousins reported a Meeting was due to take place with Glastonbury Town Clerk to discuss the clapper, as the Town Clerk was unaware that the pipe led to a storage facility when the application was submitted.</p> <p>It was agreed to discuss both matters out of Meeting.</p>	
<p>15. Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>15.1. Future Meetings were reported as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&W – 04 Oct 21 @ 1030 • Full Board – 15 Oct 21 @ 1030 <p>15.2. The Chairman thanked new Members for their attendance and contributions to the Meeting.</p>	

	There being no other business, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance, and the Meeting was closed.	
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Annex:

A. Axe Brue Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR.....DATE

**ANNEX A TO
AXE BRUE BOARD MINUTES
DATED 16 APR 2021**

AXE BRUE BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
AB/20210201-02	To provide a short monthly email update to Members of key issues.	Clerk
AB/20210621-01	To detail miscellaneous income on future Year End reports.	RFO
AB/20210621-02	To investigate why the Board had not been consulted on recent Catchment Partnership events and report at a future Meeting.	Clerk
AB/20210621-03	To provide the full Risk Register to all Board Members as an excel spreadsheet.	Clerk