

MINUTES OF THE NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON 22 JUN 21

| Attendance: | | | |
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| Elected Members: Mr E Adams Mr M Britten Mr T Bush (Chairman) Mr B Gray Mr P Kingcott Mr A Mead Mr B Mitchell Mr C Pyke Mr C Redding | Appointed Members: Mr P Burden Cllr J Cato Cllr M Crosby Mr D Dash Mr B Garner Cllr C Gibbons Cllr A Harley Cllr K Haverson Cllr S Hogg Cllr J Tonkin | Officers: Mr R Burge (Clerk) Mr I Sturdy Mrs M Hammond Mrs C-A Morgan Mr R Kidson P Brewin Mr G Oliver Mr D Alsop Mr D Crossman | Public: |
| Approved Apologies: | | | |
| Mr R Triggol | Cllr S Bridger | Mr M Wall Mr R King Mr A Brinson | |
| Non-Approved Apologies: | | | |
| Mr N Cole Mr B Letts Mr R Parsons Mr G Plaister | Mr P Harris Cllr C Webb Cllr R Westwood Mrs D Yamanaka | | |

| Agenda Item: | Detail: | Action: |
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| 1. Attendance and Apologies | 1.1. Apologies as per the above Attendance List. | |
| 2. Items additional to the Agenda | <p><u>Approval of Amendment to Board Standing Orders:</u></p> <p>2.1. 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.</p> <p>Mr M Britten proposed, Cllr J Tonkin seconded, <i>'To approve the Amendment to North Somerset Levels Board Standing Orders – V1.2.'</i></p> <p>Vote: All Agreed</p> | RESOLUTION 1 |

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| 3. Declarations of Interest | <p>3.1. Mr C Redding declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the Cider House, Hewish.</p> <p>3.2. Members were requested to submit specific declarations as necessary throughout the Meeting's Agenda Items.</p> | |
| 4. Opportunity for Members of the Public to address the Meeting | 4.1. No members of the Public were present. | |
| 5. Approval of Minutes | <p>5.1. Proposed by Mr P Burden, seconded by Mr C Pyke, 'That the Full Board Minutes of 19 Apr 21 were accepted and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting.'</p> <p>Vote: All agreed</p> | RESOLUTION 2 |
| 6. Matters Arising | <p><u>Review of Actions</u></p> <p>Action NSL/20201019-01: Clerk to re-issue the Register of members Interests to Members for return within 28 days: The Clerk reported that the Action had been completed however, there were still a small number of members who had not yet responded. Action closed.</p> <p>Action NSL/20210202-01: Clerk to establish a Task & Finish (T&F) Group Meeting to discuss the Cider House lease: The Clerk reported that a further Meeting would be required and this Action remained extant.</p> <p>Action NSL/20210419-01: Cllr Cronnelly to investigate the current status of Quiet Lane Road Closures in the North Area and their potential restrictions on IDB works: The Clerk reported that, although Cllr Cronnelly had resigned from the Board, he had reported that the restrictions did not apply to the IDB. Cllr Tonkin further commented that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) had actually been withdrawn. Action closed.</p> | <p>Action NSL/20201019-01: Closed</p> <p>Action NSL/20210202-01: Ongoing</p> <p>Action NSL/20210419-01: Closed</p> |
| 7. Health & Safety | <p>7.1. The Clerk reported that the Joint Health & Safety sub-Committee (Joint Board) was held on 07 May 21 with the following points of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSLIDB Committee Membership: Mr P Harris, Mr B Garner and Mr C Redding. • 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 Meeting from Nov 21. • Internal Audit process. The first Internal Audit process for COSHH had been conducted by Board Members with some minor | |

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| | <p>recommendations to process having been identified. Health & Well-Being of Staff Audit to be conducted in due course.</p> <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 three Boards of the SDBC were actively involved in the National Lowland Peat Taskforce. • ADA and CLA River Conveyance 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. The summit was specifically to discuss the impact of a lack of River maintenance on conveyance. • The ADA Conference and AGM would be conducted remotely on 10 Nov 21. • ADA would be producing 'Remote Meeting Guidance' in due course to complement the uplift of Standing Orders. <p>8.2. 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 C Cronnelly and B Petty • New: Cllrs K Haverson and C Gibbons <p><u>NSLIDB Elections</u></p> <p>8.3. The Clerk provided an overview of the Election timetable and the process as defined clearly within the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Election Regulations 1977 to identify the Board's obligations within that process.</p> | |

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| | <p>He recommended that the Electoral Register of Electors 2021, having received no objections, was approved by the NSLIDB Board. All agreed.</p> <p>A Notice of Election and Nomination Forms would be issued in accordance with the Regulations.</p> <p>8.4. Following a concern raised by Mr Garner regarding the number of Appointed Members required to be sourced to support Board business, the Clerk reported that Appointed Members were appointed by the Local Authority in accordance with the LDA. The LDA provided options for IDB's to reconstitute and reduce numbers if considered necessary.</p> | |
| <p>9. Finance Report</p> | <p><u>Quarterly Reconciliation of Bank Statements:</u></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 Agreement share to enable a zero balance; NSLIDB £11k. • Expenditure variance was primarily due to vacancies in SDBC Staffing. • I&E Report and Notes to Accounts were accepted 'as read'. <p>9.3. Mr C Redding questioned why contractors had their invoices withheld and who had authorised this.</p> <p>The Clerk reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three Boards of the SDBC operated within approved Governance, Finance and Procurement Policies • Staff would not be asked or directed to contravene Board-Approved Policies and Procedures. • In accordance with the Strategic Review which had been endorsed by the NSLIDB Board, two of the three contractors previously contracted by the NSLIDB would transfer to Axe Brue IDB as the lead Board of the Consortium. • In accordance with the Finance & Procurement Policies, all contractors were required to complete an Approved Supplier Questionnaire. The Clerk has offered to assist in this process | |

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| | <p>several times since Feb 21, however only one had been received to-date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor Invoices were delayed whilst awaiting expected receipt of new signed Contracts and ASQs. <p>Board Members were reminded by Mr Burden, that NSLIDB had signed endorsement of the Review and the Clerk should be supported in all matters. The Clerk could not be expected to contravene Policies.</p> <p>Cllr Harley supported the statement.</p> <p>9.4. NSLIDB 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 £52k. • Income variance due to rechargeable works, land drainage contributions and SDBC income. • Positive Expenditure variance due to Board schemes with funds raised in previous years. • I&E Report and Notes to Accounts were accepted 'as read'. <p>9.5. Following a question from Cllr Cato regarding fixed assets, the RFO reported that aged office computers that could not be upgraded were replaced to ensure compliance of the Board's Cyber Essential Accreditation. Computers remained an SDBC asset and would be depreciated in accordance with the SDBC Policy.</p> <p><u>Section 1 Annual Governance Statements 2020/21</u></p> <p>9.6. The RFO provided an overview of the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>9.7. 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>Mr M Britten proposed, Cllr J Cato seconded that 'the North Somerset Levels 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: All Agreed.</p> <p><u>Section 2 Accounting Statements:</u></p> <p>9.8. The RFO provided an overview of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 to ensure Member understanding.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">RESOLUTION 3</p> |
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| | <p>Cllr J Tonkin proposed, Mr D Dash seconded that ‘the North Somerset Levels Full Board at its Meeting on 21 Jun 21, endorse approval of Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.’</p> <p>Vote: All Agreed</p> <p>9.9. Following a concern raised by Mr Redding, the Clerk reported that the ‘Rate Manager’ Application had not been ‘abandoned’ and continued to be utilised by appropriate Staff.</p> <p><u>Board Reserves:</u></p> <p>9.10. The RFO provided an overview of Board Reserves in each section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuted Sums • Ring-fenced Schemes • Earmarked Reserves • Other Works Reserves • Non ring-fenced Reserves <p>The RFO suggested that the Free Reserves of £215k would not be sufficient to cover all risks on the Risk Register.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Finance & Works sub-Committee strongly recommended that the Board consider increasing Free Reserves to £400k based on the Risk Register status, especially in view of Sampson’s Sluice that would require initial up-front funding in the event of a failure, even if it was fully insured.</p> <p>9.11. The Deputy Clerk provided an overview of outstanding Rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £32,435 outstanding, being 37.3% of total Drainage Rate demands. • £281 from the previous Financial Year currently being enforced by Bailiffs (included in total outstanding Drainage Rates). | <p>RESOLUTION 4</p> |
| <p>10. Engineering & Operational Report</p> | <p><u>In-Year Maintenance:</u></p> <p>10.1. Mr G Oliver asked the Members to take the Engineering & Operations Report ‘as-read’ but highlighted a few specific changes and updates since the Report was issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Maintenance was progressing well. • South Yatton Phase 1 Drainage Scheme was progressing within budget. • Handwork clearance of a 50m length of unmaintained watercourse at Kewstoke Sand | |

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| | <p>Road Outfall Channel would commence Sep 21 to include tree works.</p> <p>10.2. Following a question by Mr Redding regarding contractors removing annual maintenance arisings, Dir Ops introduced Mr Wall as the new Contracts Manager, stating that Board contracts can be written to the Board's requirements.</p> <p>10.3. Mr Garner expressed concern for promotion of 're-wilding'. Dir Ops reported that re-wilding did not result in neglect, and that it was consistent with Defra's 25-yr Plan and EA's Flood Risk Plan. ADA would continue to lobby Government on behalf of all Drainage Boards.</p> <p>Dir Ops took an Action to prepare a paper to detail the Board's recommended view on re-wilding, with the assistance of the Board's Ecologist.</p> | <p>New Action NSL/20210622-01</p> |
| <p>11. Environment Committee</p> | <p>11.1. The Clerk reported the Joint Environment sub-Committee had 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 and process had been agreed. • The new Environment Bill would increase Biodiversity requirements on the Board. This matter was reportable annually to DEFRA via the IDB1 form. • The Boards' Bio-security Policy highlighted the need to clean machines and have good communication between contractors and landowners. <p>11.2. Membership of the Committee was confirmed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr P Burden • Cllr R Westwood • Cllr S Bridger | |
| <p>12. Risk Review</p> | <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>12.1. 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>12.2. The full Risk Register was available to all Board Members upon request to the Clerk.</p> | |

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| <p>13. Any Other Business</p> | <p>13.1. The Chairman commented that he found remote Meetings very difficult to Chair. He hoped that the expected lifting of current Government COVID restrictions would enable Meetings to be held in-person in future.</p> <p>13.2. Following a question by Mr Redding, the Clerk reported that the opinion of users of Rate Manager was very positive but was being reviewed as whether this was the best long-term cost-effective option.</p> <p>13.3. Concern was expressed for the future of NSLIDB Administration Assistant role should the Cider House be relinquished. The Clerk reported that he was very aware of the issue and the resource was being considered in the SDBC Development Control review.</p> | |
| <p>14. Date of Next Meeting</p> | <p>14.1. Future Meetings were reported as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&W – 05 Oct 21 @ 1030 • Full Board – 08 Nov 21 @ 1030 <p>14.2. There being no other business, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance, and the Meeting was closed at 1605.</p> | |

Annex:

A. NSLIDB Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR.....DATE

**ANNEX A TO
NSLIDB BOARD MINUTES
DATED 22 JUN 21**

NSLIDB BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

| Action Number: | Action: | Actionee: |
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| NSL/20210202-01 | To establish a Task & Finish (T&F) Group Meeting to discuss the Cider House lease. | Clerk |
| NSL/20210622-01 | To prepare a paper to detail the Board's view on re-wilding. | Dir Ops & Ecologist |