

MINUTES OF THE NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON 02 FEBRUARY 2022

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr T Bush (C) Mr J Harris Mr P Kingcott Mr C Redding	Appointed Members: Cllr P Burden Cllr P Harris Cllr J Tonkin Cllr D Yamanaka Cllr R Westwood Cllr S Hearne	Officers: Iain Sturdy Maggie Hammond Matthew Wall Rob King David Crossman Dan Alsop Anthony Dowden Phil Brewin Giles Oliver Rob Kidson Nicky Cornish	Public:
Approved Apologies:			
Mr R Parsons Mr D Dash Mr A Mead Mr G Plaister Mr C Pyke Mr O Matthews	Cllr J Cato Cllr K Haverson Cllr S Hogg		
Non-Approved Apologies:			
Mr B Letts Mr E Adams Mr N Cole Mr C Webb Mr R Mitchell	Cllr M Crosby Cllr A Harley Cllr R Garner Cllr C Gibbons		

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. Mrs M Hammond would like to discuss the Internal Auditors and this will be done in item 8. 2.2. Mr G Oliver would like to discuss discontinuity in the drainage system that he would like the Boards advice on. This will be done in item 9.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1 Mr C Redding declared a personal and financial in the Cider House, Hewish.	
4. Opportunity for Members of the Public to address the Meeting	No members of the public wished to speak	

Each Board is a statutory public body with responsibilities for flood protection, land drainage and the environment.
All are members of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

5. Approval of Minutes	<p>5.1. Mr R Westwood commented his name was on the approved apologies list twice – once spelt incorrectly. It was agreed to correct this</p> <p>With no other amendments the Chairman signed the minutes as correct.</p>	
6. Matters Arising	<p>6.1. Mr J Harris queried item 4 in the actions regarding winter maintenance saying it is not a very satisfactory situation. IDS replied this action came from of a Members comment that no winter maintenance had occurred. There was clarification in the previous meeting that winter maintenance had occurred in the North area but maybe less than people would have wanted in the South area. We are extra-ordinarily challenged at the moment with resources to deliver the current work load. We have been successful with routine maintenance but schemes and some of the winter maintenance is a challenge. He urged Members to try not to criticise the few remaining staff as he can guarantee they are working above and beyond at the moment. Mr G Oliver commented there is winter maintenance happening this year and tenders have been sent out. To say we have missed the programme this year is incorrect.</p> <p>6.2. Mr T Bush said of item 3 on the actions they are still looking for a replacement appointed Member and also an elected Member. Ideally they would like to co-opt someone from the old West Mendip area so he asked if any Board Members knew anyone who would be interested to please let him know.</p>	
7. Governance & Staff Update	<p>7.1. Currently IDS is acting up as CEO and Dir. Ops and the Boards are currently without a CEO, Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Maggie is doing the best she can to fulfil as many of the Clerks duties as possible but obviously she is the Dir. Fin and it is a very busy time of year with budgets. Recently Pete Struck, Engineer and George Hellier, Engineering Technican have given their resignations and left. IDS is investigating where the best place to advertise for new Engineers is but there is currently a lack of engineers generally.</p> <p>7.2. Mr C Redding stated he was annoyed that the Water Environment Workers didn't materialise. He suggested they could recruit their own engineers in the North Somerset Levels area, he also said Simon Bunn needs to be replaced urgently. He queried why Roger Burge's departure is such a secret. IDS informed Members the current remaining WEW apprentice is excellent and he is currently acting up as an Operations Technician and should complete his qualification soon. Regarding Roger Burge, the legal arrangements mean matters cannot be shared with anyone who was not directly involved but he reassured Members everything has been conducted in a fit and proper way and the interests of the Board were looked after by all involved in the process. IDS further added that losing Simon Bunn is a huge loss to the Boards and a personal disappointment. We will soon start a recruitment drive for replacement staff generally. He commented that although he felt there is a social</p>	

	<p>responsibility to recruit and develop young people generally, he believes that in the Boards current difficult situation the Boards now need to aim for experienced, mature people who are more likely to hit the ground running and stay with the Consortium long term.</p> <p>GO updated Members on the progress of the Banwell Bypass planning consultations, saying he had attended a meeting to discuss rhyne corridors, attenuation ponds, the environment and our accesses. He assured Members we are actively engaged.</p>	
8a	<p>8.1. Mr J Harris said he is on the Environment Committee but he wasn't invited to the meeting in December. The Chairman apologised and said it was probably an oversight because of the ongoing hiatus in the Clerk department but he will make sure he has all the papers for the next meeting.</p>	
8b Finance Report	<p>8.1. Mrs M Hammond, Dir, Fin confirmed all banks have been reconciled up to 31 December 2021</p> <p>8.2. Mr T Bush, Chair, recommended to Members they accept the budget as discussed at the Finance & Works Committee. Dir Fin confirmed the penny rate would change from 8.996p to 9.139p</p> <p>Proposed by Mr P Burden, Seconded by Mr J Harris 'to accept the proposed budget'</p> <p>Vote : unanimous</p> <p>8.3. Dir. Fin gave an update on the drainage rates reporting a current outstanding balance of £6,031.27. There are 12 accounts with a total credit balance of £434.79 and 44 accounts with a total total debit balance of £6,466.06.</p> <p>8.4. Dir. Fin informed Members that the current auditors South West Partnership will not be re-tendering this year as due to covid they are understaffed and are not renewing all contracts when they come up for renewal.</p>	RESOLUTION 1
9. Engineering & Operational Report	<p>9.1 IDS asked Members to take the report as read.</p> <p>9.2 Mr M Wall, Contracts Manager, reported there have been no issues with the maintenance, and tenders have been sent out with a return date of 25 February. Mr J Harris questioned the over complicated specifications within the tender papers, saying they could be 'fine tuned when a contractor is picked'. MSW said the specifications have not been changed and are standard for all Boards. Mr J Harris has been told contractors have been asked not to do the far bank. This was discussed and MSW assured Mr J Harris this was incorrect and flailing would take place on both sides. Mr J Harris also queried the tendering process to which MSW responded all returned tenders are opened and recorded in a controlled way then presented to the Board.</p> <p>9.3 Mr C Redding asked Mr P Brewin, Ecologist, what he thought about not conveying rubbish (cut vegetation) out of rhyes. PAB responded to say although a conveyer is</p>	

a very useful bit of kit it is possible to do a good job without one with a skilled and experienced contractor. This work is carried out effectively by contractors for the other Boards without a conveyor.

9.4 Mr Redding asked whether the hemlock not being cut twice a year will be a problem. PAB replied there seems to be a growing problem with hemlock and he is not sure cutting it twice year is affective. He mentioned there is a problem with floating pennywort in some areas which continues to spread and cause a problem and he is working closely with the Environment Agency regarding this.

9.5 Mr R King, Area Manager, told Members the Area Supervisors are carrying out minor repairs in the area including the unsafe bridges. All Area Supervisors have recently completed spill kit training.

9.6 Mr G Oliver, Engineer, updated the Members on

Winter Maintenance/Improvement works:

- Weston drainage rhyne desilt and tree clearance works is about to begin before the end of the environmental window at the end of February
- A section of Stowey rhyne will be maintained including a desilt and NOE's have been sent out to begin before the end of February
- Blind Pool access bridge repairs will commence in a couple of weeks.

Schemes:

- Work on Hutton & Locking tilting weir access bridge will be commencing in a couple of weeks
- Sampsons Sluice, a consultant is being brought in to do a full condition assessment of the Sluice.

9.7 Mr D Alsop, Engineer, updated Members on the North area schemes:

- South Yatton Scheme has finished including reinstatement and is now fully operational
- Tickenham Causeway Otter Pass, North Somerset Highways have given their approval so this can now move forwards.
- He is completing design work on Crossmans Hatch and is about to get some levelling work for the refurbishment of the gauge board.

9.8 Mr J Harris said Milleaze Rhyne might need the pipe into the Yeo checking as there is lots of traffic over it. GO will check the issue.

**Action:
20220202-1
Giles Oliver to investigate
Milleaze Rhyne**

	<p>Cllr S Hearne asked about a rhyme in an SSSI area as she has noticed there is no water. GO explained about summer and winter penning. Mr Bush added the water was kept low in case of heavy rain. Mr D Crossman, Area Supervisor invited Cllr Hearne for a field walk to explain how things work.</p>	
<p>10. Risk Review</p>	<p>The Acting CEO talked about three specific risks on the risk register. Single person knowledge dependency, major structure failure and extended unplanned staff absence. The Consortium are suffering the consequences of the first and last of these three risks and these had been discussed throughout the meeting and there is a plan to work through these issues. The second risk is around Sampson’s Sluice and reported that we are moving forward with understanding the risks of owning that structure.</p>	
<p>11. Any Other Business</p>	<p>11.1. Mr A Dowden, Area Consultant, briefed Members about a complaint received from a home owner who said his land was flooding from unconsented culverting of a watercourse. The neighbours have built a house which was granted planning permission with a special condition not to culvert the watercourse. AJD believes the new build does not cause flooding, but the watercourse is not well maintained. He suggested a members site visit to consider appropriate action.</p> <p>Enforcement action was discussed in detail and it was suggested by Peter Burden that we should write to the owner and advise him that he was in breach of his consent. That in itself would place them in breach of their planning permission. Depending upon the response received, enforcement could take a number of approaches, mindful that any enforcement carried out by the Boards be reasonable and proportionate.</p> <p>Other neighbours have also culverted their ditches over the years and it was suggested to write to them to explain the possible risks of their actions.</p> <p>Proposed By Cllr D Yamanaka, Seconded by Mr P Burden ‘to take enforcement action and write to the neighbours to make them aware of the risks to them’</p> <p>Further discussion agreed that the following would be included in the resolution</p> <p>It was agreed for ‘Officers to work with an appointed sub-group and report back to the Board before taking enforcement action’</p> <p>Vote unanimous</p> <p>Cllr D Yamanaka, Mr P Burden and Cllr R Westwood volunteered to work with Officers.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 2</p> <p>Action: 20220202-2 Set up Sub-Group to investigate unconsented watercourse</p>

12.Date of Next Meeting	Finance and Works committee – 23 March 2022 Full Board 13 April 2022	
	Meeting closed at 16.15	

Annex:

A. NSLIDB Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR.....DATE

NSLIDB BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
NSL/20220202-1	To investigate Milleaze Rhyne	Giles Oliver
NSL/20220202-1	To set up a Sub-Group to investigate unconsented watercourse	Anthony Dowden