

### **An Introductory Message from the Chairmen**

Despite the limitations and constraints imposed as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Chairmen are pleased to announce a successful year in managing flood risk and land drainage within the Boards' Districts, with minimal impact on the delivery of the Board's operational and administrative outputs.

All activities of the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (SDBC) (now consisting of the Axe Brue, Parrett and North Somerset Levels Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)) are being actively managed through the Bradbury House Office at Highbridge and, whilst most of the Office Staff remain predominantly working remotely, all field Staff (Area Managers, Expenditors and Rhyme Supervisors) remain operational, fully accessible and deployed on a day-to-day basis around all of the Boards' Districts.

The Boards of the SDBC to continue to have an important role to play in flood and water level management, both supporting Lead Local Flood Authorities and delivering on its wider responsibilities for Land Drainage and, as a Public Body, striving to deliver those activities in the most efficient and cost effective manner for the Rate Payers and Local Authorities. As part of the continuing drive for improvements and efficiencies, as of 01 Apr 21 following a full and strategic Review of Plant, Machinery & Manpower, all the Boards of the Consortium have agreed to a fully shared resource model that will improve resilience of the workforce, drive towards common 'ways-of-working' through common policy and procedures across all Boards, leading to better transparency and delivering efficiencies in the way in which the Consortium delivers its Flood Risk and Land Drainage responsibilities in the future.

The IDBs are funded primarily through the attraction of Special Levy and Drainage Rates. The 'Penny-Rate' set each year is a direct result of the correlation of income needing to be received as a result of the expenditure required to deliver the Boards' responsibilities. Whilst Special Levy is sought directly through the Local Authorities via Council Tax payments, the Drainage Rates require landowner payments in-line and proportional with their land holdings to be paid in a timely manner each year. This last Financial Year, especially with the limitations imposed by the COVID restrictions, has seen a much welcome and significant increase in the use of the automated Direct Debit System. An increase in the timely payment of Drainage Rates demands allows the Boards to deliver their essential planned Flood Risk and Land Drainage activities in-year.

It should be stressed that if anyone disagrees with the validity of a Drainage Rates Demand or encounters any difficulty in meeting their Drainage Rates payment, a call to the Board's Offices to discuss the issue will always be looked upon favourably and with compassion. Failure to respond in any way to Drainage Rate Demands following reasonable opportunity will always be looked upon negatively and invoke a subsequent challenge through the Courts.

With the current COVID-19 limitations generally requiring increased reliance and dependency on Information Technology, it is fully recognised that the Boards' Website is not the most 'user-friendly' in which to seek and exploit information on the activities of the Boards. It is hoped that within the next few months, the Board's Website will be refreshed to enable a clearer and more accessible platform in which to seek Flood Risk and Land Drainage information.

Finally, the North Somerset Levels IDB will be electing a new Board this year, to take-up Office in Nov 21. The IDBs are always keen to utilize the fresh and innovative thoughts of the younger generation of Landowners in order to keep the operations and thinking of the Boards up-to-date and challenged. Details of the Election Process for new Elected Membership will be issued in due course but anyone wishing to seek more details on what is involved in becoming a Member of the North Somerset IDB specifically, or any other Board of the Consortium, either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to speak with the Clerk or Deputy Clerk via the Board's Office (see details below). Following a recent resignation of an Axe Brue Member, there will also be a requirement to seek a replacement through the formal election of a 'Westhay to Glastonbury' representative. Election details will be sent out shortly to all those eligible landowners within the District.

Axe Brue IDB Chairman - Cllr Andrew Gilling      North Somerset Levels IDB Chairman - Mr Tim Bush  
Parrett IDB Chairman - Mr Tony Bradford

### **Income**

In accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991, for the year ending 31 March 2022, the following Drainage Rates have been set:  
Axe Brue IDB 8.734p ~ Parrett IDB 7.502p ~ North Somerset Levels IDB 8.996p

### **Annual Channel Cleaning Works**

Each year the Boards undertake channel cleaning work programmes on viewed rhynes, by approved contractors, in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991. Please see the website for full details: [www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk)

**Bradbury House**  
**33-34 Market Street**  
**Highbridge, TA9 3BW**  
Tel: 01278 789906

Email: [admin@somersetdbs.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersetdbs.co.uk)

### **Telemetry**

For access to information on water level monitoring stations please contact Phil Brewin: [pbrewin@somersetdbs.co.uk](mailto:pbrewin@somersetdbs.co.uk)

### **Change of land ownership**

Please remember to notify the Board when there is a change in land ownership. This allows the Board to keep its information up to date and provide accurate Drainage Rates.



## Operations & Engineering

- **Channel Maintenance 2020/21**
  - Axe Brue 380 miles
  - Parrett 345 miles
  - North Somerset Levels 117
- **Development Control**
  - Planning Applications 452
  - Land Drainage Consent 197
  - National Grid Culverts 255

• **Projects and Schemes completed** Please see our website for further details

### **Axe Brue**

- Pint Pot Cottage bank stabilisation
- Black Ditch access culverts
- Sheppey Inlets
- New Cut Sluice improvements
- West Rhyne Improvements
- Pyde Drove Culvert

### **Parrett**

- Curload Culverts
- East Moor Inlet
- West Moor Catchwater new control
- Sedgemoor Drove culvert
- Old Pawlett Road culvert
- Beer Drove flap
- New Road West Moor control

### **North Somerset Levels**

- Pages Outlet Tilting Weir and Culvert
- Sampsons Sluice Pump control panel
- Old Yeo Rhyne culvert
- Ham Rhyne Bank Repairs
- Middle Land Rhyne Kingston Seymour culvert removal

**Somerset Rivers Authority** Dredging the River Parrett between North Moor and M5

## Enquiries

**For general enquiries please call:**  
**01278 789906**

(09.00-17.00 Mon-Fri)  
Out of hours: 07590 775895

**Email:** [admin@somersetdbs.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersetdbs.co.uk)  
[www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk)

**For enquiries please contact:**

**Clerk/Legal:** Roger Burge

**Operations & Engineering:** Iain Sturdy

**Finance:** Margaret Hammond

**Rate Collection:** Carrie-Anne Morgan  
Kendra Kingston

**Environment:** Philip Brewin

**Flooding & pollution incidents should be reported to the Environment Agency:**  
**0800 80 70 60**



## Drainage Rate Prosecutions

In accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Boards successfully prosecuted for non-payment of Drainage Rates, with costs of £101.75\* incurred by the rate payer, for Financial Year ending 31 March 2021:

- Axe Brue IDB: 30 accounts
- Parrett IDB: 17 accounts
- North Somerset Levels IDB: 19 accounts.

\*Bailiffs costs for service of Liability Order not included

If you are experiencing difficulty paying your Drainage Rate please contact the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Do not ignore your demand as this may result in court proceedings and additional costs.

## Election

This year will see the formality of Board Elections to deliver 'Elected' Members to represent the North Somerset Levels Board for the next 3 years.

Nominations will be invited for 14 Elected Members by formal Notice. Please contact the Boards office if you would like a Nomination Form or details on what is involved in becoming a Board Member.

The list of all Board members is available on the SDBC Website.

## Land Drainage Consents

Under the Land Drainage Act 1991 Drainage Boards have a duty to exercise a general supervision over all matters relating to the drainage of land within its district. In order to carry out this role successfully, the relevant Board must receive details of any proposed works affecting watercourses, and grant permission for the work to proceed.

Consents are therefore required for both temporary and permanent works in or adjacent to **any** watercourse (except a main river). This includes any of the below:

*Mill, dam, weir, culvert or other obstruction to the flow, infilling or stopping up of a watercourse, building, structure, road, footpath, track, tree, shrub willow or similar growth, any pipe or wire crossing a watercourse, any excavation of a watercourse bank or bed, any outfall into a watercourse, fence, post, pylon, jetty, wharf, pier, quay, bridge, loading stage, piling, groyne, revetment, any engine or mechanical contrivance.*

Application forms for Land Drainage Consents can be downloaded from our website: [www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk).

Upon receipt of the application, accompanied by the application fee the Board has two months in which to grant or refuse a Land Drainage Consent. The granting of a Land Drainage Consent may be subject to conditions and does not remove the requirement for any approvals or authorizations required from other parties.

For further guidance please see the website to download the Land Drainage Consent Information Sheet.

## Full Board Meetings Calendar 2021

**Axe Brue:** 16 Apr, 21 Jun, 15 Oct

**Parrett:** 16 Apr, 21 Jun, 15 Oct

**NSLIDB:** 19 Apr, 22 Jun, 08 Nov

All meetings are subject to change. Please refer to the meetings calendar on the website for the current list of events:  
[www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk](http://www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk)

## Direct Debits



Axe Brue and Parrett IDB Drainage Rates can be paid by Direct Debit.

It is a simple and effective method for ensuring payment of your annual Drainage Rate.

If you have not already done so, you can set up a Direct Debit easily by returning the completed mandate to the office in the reply-paid envelope.