

## MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT EAST BRENT VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 20 JUNE 22

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

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>Detail:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1 Apologies as per the above Attendance List.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1 Iain Sturdy – Governance - confidential item to be discussed.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1 The Chairman Andrew Gilling declared an interest in the Governance item and asked that Vice Chairman Jeff Fear take the chair at that point.  3.2 Jeff Fear declared an interest in the tenders item as his grandson works for one of the contractors involved	
4. Opportunity for Members of the Public to address the Meeting	None	
5. Approval of the Minutes	5.1 Maggie Hammond circulated an unredacted set of minutes which detailed the closed session item from the last meeting and asked members to consider them for approval. The Chairman went through the minutes page by page and asked for any comments.	

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.

	<b>Proposed: Wendy Welland, seconded: Alan Matthews “that the unredacted minutes are signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held”. 8 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions. Motion carried</b>	<b>RESOLUTION 1</b>
6. Matters Arising	<p>6.1 Review of Actions – the top 5 are complete</p> <p>6.2 AB/20220131-6 - Stoke Moor will be included in the Engineering report</p> <p>6.3 AB/20220131-7 – Harters Hill – reported at the last meeting</p> <p>6.4 AB/20220411-1 – Standing Orders - on going</p> <p>6.5 AB/20220411–2 – Investment group - ongoing</p>	
7. Health & Safety	This item will be dealt with in the Engineers Report	
8. Governance & Staff Update	<p>8.1 An election is due to take place in October of this year. The Electoral Register has been approved with assistance from Nick Stevens. It was advertised for inspection in the Western Daily Press. As no claims or objections have been received, a further notice will be published in the Western Daily Press. As a result of the election the October meeting will be moved to a date to be confirmed in November. In accordance with the Land Drainage Act the newly elected members will take their seats on 1 November 2022. The next Finance &amp; Works meeting may have to be moved to a later date.</p> <p>8.2 Nominations are received as part of the process and a pole will only take place if more nominations are received than seats available. A resolution was requested to approve the register.</p> <p>Jeff Fear asked when is the cut off date for ineligibility of ratepayers to vote through non payment of rates. Nick Stevens confirmed that it would be the month before the election takes place.</p> <p>Charlie Rich asked if all members step down. Iain confirmed that it would be a new board so all elected members step down.</p> <p>Liz Scott asked if someone wanted to become a member when should they apply. Nick Stevens advised the election date would be advertised. Iain confirmed that nomination papers are sent out in August. The notice of the election will be in September and a poll if required would be around 27 October.</p> <p>Bob Filmer asked if the same process is carried out across the whole area. Nick confirmed that if there is only 1 district with more than one nomination you only have an election in that district.</p> <p>Roger Keen asked if the candidate has to be the actual landowner or can they use a representative. Nick Stevens confirmed that a representative can be used as long as the proposer meets the criteria such as rates paid in full and qualifying acreage (4 hectares) in that district.</p>	

	<p>All members will be written to informing them of the election.</p> <p><b>Proposed: Bob Filmer, seconded: Roger Keen “that the Electoral Register is approved” All in favour</b></p> <p>8.4 Correspondence</p> <p>Iain Sturdy wanted to bring to members attention items that had recently been received which resulted in attendance at the following meetings -</p> <p><b>River Summit</b> organised by ADA to discuss keeping rivers flowing</p> <p><b>Flood and Coastal conference</b> used to be the MAAF conference to discuss policies, processes, finance and funding, now organised by the EA.</p> <p><b>Water Forum</b> - attended by Iain, Jeff Fear and Tony Bradford. Meeting was chaired by Antony Gibson with presentations from mainly local people. It is very important for the Board to be seen to be talking with partners. Climate change is the major theme and the need to adapt and to operate differently as public bodies. Alan Franks agreed that major changes have taken place and the Board needs to be aware of where it can have an input.</p> <p>Iain had also attended an <b>SRA workshop</b> where they are reviewing their flood action plan. Iain and Rebecca Horsington were the only 2 that raised the issue of food and security. Since then the government has launched a new food strategy policy. The point of bringing this to the boards attention is that concern about climate change is leading many to reconsider the approach to flood risk in areas like Somerset and we need to be able to represent the Board, its rate payers and the public effectively. There is another SRA meeting soon. Will Human agreed that the board must be included in any conversations that are taking place with river and coastal authorities.</p> <p>Iain Sturdy also added that the EA had shared their concerns about storm “Eunice” because had the storm coincided with peak tidal levels there would have been very serious flooding.</p> <p>Will Human added that farmers have noticed that conditions are going from extremely wet to extremely dry periods</p> <p>Andrew Gilling reiterated that the Boards needs to be more involved in the discussions and conversations and to have more influence. Iain will keep members updated.</p> <p>David Tratt added there will be an effect from Natural England designating the super nature reserve area from Steart to the peat moors.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 2</b></p>
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	<p>8.5 Recruitment update – The advertisement for Clerk/CEO is now on the Consortium and ADA websites with a closing date of 24 June 2022.</p> <p>For Operational/Technical posts – there have been 15 expressions of interest in positions for Senior Engineer to Deputy Area Supervisor. An ex colleague of Iain Sturdys is interested in the Development Control position.</p> <p>There are no closing dates for the technical posts. It is hoped that interviews will take place shortly with a timescale to fill the posts from 1 to 4 months. Roger Keen asked if there was any updated regarding the Deputy Clerk. There have been no changes in the circumstances and this will not affect recruitment.</p> <p>8.6 CLOSED SESSION</p> <p><b>(This section will be redacted from the public minutes .)</b></p> <p><b>Action AB/20220620 – 1 To form a complaints panel to consider the Wilkin Chapman report and advise the members of the outcome at the next Board Meeting</b></p> <p>OPEN SESSION</p>	<p><b>Action AB/20220620 – 1</b></p>
<p>9. Finance Report</p>	<p>9.1 Bank Statements – Maggie Hammond confirmed that the bank statements have been reconciled and checked and signed by Will Human</p> <p>9.2 End of Year (2021/2022) Consortium Financial Report – had been discussed at the Finance &amp; Works committee on 13 June with the recommendation to accept the figures. <b>Proposed: Roger Keen, seconded: John Cousins “that the figures in the Consortium Financial Report are accepted” All in favour</b></p> <p>9.3 End of Year (2021/2022) Axe Brue Financial Report - also discussed at the Finance &amp; Works committee and accepted. <b>Proposed: Roger Keen, seconded: John Cousins “that the figures in the Axe Brue Financial Report are accepted”. All in favour</b></p> <p>9.4 Internal Audit Report – The TIAA report had also been provided and Maggie was pleased to say that the board was given the category of substantial assurance which is the best assurance available. 2 items to note – policies should be kept up to date (staff issues had delayed this) and the Aged Debtors report was not suitable. Maggie will ensure that policies will be updated and a better report for aged debtors report will be available.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 3</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 4</b></p>

	<p>9.5 In relation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement</p> <p><b>Proposed: Will Human, seconded: Roger Keen, “that the questions are answered all as 1,” all in favour</b></p> <p>9.6 <b>Proposed: Will Human, seconded: Jeff Fear “that all the answers to questions 1-8 are answered yes” all in favour</b></p> <p>9.7 <b>Proposed: Jeff Fear seconded: Will Human “to accept the figures as per the report” all in favour</b></p> <p>9.8 Signatories– with the recent changes in staffing, on occasion there are not enough signatories to carry out any banking, electronically or signing cheques. Currently any one with access to Bankline or is a signatory has to be named on the account. Officers have suggested that the position is used instead of the name such as CEO, Director of Operations, Director of Finance and Contracts Manager. At the Axe Brue F &amp; W meeting it was suggested that the Chairman is included. The bank mandate states that there should be 2 signatories but the board’s regulations are moot on the point. This recommendation will need full approval from the full board. Any changes made to staff/signatories are made with a mandate to the bank.</p> <p><b>Proposed: John Cousins seconded: Roger Keen that the recommendation of the F&amp;W committee to use positions instead of names for signatories in the bank is approved.” All in favour</b></p> <p>9.9 Outstanding Rates – Maggie Hammond reported the current position and is happy with the figures. Rate receipts are still coming in and first reminders are being sent out shortly.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 5</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 6</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 7</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 8</b></p>
<p>10. Engineering &amp; Operational Report</p>	<p>10.1 Health &amp; Safety Update – Naomi Johnson would like approval for the updated H&amp;S policy and terms of reference. The policy had a thorough review last year and will be reviewed again this year. The only amendment has been to include a section for infectious diseases. The frequency of meetings to be amended from biannually to twice a year and in addition the requirement to review any change to H&amp;S legislation and potential impact on board policy and processes. There is a small change in regards to the budget, the wording “receive and consider” was amended to “receive and agree”. <b>Proposed: Charlie Riches, Seconded Bob Filmer “To accept the changes as proposed by the Health &amp; Safety Sub Committee”. All in favour</b></p> <p>10.2 Wendy Welland asked if the Board should be notified if there was an outbreak of TB. There was some discussion and Iain sturdy agreed it is a good suggestion and will speak to ADA to see what other Boards do. David Tratt commented that there is a website that will show outbreaks are.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 9</b></p>

	<p><b>Proposed: David tratt seconded: Wendy Welland – all in favour</b></p> <p><b>ACTION AB/20220620 – 2 IDS to Speak to ADA about notifying TB outbreaks</b></p> <p>10.3 Iain Sturdy asked for the Engineering and Operational report to be taken as read and to approve the recommendations throughout the report.</p> <p>10.4 Operations – Rob King advised that the report is fully up to date with no further updates</p> <p>10.5 Matthew Wall reported that a sub committee had been formed to discuss the ongoing fuel price increase and circulated a paper with the committees recommendation. Iain Sturdy confirmed that the issue had been scrutinised thoroughly. <b>Proposed: Alan Franks, seconded: David Tratt “that recommendation 2.1.c of the paper is approved – The change in CPI between the month the contract was tendered (tender closing date) and the month in which the work was carried out to be applied to the price per metre”. All in favour</b></p> <p><b>CLOSED SESSION to be redacted from the public minutes</b></p> <p><b>OPEN SESSION</b></p> <p>10.7 Phil Brewin gave an overview of the Environment Report included within the Engineering and Operational report.</p> <p>There is an ongoing problem in the Bleadon area with floating pennywort but the Parish Council had reported that it seemed under control and they were pleased with the way the channels were looking.</p> <p>10.8 Matthew Wall asked members for their approval to take into view a section of Applewthy rhyne. A plan was shown of the rhyne, highlighting the section which would be an extra 1035m. Within this years prices it will be additional £332 extra to pay to the contractor. <b>Proposed: Jeff Fear, seconded: David Tratt “that the Applewthy rhyne is taken into view” all in favour</b></p> <p>10.8 Matthew Wall reported that the Brocks Pill gabian baskets project will be delayed as SRA funding had been diverted to maintenance dredging this year.</p> <p>10.9 Stoke Moor Pumping Station – Iain Sturdy referred to the report and would like to leave things as they are to protect the board. Andrew Gilling and Anthony Dowden declared an interest. The property was sold approximately 30 years ago. Alan Franks asked how long the covenant could stay in place and is the property going to become an eyesore? Will Human was</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 10</b></p> <p><b>Action AB/20220620 - 2</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 11</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 12</b></p>
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	<p>of the opinion that it could become a pleasing property if the covenant was removed. Iain Sturdy felt the worry for the board is that they sold the property very cheaply to a board member as no other body was able to take it on. Bob Filmer commented that as the price paid at the time was low could a fee be charged to remove the covenant? Iain Sturdy agreed this may be the way forward and would like to ask Ashfords for more advice.</p> <p><b>Proposed: Liz Scott, seconded: Roger Keen “that more advice is obtained from Ashfords with regard to a payment to be uplifted to the board or the release of the covenant”. 9 for, 0 against, 1 abstention. Motion carried</b></p>	<b>RESOLUTION 13</b>
11. Environment Report	See above	
12. Somerset Rivers Authority Update	<p>12.1 Iain Sturdy reported that the Flood Action Plan is to be reviewed but there is no Chairman at present due to County Elections</p> <p>12.2 A meeting had been held at the Boards offices to discuss the hydraulic model of the Brue dredging which was arranged by John Rowlands, David Mitchell, Andy Wallis.</p> <p>12.3 The Water Injection Dredging is continuing in the Parrett. An interesting article by the Parrett Drainage Board has been published in the ADA Gazette.</p> <p>12.4 The Board continues to bid for funding for suitable projects.</p>	
13. Risk Review	The register has not been reviewed and needs to be thoroughly checked before the next meeting. The biggest risks are are currently fuel costs and staffing	
14. Any Other Business	<p>14.1 Liz Scott asked for information regarding the siphon under the Yeo. Iain Sturdy is not sure who owns the siphon but advised that Lester Durston is working on a design. It may be possible to use structural lining to refurbish hard to access pipelines such as this.</p> <p>14.2 Nick Stevens had checked the rules regarding the eligibility to vote and confirmed that the rates should be paid in full 1 month before the date of the election.</p>	
15. Date of Next Meeting	7 November 2022 venue to be advised	
16.	The Chairman thanked members and staff for their attendance and closed the meeting at 13.15	

Annex:

A. Axe Brue Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR.....DATE .....

**ANNEX A TO  
AXE BRUE BOARD MINUTES  
DATED**

**AXE BRUE BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
AB/20220411-1	To make enquiries about changing the standing orders.	CEO
AB/20220411 - 2	To bring forward to a later date the investment group meeting	CEO
AB/20220620 – 1	To form a complaints panel to consider the Wilkin Chapman report and advise the members of the outcome at the next Board Meeting	
AB/20220620 - 2	To speak to ADA about notifying TB outbreaks	Acting CEO