

MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT COSSINGTON VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2023

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr J Fear (C) Mr A Franks Mr D Tratt Mrs W Welland Mr M Watts Mr T Whitcombe Mr M Lunnon Mr J Stradling	Appointed Members: Cllr P Clayton Cllr J Cousins Cllr A Gilling (VC) Cllr W Human	Officers: Mr I Sturdy Mrs M Hammond Mr P Brewin Mr A Dowden Miss N Cornish Mrs V Martin Mrs N Johnson	Public:
Approved Apologies:			
Mr B Clapp Ms L Scott	Cllr A Matthews Cllr A Hendry Cllr M Murphy Cllr C Riches		
Non-Approved Apologies:			
Mr N Lukins	Cllr M Martin Cllr B Filmer Cllr M Healey Cllr R Keen		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance & Apologies	1.1. Apologies as per the above Attendance List.	
2. Items additional to the Agenda	2.1. Matthew Wall would like to discuss taking into view a further section of Chasey's Drove. 2.2. Maggie Hammond has a drainage rate write off she would like to discuss.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1. The following declarations of interest were declared. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alan Franks in Dogleg Ditch and Westhay Moor, Jon Cousins said he was on the Scrutiny Panel Martin Watts declared an interest in MSW's AOB regarding Chasey's Drove 	
4. Members of the public to address the Meeting	4.1. None	

5. Minutes of Axe Brue Full Board 07 November 2022	5.1. The minutes were signed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.	
6. Matters Arising	<p>6.1.IDS discussed outstanding action with the Members as follows :</p> <p>AB/20220411-1 To make enquiries about changing the standing orders -Regarding the timing of papers being sent out before a Meeting – Superseded</p> <p>AB/20220411-2 To carry forward to a later date the investment group meeting – Carried forward</p> <p>AB/20221109-02 – To set up a meeting to discuss Stoke Moor Pumping Station – IDS informed Members that Ashfords have been appointed to advise and there is enough information to set up this group within the next couple of weeks. IDS updated Members on the current situation. David Tratt asked whether the Board was incurring the full legal costs and IDS responded with yes.</p>	
7. Health & Safety	<p>7.1. Naomi Johnson highlighted to Members that all IDB staff would be having conflict resolution training.</p> <p>7.2. NJ further advised she is going to implement a new register called Visit in Pairs (VIP) which details properties where there have been issues in the past and this helps staff be aware not to attend alone.</p>	
8. Governance & Staff Update	<p>8.1. IDS reminded Members to send in their Register of Members Interests.</p> <p>8.2. IDS updated Members on the staff structure saying there is currently an advertisement for a Consents and Enforcement Officer which is receiving some interest. Three Deputy Area Supervisors have been appointed across the Boards leaving the Operations team fully populated. Furthermore, there will be some adverts for Engineers in the next few weeks.</p> <p>8.3. IDS told Members that the calendar of meetings has been revised so the SDBC Management Committee meeting is held before the individual Boards Finance & Works meetings. Also, a new Environment Committee meeting will be taking place in June.</p>	
9. Finance Report	<p>9.1. Maggie Hammond ran through the finance report telling Members, the bank reconciliation up to the 31 December have been completed and it is as expected.</p> <p>9.2. MH ran through the budgets advising that bank reconciliations were up to date and the position as of 31 December 2022 was a surplus of £311k with an estimated year end overspend of £79k but added the Board is spending £106k on Board schemes from money that has been raised in previous years, so there is an actual underspend. MH said there are £584k of free reserves and she will write a paper to help Members make the decisions on a reserves policy. Martin Watts asked how much money had been put back for jobs which had not</p>	

	<p>been completed over the last few years. MH said as at April 2022 the works reserve was £243k and if the forecast figure of £109K is spent this will go down to £137k.</p> <p>9.3. MH discussed the proposed budget for 2023/24 saying expenditure was going up by 11.75% and the pennyrate would increase by 10.899%.</p> <p>9.4. Martin Watts proposed keeping the pennyrate as it was. There was much discussion around this with IDS saying to go forward with MW proposal the Board will not be able to fulfil a lot of the core work and will not deliver a satisfactory service to the public. IDS asked Martin Watts to suggest details of what he recommends shouldn't be done.</p> <p>The Chair asked Members if they would like to take the amended proposal forward to be the substantive motion</p> <p>Martin Watts proposed and Alan Franks seconded 'to keep the pennyrate as it was' In favour 2, against 7 and 2 abstentions.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Peter Clayton and seconded by Cllr Jon Cousins 'to accept the budget as described by the Finance Officer' In Favour 6, Against 2 and 3 abstention</p> <p>With the proposal carried by majority the Chair and CEO signed and sealed the drainage rate levy certificate.</p> <p>9.5. MH updated Members on drainage rates stating there was £10,018.45 outstanding. Cllr Jon Cousins asked what the Boards policy was on non-payment. MH said they are taken to Court and issued with a liability order but she would like to be able to issue persistent non-payers with a CCJ as this would have an impact on their credit score but she needs to investigate if it is allowed and how to go about it. MH told Members about a drainage rate in Stoke Moor on land where it was unlikely to be able to recover the debt that has not been paid since 2014/15 with an outstanding balance of £460.58 and she was seeking permission to write it off. There was discussion around sending out the right message regarding writing off the debt. Cllr Jon Cousins asked whether there was a policy and if not would it be a good idea to have a policy so in future, Officers could follow procedure and not bring these items to the Board. It was agreed to withdraw the write off and not to send reminders. Jo Stradling recommended leaving the debt in the accounts against the named person(s)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RESOLUTION 01</p>
<p>10. Engineering & Operational Report</p>	<p>10.1. IDS asked Members to take the report as read. He further commented on the hydrometric summary and recent flooding in the Parrett Board saying there would be a review undertaken with the Environment Agency and the SRA to see how things have gone and what</p>	

could be done better in the future.

Matthew Wall told Members only 2% of the Upper Brue maintenance has not been completed and there are explanations for each area mainly due to maize and trees. Moving forward he said all Axe area tender documents will be sent out within the next week.

Martin Watts asked about Field Ditch and asked who it belongs to, MSW will look into it. Anthony Dowden said there are two controls at Field Ditch and the structure is an IDB one although it is on an EA watercourse.

10.2. MSW told Members while updating maintenance plans for the area there is a short section of rhyne that has not been maintained, Chasey's Drove and Martin Watts has asked that this section be taken into view. At this point Martin Watts declared an interest and then informed Members of the issue saying he believes it was missed off plans previously. IDS asked what the benefits would be from the section being taken into view. Martin Watts said currently it drains very slowly so it will improve connectivity in the area and allow better run off for areas outside the boundary.

Cllr Jon Cousins proposed and Joe Stradling seconded 'to take the section into view'
All in favour

Virginie Martin gave an update on Development Control saying Isleport Development is close to being granted Land Drainage consent and they will be replacing the IDB Weir .

Andrew Gilling said he would like VM to be aware of an issue in East Brent which is an application to allow access for construction traffic from the old Bristol Road to the A38 which was blocked up many years ago but will mean crossing Brockspill Rhyne.

David Tratt said the consent ID 1174 might need a visit as there is a very high water table and there are restricted water flow issues in that area. Cllr Jon Cousins declared an interest in planning application 2022_1981_FUL.

Martin Watts asked who makes the decision on providing pipes when land owners wish to replace culverts. IDS said the decision on whether the landowner is reimbursed or given a pipe or the size of the pipe is a matter of policy.

Trevor Whitcombe queried consent ID 1172 asking whether it will have an impact on neighbouring land. IDS said it is a concern that would apply to anyone wanting to modify a watercourse but Phil Brewin, the Boards Ecologist and Anthony Dowden are working to understand the implications of the work.

Cllr Will Human left the meeting @ 12.10

RESOLUTION 02

<p>11. Environmental Report</p>	<p>11.1. Phil Brewin told Members he was hoping to have more Environment Committee meetings in the coming year and was seeking approval from the Board to make the Joint Environment Committee a standing committee and for the Chair to be elected for a three year term.</p> <p>Proposed by Andrew Gilling and seconded by Wendy Welland ‘to make the Joint Environment Committee a standing committee and for the Chair to be elected for a three year term. All in favour</p> <p>11.2.PAB told Members, Drainage Boards are required by Defra to report on their work and standards in an annual report known as the IDB1 form. There are questions about environmental expenditure and other environmental matters such as access to expertise and the preparation of Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans. Currently the Boards do not collect financial data on environmental expenditure despite significant investment in environmental and SSSI management. Advice is being sought from ADA.</p> <p>11.3. PAB discussed proposals for updating the Policy Statement saying the Environment Act 2021 has been passed by law to require public bodies to be more transparent in how they are helping the environment. The committee recommends that the Boards update their Policy Statement to cover changes in legislation and to better reflect the Boards’ commitment to environmental protection and nature recovery.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Jon Cousins and seconded by Wendy Welland to adopted the words ‘further to the requirements of the Environmental Act 2021, the Boards will review their Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans with reference to the local nature recovery strategy and relevant species conservation or protected site strategy for their areas’ All in favour</p> <p>11.4.PAB updated Members on Biodiversity Action Plans, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Water Level Management Plans and invasive species.</p> <p>11.5. Regarding invasive species, the Board is doing quite well, there is only one site in the Axe Brue Board with floating pennywort and it is fairly well contained and being actively controlled. PAB stressed how important it was to focus on biosecurity with contractors. Wendy Welland asked whether the Board should be notified of floating pennywort in private ditches. PAB said although it is not the Boards problem they do try to engage with landowners through the annual newsletter and Parish Councils to let people know that the Board</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 03</p> <p>Action: 20230230-01 To get advice from ADA about Environmental expenditure and other Environmental matters for the IDB1 form.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 04</p>
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	does offer advice.	
12. SRA Update	<p>12.1. IDS gave a brief update saying he attended the SRA Full Board meeting recently with the initial focus being on the rainfall and flooding. There was an additional 40 pumps deployed pumping water out of the moors and into the rivers with an estimated 41 million cubic metres of water that needed to be pumped. The Flood Action Plan from 2013/14 is being reviewed and will be concluded by the end of the year. He concluded to say the dredging of the River Parrett's five year contract has been completed successfully.</p> <p>12.2. Alan Franks asked if the EA had a contingency plan for the Brue if the rain hadn't stopped. IDS said he doesn't believe there is apart from the usual operational response plans. He added that for EA to do more there would need to be strong evidence to justify the expense and that was often a problem for them. Alan Franks said Dogleg Ditch was underwater and he has never seen that happen in 74 years. He asked if there was any information on Dogleg Ditch and the restoration of the existing area. PAB said after initial progress Godwin's have gone very quiet. They are endeavouring to sort it out but there is no formal agreement to operate Dogleg Ditch.</p> <p>IDS added that he believes Godwins own the site and they would have a liability should their lack of action cause disadvantage to anyone else.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Members and Officers and closed the meeting at 13.05.</p>	
14. Date of next Meeting	The next meeting will be on 17 April 2023	

Annex:

A. Axe Brue Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR.....DATE

AXE BRUE BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
AB/20220411 - 1	To carry forward to a later date the investment group meeting	Clerk & RFO Ongoing
AB/20221109-02	To set up a meeting to discuss Stoke Moor Pumping Station.	Mr M Wall & Mr A Dowden and Mr Sturdy Ongoing
AB/20230130-01	To get advice from ADA about environmental expenditure and other environmental matters for the IDB1 form.	Mr P Brewin