

MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FINANCE AND WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON 16 JANUARY 2023

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr J Fear Mr D Tratt Mr M Watts Mr T Whitcombe	Appointed Members: Cllr A Matthews Cllr M Murphy	Officers: Mr I Sturdy Mrs M Hammond Miss N Cornish	Public:
Apologies:			
	Cllr W Human Cllr A Gilling		
Non-Attendance:			
	Cllr R Keen Cllr L Scott		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1. Apologies as per the above Attendance List.	
2.	2.1. IDS asked for nominations for a Chair. Proposed by Cllr Alan Matthews and seconded by Cllr Mike Murphy “that Jeff Fear chair the meeting” Vote: unanimous	Resolution 1
3. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1. No additional items requested.	
4. Declarations of Interest	3.1. As per the register.	
5. Approval of Minutes	4.1 The Minutes of the Finance & Works meeting of 13 June 22 were approved and signed as a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting.	
5. Matters Arising	5.1. AB/20220117-01 – Maintain pressure on Bristol Water and to make contact about Bleadon Sluice - IDS informed Members he had received a response from Bristol Water on	

	<p>19 October 2022 to say Bleadon Sluice will be removed subject to consultation and environmental assessment. The removal time will be between 2025 and 2030 dependant on funding.</p> <p>5.2. AB20210614-01 – Undertake a Land Registry Search for landowners either side of Bleadon Sluice to ascertain if there were any easements in place – IDS reported that a LRS had not been completed and seemed superfluous now.</p> <p>5.3. AB/20210614-01 – Investigate County Court small claims with ADA Policy & Finance Committee – IDS reported there is a backlog due to covid and the Courts are prioritising cases. MH added we need to identify the next steps to take legally including the time and costs versus the gain of getting money in..</p>	
6. Finance Report	<p>6.1. 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. She added the Board is spending £106k on Board schemes from money that has been raised in previous years.</p> <p>6.2. Martin Watts queried the figures saying it's not an overspend if the money is being used from previous years. MH advised that she needs to account for the money in the year it is spent. Martin Watts said there should be a paper showing what the reserves are and how much money has been raised over the years for work that has not been done. MH said they still need to raise money for next year and if the Board want to use their reserves to bring down the penny rate they can do that for a few years but it will eventually have to go up.</p> <p>6.3. David Tratt raised the question about the unspent funds on staff expenditure being held in reserves by the Consortium, this was discussed at the last Full Board meeting in November but MH advised she had not used that option in this budget. Instead, any underspend will go back to the Boards as the Consortium agreement states.</p>	

	<p>6.4. Martin Watts asked how many staff were needed for the Consortium to be up to full structure. IDS discussed with Members the structure he has designed saying positions vacant are Ratings Officer, Assistant Clerk, 3 Engineers, a Principal Engineer, 2/3 Deputy Area Supervisors and a Consents & Enforcement Officer.</p> <p>6.5. MH discussed the proposed budget for 2023/24, informing Members a couple of the bigger increases include the admin budget which was underfunded last year due to the cost of living increase being higher than budgeted for and this has left a starting value of £28k on the Boards admin charge. Martin Watts stated he thought the amount was excessive saying between the three Boards £194k has been requested and he questioned what happen to the underspend from last year. IDS explained that for the staff structure he has been asked to deliver to enable the Boards to function effectively as a Drainage Board this is the cost. He reiterated the estimated underspend of £284k will go back to the Boards so they can decide how to use the money for future budgets. MH then told Members the contracts for routine maintenance allow for CPI in years 2 and 3 if it's above 2% and she has allowed for a 10% increase.</p> <p>6.6. Cllr Mike Murphy queried when the committee to discuss investments involving Cllr Will Human, Martin Watts and himself as agreed at a previous meeting would take place.</p> <p>Cllr Mike Murphy proposed and Cllr Alan Matthews seconded “to recommend the budget to the Full Board Meeting”</p> <p>3 for and 1 against.</p> <p>6.7. Trevor Whitcombe said maybe alternative ways to raise money should be looked at such as raising the amount for fishing lakes and peat land who pump their water into the system.</p> <p>6.8. David Tratt asked how the Council reacted to the budget and MH confirmed she has had</p>	<p>ACTION: 20230116-01 – Arrange a committee to discuss investments</p> <p>RESOLUTION 01</p>
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	<p>discussions with them and they understand it is a standstill budget.</p> <p>6.9. Martin Watts asked why people who have previously operated structures have been stopped from doing so. IDS said this is not new and has been the Boards position for many years, some of the reasons are because people do not let the Boards know what they do and when they do it and there is an issue around safety. Jeff Fear questioned whether these people have insurance in case they have an accident. IDS also queried whether the structures are being altered to suit the drainage needs of everybody or just themselves and are the people capable of going out at all hours to operate the structures as necessary.</p>	
7. Any Other Business	None	
8. Date of Next Meeting	<p>10.1. The Date of the next Finance & Works meeting is 20 March 2023</p> <p>10.2. The meeting was closed at 15.54</p>	

Annex:

A. Axe Brue F&W Meeting – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIRMAN.....DATE

**ANNEX A TO
AXE BRUE F&W COMMITTEE MINUTES
DATED 13 JUN 2022**

AXE BRUE F&W MEETING – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
AB/20230116-01	Arrange a committee to discuss investments	
AB/20210614-01	To investigate County Court Small Claims with ADA Policy & Finance Committee and report back to the Boards.	Dir Fin will start afresh. Ongoing