

**MINUTES OF THE PARRETT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON 20 JUNE 2023 AT 14:30**

<b>Attendance:</b>			
<b>Elected Members:</b> Will Barnard Roger Barrington Anthony Betty (VC) Tony Bradford (C) Barrie Bryer Colin Passmore John Perrin David Vigar James Winslade	<b>Appointed Members:</b> Cllr Alan Bradford Cllr Hilary Bruce Cllr Mike Caswell Cllr Mike Stanton Cllr Julian Taylor	<b>Officers:</b> Iain Sturdy (Clerk/CEO) Maggie Hammond (RFO) Kendra Kingston Naomi Johnson Phil Brewin	<b>Public:</b>
<b>Approved Apologies:</b>			
Roger Coombes Rebecca Horsington	Cllr Norman Cavill Cllr Richard Morgan Cllr Gwil Wren Cllr Richard Wilkins		
<b>Non-Approved Apologies:</b>			
Mark Heywood	Cllr Lance Duddridge Stuart Kingham Cllr Liz Leavy		

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>Detail:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
1. Attendance and Apologies	<p>1.1 Tony Bradford (Chair) welcomed members to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 The Chair informed members of the sad news that Cllr Mike Lewis had recently passed away. He was a valuable member of the Board and as a mark of respect a minute's silence was held</p> <p>1.3 Apologies from. Norman Cavill, Roger Coombes, Rebecca Horsington, Richard Morgan, Richard Wilkins. Also, staff members Matthew Wall and Rob King</p> <p>1.4 Meeting packs. The Chair felt all members should receive a hard copy, but not everyone agreed. Members who require a hard copy are as follows: Barrie Bryer, Mike Caswell, Alan Bradford, Julian Taylor, David Vigar, James Winslade, Colin Passmore and Tony Bradford.</p>	

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.

2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1. Colin Passmore – phosphates and bank interest rate.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1. As per the register of Members interest. Will Barnard – FWAG 3.2 Anthony Betty advised that the new Somerset Council had put in some local community networks and he had been elected as Vice Chairman to the Levels and Moors Committee which covers a very large area including Chedzoy, Westonzoyland and Somerton. A meeting was held to establish requirements. A request was made for an IDB officer to attend future meetings. David Vigar advised there are 33 parishes involved, the committee acts as a go between for parishes and the council. The Clerk advised it would be difficult to attend to all of these but perhaps could attend when requested.	
4. Members of the Public to address the Meeting	4.1 Anthony Dowden introduced himself. He was no longer working for the Board but thanked them for the work business opportunity he had been offered over the years. Will Barnard thanked him for his work. The Chair added his thanks.	
5. Approval of Minutes	5.1. Councillor Bruce wished to add her apologies for not attending the previous meeting. Roger Barrington asked for the date of the flood in item 6.2 to be checked. With this amendment it was agreed unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting of 18 April 2023	<b>ACTION P/20230620-01</b>
6. Matters Arising and Review of Actions	6.1. Julian Taylor – item 6.3 in relation to underfunded EA maintenance, asked has there been any response? The Clerk replied there had been further feedback and a questionnaire sent recently to EA regions to start building the picture of any associated asset deterioration. Julian Taylor asked if locals should fund defences. The Clerk said that he didn't think this was the intention, more so DEFRA are trying to understand the consequences of the shortfall in funding.  The Chair said pressure is kept on to the Minister.  6.2 The Chair – item 6.4 – Regarding the EAs flood recovery work, a meeting had been held with Andrea Summers. They are well on the way to putting damaged assets back to good order. Documents had been received with trigger points for each pumping station and seems to be a positive report. The Clerk noted that he had asked for more time to consider the current documents and for the EA team to come and present their findings/proposals.  James Winslade asked if 1 <sup>st</sup> July was the deadline. The Clerk assured members that he will ask for more time. Roger Barrington said it was a very constructive meeting. The Chair added that he is confident progress will be made. The Clerk will have read the documents by the end of the week and will arrange another meeting.  6.3 item 8.4 Regarding members attendance. The Chair stated that attendance of committee meetings was poor. There had been times when the meeting was not quorate. The Clerk said sub committees are necessary and perhaps	

each board should decide on whether they wish to continue with committees such as Finance and Works. The Chairman said members should be more focused on the whole board and not just the particular committee they have been appointed or elected to. Finance is very important, Colin Passmore said the F&W have done well. Maggie Hammond (RFO) said that figures can be discussed more effectively with a smaller number of members who can report to the full Board.

Alan Bradford said the town council have the same problem, members should be involved in all areas. Cllr Bruce said skills should be brought to the full board. Barrie Bryer commented there should be a holistic approach to the whole board. Will Barnard agreed but added there is not always enough time so creative thinking is needed. The Clerk outlined the current structure – 4 full board meetings per year. Joint sub committees are important to bring cross board information to full board meetings. All happy to leave it as is. The RFO would ask for 2 meetings. One for agreeing budgets and one for reporting year end accounts.

The Chair felt the F&W committee is very important for everyone to understand. James Winslade would prefer longer meetings to include the F&W. Mike Caswell suggested arriving at the meeting at 2pm and continuing until 7pm. Other meetings are held in the evenings. The F&W was set up to go through the financial matters and to make recommendations to the full board. David Vigar commented that more people should attend the meetings.

**Proposed: Mike Caswell, seconded Hilary Bruce “that no changes should be made to the current meeting system” 9 for, 1 against, 4 abstentions, motion carried**

**RESOLUTION 1**

6.4 Investment – a meeting had been held with North Somerset member which resulted in a few changes to the policy which will be brought to the group for approval.

6.5 Barrie Bryer asked if a meeting has been arranged with English Nature, this was confirmed by Phil Brewin.

Cllr Bruce on item 15.3 of the April minutes advised that she would prefer Evening meetings. The Chair suggested members should express their preferences.

Alan Bradford said that council planning meetings start at 5pm. The Clerk said an analysis of attendance would be useful and feels attendance is improving. Perhaps alternating between day and evening meetings would help. Anthony Betty said the same faces turn up at each meeting, should non-attenders be penalised. The Clerk will take this as an action and bring a report to next meeting

**ACTION  
P/20230620-02**

	<p>6.6 <u>Review of actions</u></p> <p>P/20191105-21 To convene a Task and Finish Group meeting to review Electoral Districts</p> <p>P/20211026-2 To complete a review of the Strategic Review of Plant, Machinery and Manpower. 5 year plan put on hold (Colin Passmore said a good job by Matthew Wall in a delicate situation with regard to tenders for maintenance work)</p> <p>P/20230131-01 To draw up a programme for problem areas of water flow</p> <p>P/20230418-01 Arrange another meeting with the EA to discuss the flooding</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> <b>P/20191105-2</b> <b>Ongoing. Will be concluded nearer to next elections</b></p> <p><b>ACTION</b> <b>P/20211026-02</b> <b>Ongoing</b></p> <p>Phil Brewin <b>COMPLETE</b></p> <p><b>COMPLETE</b></p>
<p>7. Health &amp; Safety Report</p>	<p>7.1. Naomi Johnson asked that the report be taken as read. A meeting is to be held next week regarding the Soloprotect lone working device which was shown to members.</p> <p>The Clerk referred to the register of incidents. What appeared initially to be a minor issue has now become more significant. Whilst flailing a hedge, a wire was caught which hit the cab of the machine. However due to proximity of the work to the M5 it could have been much more serious. We are now working with National Highways to overcome this problem.</p> <p>The Clerk said that work is being carried out by National Highways to make access safe. In the fullness of time fences will be replaced by National Highways.</p> <p>Roger Barrington asked if is it possible to flail with a metal detector</p> <p>Naomi Johnson commented that the concern was the proximity to the highway</p>	
<p>8. Governance and Staff Update</p>	<p>8.1. Byelaws – The Clerk informed Members that the new model byelaws have now been confirmed by DEFRA and are therefore in operation.</p> <p>8.2 Recruitment – Nicky Cornish has been appointed as the Rates Assistant and Maggie Hammond is taking on the role of Business Support Manager. The position as receptionist has been advertised with a strong interest which could also possibly fill the role of Clerks Assistant.</p> <p>An engineering recruitment agency has been engaged to assist Virginie Martin with the enforcements but this will not be the long term option.</p>	

	<p>There is still no success with recruiting to the engineering vacancies. However in looking at other ways to provide the engineering service the CEO has come across an organisation called Calm Engineering. Calm Engineering have provided services to the EA, SRA and Mendip DC. They are offering up to 6 chartered civil engineers who are available up to 20 hours per week each with favourable hourly rates when compared to others and are available to start next week. The other two Boards have heard this proposal. As has the Parrett F&amp;W Committee who are in favour of appointing CALM. Within our procurement procedures a Single Source Option has been considered and is justified as we have tried every other avenue available to fill the roles and have been unable to secure the necessary resource. It is a call off contract, so does not have a value to it and will be a NEC contract for services.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated the need for engineers. <b>Proposed: Will Barnard, seconded: Roger Barrington “that CALM Engineering Services are engaged on an as and when basis” All in favour</b></p> <p>8.3 Hilary Bruce requested information before meetings in future. However due to the urgency the F&amp;W committee had asked for a verbal report to the full meeting.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 2</b></p>
<p>9. Finance Report</p>	<p>9.1 Maggie Hammond referred to the report. All has been considered by the F&amp;W committee. SDBC accounts show a surplus of 266k shared between 3 boards  <b>Proposed:, Colin Passmore, Seconded: Anthony Betty “That SDBC account are adopted for 22-23” All in favour</b>  The Parrett surplus is 153k  <b>Proposed: Colin Passmore, seconded: Mike Caswell “that Parrett accounts are adopted for 22-23” all in favour</b></p> <p>9.2 Reserves – £544k of reserves currently. Julian Taylor asked if treasury is advised of funds. Maggie Hammond advised that the auditor is involved. Colin Passmore highlighted how important it is, now we have engineering capacity, that we start to get stuck into the work programme – covid stopped work be delivered. Now that reserves are built up we need to get the work back on track.</p> <p>9.3 The Chair said other boards operate on a 1 year expenditure, we need to keep reserves for emergencies. Colin Passmore said reserves need to be used to carry out works</p> <p>9.4 Internal Audit Report – Maggie Hammond reported that 8 questions on the report should be answered yes  The chair advised that the F&amp;W committee had been through the report and agreed to take all questions together.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 3</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 4</b></p>

	<p><b>Proposed: Mike Caswell, seconded: Anthony Betty</b>  <b>“that the Board agrees to answer to take all the questions together” All in favour</b></p> <p><b>Proposed: Anthony Betty, seconded: Colin Passmore</b>  <b>“that the board agrees to answer yes to all the questions on the AGAR report”. All in favour</b></p> <p>9.5 Section 2 – <b>Proposed: Mike Caswell, seconded: James Winslade: that the board accept section 2 of the AGAR” all in favour</b></p> <p>9.6 Maggie Hammond reported that the bank statements had been fully reconciled to the end of May and that Stuart Kingham has agreed to continue checking the statements on a regular basis</p> <p>9.7 Rates – the demands were sent out in May. £115k has been received leaving £84k outstanding. Second reminders will be sent out in July</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 5</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 6</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 7</b></p>
<p>10.Engineering &amp; Operational Report</p>	<p>10.1. The Clerk apologised for the absence of Matthew Wall and Rob King and asked that the current report be taken as read.</p> <p>10.2 Hydrometric Summary is taken from the Environment Agency Wessex report – currently struggling to keep water levels where they need to be. The outlook is for dry weather. There are good field teams in place with deputies supporting the area supervisors.</p> <p>David Vigar reported that EA had been trying to resolve problems at Henley Door and the irrigation pumps. He thought these had now been repaired. Nick Lockyer was aware of the issue.</p> <p>10.3 Mike Caswell – going back a few years there was a long list of items to be done. How are we getting on with the list because I have not seen it since? Iain Sturdy replied that this is the work we have been unable to do due to lack of engineering resource. The funds for this work have been ringfenced and is there when we have the engineering resource. The proposed contract with Calm Engineering will allow us to eat our way into the outstanding work. When engineers are appointed, we will be able to complete this work quicker. Mike Caswell asked if in future the Board could have the list of works. This will be made available at the next Full Board meeting</p> <p>10.4 The Chair confirmed that the maintenance lots that had no tenders at the first round of tendering have now got tenders secured. He thanked Matthew Wall who worked hard to get contractors for these lots.</p> <p>10.5 Will Barnard wanted to highlight that now we are wholly dependent upon contractors maintaining the supply of contractors is critical. The Clerk confirmed that there are policies on the amount of work we award to one contractor and we have operated an open approved suppliers list. This means any contractor can ask to be included as an</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b>  <b>P/20230620-03</b></p>

	<p>approved supplier. They just have to demonstrate through formal questionnaire that they can operate to the required standards.</p>	
<p>11. Environment Report</p>	<p>11.1. Phil Brewin referred to the Environment report at the back of the Engineering and Operational which is largely a summary of what was discuss at the Environment Committee at the beginning of the month. Keen to keep the Board up-to-date.</p> <p>11.2 The Chair asked that with the Phosphorus pollution, we know what the situation is, but what we need is solutions? Colin Passmore commented that it was more complex than suggested by the Chair. Phil Brewin referred to the report and showed slides to the Board that provided context to the issue and why it matters to the IDBs. Eutrophication has direct impacts on water conveyance, through increased aquatic plant growth, and biodiversity in IDB rhynes, and it could be impacting channel maintenance (increased frequency and cost). There is also a duty on the Board, under the Environment Act 2021, to contribute to protected site restoration plans. Natural England has prepared a site restoration plan for nutrient pollution that outlines actions and measures that will hopefully provide a solution. This has discussed in some length at the Environment Committee.</p> <p>Barrie Bryer – a lot of the summer problem is a lack of flow of water. Phil Brewing agreed that there is a dilution problem.</p> <p>Julian Taylor – How much of the phosphorus is coming from the higher ground? Phil Brewin responded that we know from sampling on West Sedgemoor and other moors in the Parrett catchment that phosphate concentrations can be many times higher than the target threshold.</p> <p>James Winslade – is it to do with levels of silt in the watercourses which is making the water levels shallower which is also not helping the vegetation. Phil Brewin said that the phosphate levels in the watercourse silt was very high, as it is too in the top layers of soils, as phosphates have been accumulating within IDB districts from many decades. The main challenge in site restoration will be reducing these legacy phosphate levels and mitigating it impacts.</p> <p>Will Barnard – the problem is very complicated. Phil is doing a good job of representing the Drainage Board’s interests.</p> <p>The Chair summed up by saying it is a problem. The figures would be more credible if there was a cross section of each moor tested. Is it worse after rainfall or no rainfall? We cannot tackle the problem without evidence. The IDB should perform independent testing to gather data for all areas.</p>	

Colin Passmore – I wrote to the Clerk about this problem and I suggested that the Board uses the Area Supervisors in their travels to take regular dips from watercourses. Phil Brewin has been working with a local water chemist to discuss what would be required for us to complete testing. A budget would be required of approximately £2,000 for equipment.

Iain Sturdy summarised the conversation. Let’s agree in principle that the Board will fund a modest monitoring programme of phosphorus across the levels and surrounding area so we can compile our own picture. The one thing we should not do is duplicate work that is already happening.

The Chair drew the item to a close, we have no information to challenge the current results.

**Proposed: James Winslade, seconded: Will Barnard: “that the board make available the requested sum of £2,000 to set up the testing of phosphorus by the Area Supervisors” all in favour**

**RESOLUTION 8  
ACTION  
P/20230620-04  
COMPLETE**

11.3 FWAG. test and trial – the Board has been written to about two proposals for adjustment to water levels for peat conservation.

The Chair reported that the Sowy scheme had not been complete yet by the EA/SRA and the banks aren’t complete and the area Phil was discussing will be severely affected by this, so can’t see that any test and trial can be done. Phil was happy to take this as the opinion of the Board. The Chair confirmed that this was his opinion.

James Winslade – confirmed that he is not happy with test and trials especially on flood plains and testing should be elsewhere. Compensation payments are needed to landowners that lose crops to flooding rather than test and trials that will mean farmland can be flooded every year just because a payment is made. Phil highlighted that the peat test and trial was concerned with water level management during dry hot summer conditions when there was an increased risk of peat wastage and carbon emissions, and when the risk of flooding was minimal. It was not a winter flood water storage trial, as had been attempted on Currymoor earlier in the year.

Will Barnard said the trials are about coming up with a way of working that enables Somerset to engage with DEFRA to deliver a scheme/policies that will be fit for purpose to allow us to work with in the future. What the trials do is show that we can engage with that and we can come to the table and talk meaningfully and reasonably about how we would like our landscape to function. The deliverables are somewhat academic, it’s about the process. It’s about informing the policies and payments from DEFRA for the next 20 years. DEFRA are now listening.





	<p>There are ongoing concerns about the impact of Test and Trial, especially on flood risk and Iain expressed the Boards concerns that the sites should not increase flood risk.</p> <p>Will Barnard – confirmed that the Board through Iain Sturdy was not informed of the date of the Currymoor trial.</p> <p>Iain Sturdy confirmed that the SRA meeting was a productive meeting and there had been requests for future funding put forward.</p>	
13. Correspondence & engagement with other authorities	13.1. No correspondence has been received.	
15. AOB	<p>15.1 Colin Passmore asked about the interest on the bank account. This was confirmed as 1.35%. The RFO Maggie Hammond is to re-write the investment policy after the AGAR has been submitted for all 3 Boards.</p> <p><b>Proposed Anthony Betty, seconded: Mike Caswell: “that the RFO re-writes the investment policy and brings it back to the investment group ASAP” all in favour</b></p> <p>The final version will come to all of the Boards. The Clerk said that this must be done carefully and in a considered way.</p> <p>James Winslade - asked about invasive weeds and how we are going to do going forward as there is a concern in North Petherton. Phil Brewin confirmed that the spraying is going well and we have had contractors on site removing invasive weeds. The EA are keen to give funds for invasive species.</p>	<b>RESOLUTION 11</b>
16. Date of next meeting	<p>16.1. Dates of the next Full Board meeting is: 10 October 2023.</p> <p>The Chair and Cllr Mike Caswell will not be available for this meeting.</p> <p>The Meeting closed at 16.55</p>	

Annex:

A. Parrett Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

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

**ANNEX A TO  
PARRETT BOARD MINUTES  
DATED 20 JUNE 2023**

**PARRETT BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
P/20191105-2	To convene a Task & Finish Group Meeting to review Electoral Districts. IDS has asked Nick Stevens if he could arrange this meeting as soon as possible and he has already drawn up draft papers with options.	Special Advisor – Ongoing, Had been arranged but was cancelled due to members availability
P/20211026-02	To complete a review of the Strategic Review of Plant Machinery and Manpower. This is a long-term action.	CEO – Ongoing
P/20230620-01	To check the date within the April minutes re the date of the flood and subsequent dredging in item 6.2 to be checked	Clerk Flood was 2013/14 Dredging was 2015
P/20230620-02	To report to the next Full Board meeting attendance information	Clerk
P/20230620-03	To ensure that the list of outstanding board schemes be made available at the next Full Board meeting	Clerk