

Message from the Chairmen

This year we have once again been tested by extreme weather events, having had some of the driest and wettest periods on record. Despite this we are pleased that we continue to operate an effective service for the rate payers through the wettest and driest of times. This has been largely possible as a result of the extensive watercourse maintenance work we have completed this year, and we are pleased to have awarded new contracts this year in parts of the Parrett and Axe Brue Boards. With our growing workload, we are always on the lookout for suitable contractors who are interested in working with us, so get in touch if you know of someone who may be suitable.

Following the flooding in January in the Parrett Board area we are working with the Environment Agency to review flood operations and identify opportunities to improve and embed these before next winter.

We remain committed to influencing policy and process, locally and nationally, and we play an active part in the Association of Drainage Authorities where we are represented on the Board of Directors and the Technical and Environmental Committee. We have also recommenced the activities of the South West Branch of the Association following a pause through the Covid19 pandemic.

This year we are hoping for a period of stability in terms of weather conditions, operations and policy but we are prepared should that not be the case. In the meantime, our thanks go to everyone who has worked with us over the last year and please do get in touch if you need our service.

Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium & Parrett IDB Chairman - Mr Tony Bradford,
Axe Brue IDB & SWADA Chairman – Mr Jeff Fear, North Somerset Levels IDB Chairman - Mr Tim Bush

RECRUITMENT

We are pleased to have recruited some excellent staff this year who are already making a very positive impact on the work we are able to do. We still have some interesting vacancies though. In particular we are looking for Engineers, Technicians and an assistant Clerk, so look on our website for details or just get in touch if you are interested in working with us

LAND DRAINAGE CONSENTS - Building in or adjacent to a watercourse

It is an offence under the Land Drainage Act to build anything in or close to a watercourse without consent from the Board. The Board can prosecute, and has done so in the past where this has happened. However, we want to be helpful and ensure that if you plan to build anything close to a watercourse, it is acceptable to the Boards, and is consented. If you are considering building/planting in or within 9m of any watercourse please speak to the Board's Development Control Team who will be able to advise you what will and will not be acceptable.

ANNUAL CHANNEL CLEANING WORKS

Please be advised that the annual routine maintenance of the Viewed Rhynes runs from May to February each year we maintain nearly 1492km of watercourse each year and unimpeded machine access will be required to undertake this important maintenance works. Help us to help you by ensuring there are no obstructions placed within the 9m from the top of the bank of the rhyne and inform us of locked access gates. Where crops are planted up to the edge of the watercourse and no maintenance access is provided it may be necessary to track over standing crops to undertake the maintenance of the watercourse. **If the risk of this happening is unacceptable to you, please do not plant crops within 6m of a maintained watercourse.**

Should you wish to discuss the routine maintenance within your area please contact the Board's Office in Highbridge on the number provided and we will then ask your local Area Supervisor to contact you to discuss your query.



INVASIVE WATER PLANTS

The IDBs are keen to stop the spread of fast growing non-native water plants that can block water flows and smother native wildlife. Floating pennywort is a particular problem as it grows very quickly and can completely fill watercourses (photo of pennywort from Bleadon). All known locations of pennywort in Somerset are being managed to reduce risks to drainage and ecology. Please contact the IDBs if you think you have seen any pennywort in your local area or you have any questions about our non-native invasive species work.

Operations & Engineering

Development Control 22/23

We have commented on 289 planning applications and 221 land drainage consents this year

Board Schemes

Axe Brue

West Town
Gutter/Applewthy
connection Brent Knoll

West Rhyne culvert
Northam Farm Berrow &
Brean

Multiple repairs to water
control structures, culverts
and gateways

Parrett

River Parrett Water
injection Dredging

H&S Structure
improvements Kings
Sedgemoor

Stear Village drainage
improvements

Henley minor
improvements

Lynng Corner Northmoor
improvements

Multiple repairs to water
control structures, culverts

North Somerset Levels

Nailsea Moor, Kenn, Clevedon
& Kingston Seymour desilting

Puxton Moor and Wick St
Lawrence water structure
repairs

Access culvert upgrades

Sampson Sluice on Oldbridge
River-principal structure
inspection

Multiple repairs to water
control structures, culverts
and gateways

Contact Information

Office opening hours & Enquiries
9am to 5pm Mon-Fri

01278 789906

Email: admin@somersetdbs.co.uk
www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

Clerk/CEO: Iain Sturdy

Operations Manager: Rob King

Maintenance/
Contract Manager: Matthew Wall

Finance: Margaret Hammond

Rate Collection: Margaret Hammond

Environment: Philip Brewin

**Emergency out of hours – 01278 789906
(You will be directed to the duty officer)**

**Flooding and pollution: report to the
Environment Agency:
0800 80 70 60**

The Board operates 769 water level control structures with our in-house team. If you think that a structure needs adjusting, please contact the office who will be able to put you in contact with the local operators.



The SDBC played a key role in managing the recent floods, in the Parrett area. The team assisted the EA with getting the floodwater away as quickly as possible by using our structures to help evacuate the water efficiently.

Landowners, please ensure that your own ordinary watercourses are clear of debris and weed etc in order to promote the conveyance of water into our viewed rhyne systems, this will help reduce future flooding and improve water level management.

INCOME

In accordance with the Land Drainage act 1991, for the year ending 31 March 2024 the following drainage rates have been set – Axe Brue IDB 10.132p ~ Parrett IDB 8.615p ~ North Somerset Levels IDB 10.139p

Full Board Meetings Calendar 2023

Axe Brue: 19 June 2023, 9 Oct 2023

Parrett: 20 June 2023, 10 Oct 2023

NSLIDB: 21 June 2023, 11 Oct 2023

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

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.

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. If you require a plan of land held in your ownership, please email admin@somersetdbs.co.uk