

MINUTES OF THE PARRETT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON 5 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 14.00

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Will Barnard Tony Bradford (C) Roger Barrington Barrie Bryer Stuart Kingham David Vigar Mark Heywood Anthony Betty Rebecca Horsington James Winslade	Appointed Members: Donna Gowler Cllr Hilary Bruce Cllr Norman Cavill Cllr Liz Leavy Cllr Mike Stanton Cllr Gwil Wren	Officers: Phil Brewin Maggie Hammond (RFO) Kendra Kingston Iain Sturdy (Clerk/CEO) Matthew Wall Caroline Murray Naomi Johnson Rob King	Public: John Chaplin - Bristol Port
Approved Apologies:			
Colin Passmore Roger Coombes	Cllr Michael Caswell Cllr Julian Taylor		
Non-Approved Apologies:			
John Perrin	Cllr Lance Duddridge Cllr Dave Loveridge Cllr Richard Morgan Cllr Alan Bradford		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1 As per the Attendance Register.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1 Maggie Hammond (MH) informed Members that the charity morning held by the SDBC raised £580.00 for Cancer Research UK	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1 None declared.	
4. Opportunity for Members of the public to address the meeting	4.1. No members of the public were present.	
5. Minutes of Full Board Meeting held on 28 June 2024 and Extraordinary Joint Board meeting on	5.1 Mike Stanton said he sent in his apologies but they weren't recorded. Proposed by Stuart Kingham and seconded by Roger Barrington "the minutes of the Full Board	RESOLUTION 01

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.

<p>02 September 2024</p>	<p>meeting held on 28 June 2024 are signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held”. All in favour</p> <p>5.2 There was a Joint Extra-Ordinary meeting on 02 September to discuss lending the Environment Agency money to carry out maintenance work. It was decided that it was a good idea. Stuart Kingham said he is on the attendance sheet as a Councillor which he is not. He also added there are Councillors on the unapproved apologies who haven't attended a meeting in over 6 months. The Chair said his point was noted and IDS will take it up with the appointing authority.</p> <p>Proposed by Stuart Kingham and seconded by Roger Barrington “to offer the Environment Agency money for maintenance work” All in favour</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 02</p>
<p>6. Matters Arising and Review of Actions – 28 June 2024</p>	<p>6.1 There were no matters arising.</p> <p>P/20191105-2 - To convene a Task & Finish Group to review Electoral Districts. Ongoing. IDS said they will continue with this closer to the elections next year</p> <p>P/20240130-02 – Removal of Trees in viewed rhyne between Parchey and Sutton Corner - Ongoing</p> <p>P/20240130-03 – Reinstatement of Chedzoy Moor Drove following damage by Wessex Water. IDS said there has been correspondence with Wessex Water and the drove is looking better. The Chair added that the first section of the drove by the road has not been done and he suggested involving Chedzoy Parish Council, the EA and anyone else concerned. IDS said they would carry the action forward.</p> <p>P/20240130-04 – Prompt EA to jet the outfall at Sam Gamblins Corner. IDS said he has spoken to Adrian Govier at the EA regarding this. James Winslade said they do not maintain any of the outfalls down there but one of the IDBs Deputy Area Supervisors has jetted the one at New House. IDS said the Board did look at Sam Gamblins and had removed a log but MSW said there is about 20 tonnes of silt which needs to be removed from the outfall and this is too much for the Boards jet washer. IDS said he will ask the EA again although they have already said the works were programmed in. Carried forward.</p> <p>P/202401230-05 – Speak to the EA regarding removing trees from the River Parrett. IDS said the trees are still there and the response he frequently receives is either the river levels are too high or there are environmental restrictions. IDS said the Board will be dealing with some of the trees during the River Parrett maintenance dredge. Ongoing.</p> <p>P/20240416-01 – IDS to write to all Members regarding the importance of meeting attendance. IDS said this is ongoing. The Chair said he is pleased with attendance</p>	

<p>Matters Arising - 02 September 2024</p>	<p>today but is not happy with the attendance at sub-committees as many of them are not quorate. MH asked if Members could let the office know if they will be attending meetings for refreshment purposes.</p> <p>P/20240416-02 – To write to the EA regarding comments at the meeting. IDS said this relates to Members requesting that he writes to the EA to reinforce the Boards concern about lack of general maintenance. Complete.</p> <p>P/20240619-01 - Matthew Wall to provide a suitable meeting date to discuss maize. MSW said he has written a draft paper and would like to move the issue to nearer the next Full Board meeting in January. Carried forward.</p> <p>P/20240618-02 – Rob King to talk to the EA about the KSD water levels at summer penn which are deemed unsatisfactory. IDS said RCK has discussed this issue with the EA. Complete.</p> <p>There was discussion around how the EA wait for instruction from the Board before doing anything outside of routine water levels. IDS said if Members come across anything problematic they should let the Board know and it can be communicated to the EA. James Winslade said when North Moor was flooding he rang the EA regarding turning on extra pumps at the Pumping Station. He was told the pumps were broken but they just needed priming and because the usual person was on leave they weren't ready until Monday morning. James Winslade asked why staff who were manning the pumps didn't know how to prime the pumps.</p> <p>6.2 David Vigar said on page 3 it states that David Tratt asked a question but it was actually David Vigar who asked.</p> <p>6.2 John Perrin asked where the figure of £41ph came from in the statement 'if the EA had the internal resources their rate is actually quite good at £41ph' IDS said Jamie Donaghy at the EA.</p> <p>6.3 Roger Barrington queried how the EA will pay back the money. IDS responded saying following conversations from before and after the meeting, it is quite clear the EA would not pay us back. Roger Barrington asked if this situation arose again would they ask the ratepayers if they would be happy to use the money to support the EA. The Chair said it could be a very contentious issue and would be better done with a PSCA and claim the money back. IDS told Members the EA have told him there is very little prospect of improvement on the situation for next year and as a result they are bidding for about £1,000,000 from the SRA. IDS showed Members a plan of the EA maintained watercourses of which 12% have been cut,16% are planned to be cut and 72% of watercourses that will not be cut. Rebecca Horsington asked whether the weed cutting works were done every year or every other year. IDS said they used to be done every year, sometimes more than</p>	
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	<p>once but the watercourses which haven't been maintained are due to there being no funding but these watercourses are less risky to leave than some of the other ones. He added the Board is carrying out maintenance where the greatest problems will arise. Caroline Murray said at the SRA Technical Group Meeting, Wessex Water were concerned to see the work which wasn't being maintained as they have concerns over their CSO's and the ability to discharge into rivers. Cllr Gwil Wren asked if the EA were involving the IDB in discussions about work they are and aren't going to do. The Chair said the IDB were not party to any shortfall until late August/early September and because of the election they were not allowed to highlight the fact they didn't have the finance to do the maintenance. Cllr Gwil Wren asked how much notice the IDB can get for the areas the EA will or will not do. IDS said it felt like a bit of a secret as the EA were not allowed to publicise they had insufficient funding and the IDB was getting word from the EA workforce that some of the maintenance was not going to be done. He said the information has been passed to other authorities who have all allegedly taken it to the Ministry and they are waiting for an announcement from the floods minister. IDS added that it will not get over the dilemma this year and was unlikely to solve the problem next year. Rebecca Horsington said it is important for the ratepayers to know that the IDB is doing both our own work and now extra for the EA. James Winslade said he knows may people have excavators and could they possibly do little bits in their own areas. The Chair said there are so many hurdles when the IDB are only trying to help. MH said there is an opportunity to communicate with ratepayers through the newsletter which goes out with the demand in April. David Vigar said it is not just getting water out into the EA system because earlier in the summer they couldn't get water where it was needed. IDS said MP Sadik Al-Hassan wrote to him asking for the Boards position on the problem to which IDS said he wrote back explaining the situation and said it might be better to work at County level</p> <p>6.4. David Vigar said the wrong name was on page 5 where it says David Tratt said redundancies are being made in the farming industry – that should be David Vigar.</p>	
<p>7. Update on the Steart Management Realignment Project</p>	<p>7.1 The Chair welcomed John Chaplin from Bristol Port to give an update on the Steart Management Realignment Project. John Chaplin thanked Members for the opportunity to talk about the proposals. He said Bristol Port currently deliver and distribute a wide range of goods from all over the world but looking to the future it's about the energy transition. The interests for the port are carbon capture and storage, potential transfer to hydrogen and small modular reactors (SMRs). He said the Government has identified the Celtic Sea is a location for floating off shore wind turbines and they are proposing 4.5 gigawatts. He ran over the proposal for the SMRP with Members saying they will require consent from Somerset Council and a marine license from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and advice from various bodies including the IDB.</p>	

	<p>Stuart Kingham asked whether the scheme is similar to the last application and if the harbour is the same. John Chaplin said the footprint is more or less the same. Cllr Gwil Wren declared an interest as he sits on the planning committee. John Chaplin said they intend to work with WWT as partners and Keir. Phil Brewin said the Board has already been in discussions and the main issue would be around changing flood plain storage but in particular the Board is interested in the functionality of the fresh water system. The Chair thanked John for his presentation</p>	
<p>8. Health & Safety Report</p>	<p>8.1. Naomi Johnson gave an update on training saying:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 members of staff attended the ½ day Emergency First Aid at Work Refresher Training. • 2 members of staff attended Defra’s Water Safety Awareness Training • All staff attended Conflict Resolution Training and Fire Warden or Fire Safety Awareness Training • The Operation Technician completed his Lantra Qualification for Brushcutters and Trimmers. • Jody Farthing will be undertaking Mental Health First Aider training in the New Year. <p>8.2. A recommendation from the H&S Audit was to provide access to counselling/mental health services and the Boards have now signed up to a new employee assistance program</p> <p>8.3. NJ told Members about a couple of incidents :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A contractor was carrying out some mobile works and a lady reported that she had been knocked off her bike by the them. A full investigation was carried out and the contractor reported that he did not see the cyclist so he has not agreed that he knocked her off her bike. IDS added the lady claims the machine moved to allow traffic to pass but did not spot her and she was struck by the bucket. He added the Board needs to learn and improve risk assessments and SSOW but the greater issue was both the contractor and the Area Supervisor decided not to report the incident. • Another incident occurred where a child got their leg stuck in a hole on a walkway over one of the IDB structures. The incident was reported through North Somerset Council and a temporary repair was carried out to make the walkway safe. As of today’s meeting, a lockable gate has been fitted and new signage. What appears to have happened is the covering installed over the holes was removed by a third party since the IDB’s last visit to the structure which exposed the hole. The Area Supervisors have been asked to visit all structures to identify any immediate issues. The mother of the child has indicated that she is potentially going to put in a claim and the insurance company have been notified. 	

	<p>8.4. John Perrin said Ham Street Sluice is constantly being used as a footpath. IDS said the Boards role is to ensure that walking over structures is not encouraged by using signage and barriers but people will still use them. There is a responsibility to ensure the structures do not pose an unreasonable risk and when the survey of all structures has been carried out every hazard will have been identified and addressed. IDS added that this incident does require to be reported to the Health & Safety Executive. Anthony Betty asked if there is a plan to check the structures regularly. IDS said structures that present the greatest level of risk are inspected more often than others but most of the structures are visited at least twice a year by the Area Supervisors to change from summer to winter penn There was a discussion and IDS concluded saying all assets are on a register which shows current condition and combined with the app any defects are immediately recorded and triaged.</p> <p>8.5. NJ reported another incident which has now occurred twice, which is a vehicle sinking into the ground. MSW said this is happening in peat areas and in response to these incidents there will be no flailing on soft ground only from hard tracks or roads.</p>	
9. Governance Update	<p>9.1. IDS told Members there is a vacancy for a Parrett Board Member on the SDBC Management Committee and asked if any Members would be interested.</p> <p>9.2. IDS advised there are members packs available for anyone who does not have one and they are a compilation of Board Members responsibilities, liabilities, code of conduct, standing orders and anything that a Board Member might need to refer to in their role.</p> <p>9.3. The calendar of meetings was shared with Members and they were asked to let the Board know as soon as possible of any Council meeting clashes. Will Barnard asked if meeting invites could be emailed so they go straight into his calendar. The Chair requested that anyone who is on a sub-committee turn up to the meetings as very often they are not quorate.</p> <p>9.4. IDS said the Board are still advertising for a Senior Governance Officer and there has been some interest which he will follow up on. Furthermore, a new Deputy Area Supervisor has been appointed for the North Somerset Area. He has been in position for 4 weeks and is settling in well. Unfortunately, the Enforcement Officer has left the position after finding himself another job in Surrey.</p>	
10. Finance Report	<p>10.1. MH said the bank has been reconciled to the end of September with no spurious entries.</p> <p>10.2. The Finance and Works Committee have made a recommendation to set the level at which to take people to court for non-payment of drainage rates at £50. The</p>	

	<p>current outstanding balance of rates is £13,000 compared to £9,500 last year</p> <p>Proposed by Anthony Betty and seconded by Stuart Kingham “to set the amount for taking outstanding drainage rates to court at £50.” All in favour</p> <p>10.3 MH discussed with Members the Chairmans allowance; at this point Tony Bradford left the room. MH said currently the allowance is £1500 and it has remained at this amount since 2012. The Axe Brue have decided to upgrade their Chairmans allowance to £2000. There was discussion about this still being still too little as the amount is taxable. MH said the Members can suggest an amount but she will have to take it to DEFRA.</p> <p>Proposed by James Winslade and seconded by Roger Barrington “to raise the Chair’s allowance to £3000” 14 In favour & 2 abstentions</p> <p>10.4. IDS referred back to 8.1 above regarding the vacancy on the SDBC Management Committee saying it can be an appointed or elected Member. Cllr Mike Stanton volunteered.</p> <p>Proposed by Anthony Betty and seconded by Cllr Alan Bradford “to accept Cllr Mike Stanton as a Member of the SDBC Management Committee” All in favour</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 03</p> <p>RESOLUTION 04</p> <p>RESOLUTION 05</p>
<p>11. Operations, Engineering & Environment Report</p>	<p>11.1. MSW showed Members slides regarding maintenance and said that 81% is completed.</p> <p>11.2 Work has begun weed cutting and flailing the bank of the River Cary on behalf of the EA. MSW said this is a challenging job as the weeds are not actively growing but the main problem is the trees. IDS said he is working with the EA to update the public co-operation agreement to allow the Board to do the tree work and this should be in place before the works are completed. Cllr Gwil Wren asked if the costs given included removal of the trees. MSW said it was a realistic cost for weed cutting and tree removal. Mark Heywood asked how much the work was costing and the response was £17,000. He said ratepayers might start asking why more work is not being done in their area to which IDS said they already are. Cllr Mike Stanton said he thinks the EA are putting their environmental responsibility ahead of keeping the rivers maintained. The Chair clarified the position saying ratepayers paying their rates to have their land drained are unable to do so because of this issue and the Board are trying to sort it out. He made members aware it is a one-time only situation and suggested withholding money from the EA precept. There was some discussion on the legal aspects of withholding part of the precept with IDS saying it is not legal.</p>	

Cllr Gwil Wren there needs to be a working arrangement with the EA which takes account of all the pressures. IDS said it is a widespread issue across the country which ADA know about, there is a lack of money to do work which is needed. He believes the Board should be working to push this to the highest level to make sure the people who make decisions in the Ministry are aware of the consequences of their actions and financial arrangements that they are making. He also said he would not allow the Board to make an illegal recommendation. The Chair told Members for the reputation of the Board and staff he would withdraw his comments about withholding precept.

IDS shared an email he had sent to Sadik Al Hassan the MP for North Somerset saying he thought it might be more productive for all local MPs to take a common position at a county level and they have agreed. IDS said he has an action to write to all local MPs to try and get a common approach up the ministerial chain to Emma Hardy.

11.3. MSW informed Members of an issue where a land owner pushed spoil back into the rhyne. It wasn't a big enough issue to warrant action but he thought he should notify the Board in case it happened again in future years.

11.4. MSW talked about unconsented works on a main viewed rhyne in Stretcholt. The maintenance has not been able to be carried out this year and he asked how the Board would like to proceed and suggested setting up a sub-committee to deal with the matter. The Chair said the options are to let the land owner maintain it to our satisfaction as he has suggested or serve enforcement notice on him and take the fence down. Will Barnard said he has heard a lot of concern from locals that the IDB are not dealing with the situation and they are worried it will set a precedent.

**Proposed by Rebecca Horsington and seconded by Will Barnard "to set up a sub-committee with delegated powers to take the action necessary"
All in favour**

The members of the Sub Committee will be Tony Bradford, Anthony Betty, Will Barnard and Stuart Kingham.

11.5. Rob King (RCK) updated Members on the structures survey saying there were 277 in the Parrett, 196 in the Axe Brue and 72 in North Somerset and out of 668 structures they have currently assessed 545 with about 18% left. 28 of these were found to be unsafe or at high risk so an external contractor is completing the repairs which should be finished in 6 weeks

11.6. Members were showed a photo of the structure where the incident described in 8.3 took place showing this now has signs and locks.

11.7. RCK said they are about to start winter penning and he appreciated that Members were on board with the early penning.

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11.8. Caroline Murray (CM) asked Members to take the report as read and gave an overview of the projects CALM are working on

11.9. Phil Brewin (PAB) said consents are normally dealt with in the office but due to the sensitivity of water level management in Northmoor it has been brought to the Board. There are two stoplog water control structures built in 1994 with a design life of 10 years, they are still functional but cannot be operated easily. The current structure is rotten and will be replaced with one with galvanised sheet pile walls, hand rails and a safe working area. The structure will be operated by Natural England's site manager under supervision of the IDB. Natural England would like to restore the operation and add some additional benefits such as flexible water management.

The Chairs asked if there was any detrimental effect to the householders at Northmoor Corner. PAB said there are volumes stored and they need to be able to mitigate the extra volume so he hopes the answer is no. James Winslade said a new structure would be good as there would be better control. IDS said the proposal is an improvement in flood risk for the area.

Proposed by Will Barnard and seconded by James Winslade "to grant consent to Natural England to upgrade the water control structure in the Northmoor Corner Raised Water Level Area to enable better control of the water levels within the scheme area and to allow operational changes to be made to reduce any potential impact on flood risk."

All in favour

11.10 PAB showed what he called an alarming photograph of the River Penzoy covered in pennywort as it has moved from the rhyne system to the main drain. He said it is a really problematic plant and stressed the importance of getting it under control with a consistent approach to dealing with it. The EA have cleared it this year but PAB said it will be bad next year and he worries that now it is in the main drain it will travel into the King Sedgemoor Drain in a couple of years.

11.11. PAB said the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being written and in the New Year the Boards will have to think about what it means to them and what they have to offer as it is something the IDB is obliged to take part in as part of the Environment Act.

11.11. PAB discussed the peat project being carried out in the Parrett area. He said at KSM they are planning on carrying out some engineering works around the KSM SSSI to help with the supply of water in summer. Natural England have put in some solar pumps which have really helped keep the system topped up. PAB showed a picture of The Cottage at Fiddlers End with water flowing across

RESOLUTION 07

	<p>the garden and into the system. Barrie Bryer said it is because spoil is always put on the same side of the rhyne and the bank is 2-3 foot higher than the garden side. PAB said the there is a small water supply pump station with a flap but it is not operating and he would like to rebuild and have a proper mechanism for getting water into the old Cary. David Vigar asked for an update on the EA pumps on top of an IDB structure. PAB said he hasn't made much progress as he has not received a response from the EA but he believes it would be better to have a proper overhaul of the feed system to make it work as efficiently as possible. The problem is no one in the EA is available to talk about it. IDS said there are a number of components to the project which are achievable and the Board are still behind the project.</p> <p>11.12. The Chair told Members he and Colin Passmore attended a phosphate workshop in Taunton which was informative. He'd asked whether schemes for storing water would exacerbate the phosphate problem or make it better but they could not answer.</p>	
12. Operation of Parrett Relief Channel/Sowy	12.1. Was dealt with earlier in the meeting	
13. Unconsented fencing works at Stretcholt	13.1. Covered above in 10.9	
14. Clerks Report	14.1. IDS said the system currently used for managing ratings is no longer being supported as of April 2025 and there will be an increased cost for the new system which will be included in the budgeting moving forward.	
15. Somerset Rivers Authority Update & WID Contract Approval	<p>15.1. CM gave an overview of the project programs saying there were currently four projects in the SRA programme. The pre-survey work for the WID is going to be undertaken once water levels drop and this will inform the dredging team what they need to remove. The project value is £650,000 and requires Board approval.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proposed by James Winslade and seconded by Cllr Anthony Betty "to approve in principle £650,000 for Van Oord to carry out dredging works" All in favour</p> <p>15.2. CM gave a KSD bank update saying investigations over the summer have determined that materials within the bank are suitable for using as bank raisings and the next steps are consulting the EA to make sure they are happy. This will be taken to the SRA as a plan of how it can be delivered, not saying the IDB will deliver it.</p> <p>15.3. The KSD outfalls had funding of £250,000 from the SRA to complete the works and the contract has been awarded to Bernard Perry who will commence in March.</p>	
16. ADA SW Directors Report	16.1. N/A as Rebecca Horsington has left the meeting	
17. Correspondence &	17.1. IDS said that he, MH and the Chairs are going to London for the ADA conference.	

Engagement with other Authorities	17.2. The Chair said he had been to the House of Commons for the ADA meeting on special levy. It was not so significant in Somerset because it's not a big percentage of the overall budget.	
18. Any Other Business	18.1. The Chair suggested using microphones so speech is clearer during meetings. MH said she will look into the cost as she will be budget setting for 25/26 in the coming weeks.	
19. Date of Next Meeting	19.1. The date of the next meeting is 28 January 2025 The Chair thanked Members for attending and apologised for it running over. Meeting closed at 17.15	

Annex:

A. Parrett Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR..... DATE

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 Bring forward closer to elections
P/20240130-02	Removal of trees in viewed rhyme between Parchey and Sutton Corner	Operations Manager – Ongoing
P/20240130-03	Reinstatement of Chedzoy Moor Drove following damage by Wessex Water	MSW/ Contracts Manager – Ongoing
P/20240130-04	Prompt EA to jet Sam Gamblins Corner	Clerk/CEO – Carried forward
P/20240130-05	Speak to the EA regarding removing the trees from the River Parrett	Clerk/CEO - Ongoing
P20240619-01	Matthew Wall to provide a suitable meeting date to discuss maize.	MSW/ Contracts Manager – Carried forward