

**REVISED MINUTES OF THE PARRETT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING
HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON 18 JUNE 2024 AT 14.00**

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

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1 As per the Attendance Register. 1.2 The Chair welcomed a new appointed member, Donna Gowler, from Natural England, who is also an appointed member of the Axe Brue Board. 1.3 The Chair welcomed George Maltby, new Enforcement Officer. 1.4 The Chair shared the sad news that John Lang has passed away and asked the Board to share in a minute's silence to remember him.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1 Maggie Hammond (MH) took the opportunity to remind members that this is one meeting and please do not hold	

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.

	separate conversations during the meeting as it makes transcribing the minutes very difficult for staff.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1 None declared.	
4. 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 16 April 2024	<p>5.1 A mistake was noted on p9, it should read 'view' not 'few'. This will be corrected.</p> <p>5.2 Colin Passmore (CP) said on P6 he was mentioned as saying things were 'slipping back' he said he didn't say this. He wanted to clarify that what he said was that he didn't want the Moors Association undermining the statutory responsibilities of the drainage board and wanted to reiterate this. The Chair asked that this please be amended. CP said he felt very strongly about this. Will Barnard (WB) said that he felt people should be able to speak freely on their concerns. The Chair mentioned there was an instance with abusive behaviour from a Moors Association member regarding water levels. WB said that this was not acceptable. The Chair felt that the final word stays with the IDB who have the legal powers. IDS said that this needs to be further discussed in Matters Arising section, in keeping with the order of the agenda.</p> <p>5.3 <i>'That the minutes are a true and correct record of the meeting held 16 April 2024'</i></p> <p>Prop Stuart Kingham Sec Colin Passmore All in Favour</p>	RESOLUTION 1
6. Matters Arising and Review of Actions	<p>6.1 The Chair invited CP to continue with his comments regarding the Moors Association. CP mentioned that he felt the Boards' statutory position should be respected. The Board is operating effectively, but at this stage it shouldn't be undermined by people acting outside of their legal remit – CP felt this is wrong. However, he said the Board can try and help, but the Boards' Statutory position should come above all else.</p> <p>WB said that the Moors Association's aim is to collaborate and cooperate, he said that abuse is not acceptable in any form. WB said that the two organisations can mutually benefit each other. There are currently 10 moor associations now and the aspiration is that there will be an overarching Board to help manage and ensure collective function.</p> <p>IDS said that the distinction he would like to draw that if the MA is beneficial to us, there should be consensus for future scoping and work towards a long-term strategy. It could be destructive if members are complaining about day-to-day operations of water levels. WB was in agreement with IDS and said they are working on a governance model and creating the structures around this. WB said that Moor Association meetings are for gathering feedback and this</p>	

may be helpful in terms of feedback being given in a single and concise way back to the Board.

IDS said it is extremely important that it is made clear that these groups are not empowered to directly engage with operational staff, the normal rules of governance must be followed.

D Vigar suggested that those complaining should perhaps look to join the Board in the next elections.

CP said alarm bells start ringing when he hears about 'chairs of chairs', he felt that this isn't the right way forward and felt that it would be undermining the Board.

The Chair said he had attended a Moors Association meeting and suggested that members there should attend a full board meeting and to bring their concerns to the Board. The Board worked very hard to maintain water levels. There is a concern that the associations have reverted to an old-fashioned talking shop where everyone just complains. The Chair felt that these associations need to be managed very carefully.

Donna Gowler said from the Natural England point of view the Moors Associations have been very helpful.

John Perrin said that in the West Sedgemoor Association water levels haven't really been discussed – there is a bigger picture. He agrees that they need more refining and more structure.

Barrie Bryer asked Donna Gowler if Natural England could just get their information from the IDB.

DG replied that they gather a lot of information about how land owners want their land managed. They engage with several organisations. Their remit goes beyond water level management.

IDS felt that it might be helpful if a representative from the Moors Association could attend a meeting to bring feedback on behalf of their committee. WB felt this was good constructive feedback that he could take back.

6.2 P8 - David Vigar mentioned that a Solar Farm planning application had been refused due to insufficient information.

IDS said that we advise local authority planners but if they don't implement our advice, we still enforce our byelaws.

6.3 Review of Outstanding Actions

P/20191105-2 – IDS said that this will be done in advance of the Board elections which start next April 2025. Action - Ongoing.

P/20240130-02 – IDS said this was currently with Rob King who is on leave. MW said its likely these will be done along with the scheduled maintenance. Action - Ongoing

	<p>P/20240130-03 – IDS said Rob is dealing with this one and has been engaging with Tony Bradford. MW and RCK will go onsite to visit with TB. Action -Ongoing</p> <p>P/20240130-04 – This is covered in the Engineering report.</p> <p>P/20240130-05 – IDS has been speaking to EA about this. It is slow progress with the EA unfortunately. IDS said there may be an opportunity to pick some of this work up with the SRA. Action - Ongoing</p> <p>P20240416-01 – IDS will be writing to all members of the Parrett and Axe Brue Boards reminding them about attendance before the next meeting. Action - Ongoing</p> <p>P20240416-01 – IDS said that the EA were written to, there is now a fresh dialogue with Ian Withers (Emma Baker’s temporary replacement). The Chair felt that in EA meetings EA staff feel embarrassed that through lack of national funding they are unable to do all the work that they want to do. Action - Ongoing</p> <p>P20240416-03 – MW said that he met with Alan Bradford and the contractor completed this job. Action - Complete.</p>	
<p>7. Health & Safety Report</p>	<p>7.1 Naomi Johnson updated the Board on the recent Audit report and said that she was pleased with the outcome of this and she was currently working her way through the recommendations made on this report.</p> <p>7.2 SK asked about the recent issues at the offices with intruders on the roof at Bradbury House. NJ reported that we were looking at deterrent options as there were concerns that these individuals were “scoping out” the building, however it’s all settled down and they have not returned after it was reported to Police.</p>	
<p>8. Governance Update</p>	<p>8.1 IDS said that he will be reminding members about non-attendance at meetings.</p> <p>8.2 Recruitment Update – IDS gave an update on two new members of staff that have been appointed recently. George Maltby to Enforcement Officer and Izzy Ingledew as Consents Officer. There will be a new member of staff joining soon as a replacement for Sariquia Purchase.</p> <p>IDS said apart from the Engineering vacancies, the only other vacant post is the Clerks Assistant/Assistant Clerk/Deputy Clerk. Nick Stevens is also helping to recruit for this role. There is an expression of interest from an internal member of staff that could grow into the role nicely but we will also test the market for external interest.</p> <p>The Chair asked how long Nick Stevens is willing to continue working with us. IDS said Nick will continue as long as he is able to. NS has been very helpful in advising IDS and also covers quite a bit of extra work</p>	

	<p>that IDS doesn't have time to do. The plan is for Nick Stevens to work alongside the new Clerks Assistant and help to train/mentor that role. The Chair agreed that it would be helpful for Nick to mentor the new Clerks Assistant.</p>	
<p>9. Finance Report</p>	<p>9.1 Maggie Hammond (MH) drew the members' attention to the reports in their meeting pack. MH said that the Finance and Works Committee had met on 4th June 2024 to scrutinise the finance report and figures. The committee wasn't quorate but there was a healthy debate and they agreed to put forward that the report should be approved by the full board. CP agreed that the committee had looked through the figures in depth and felt that the Board's current position was a healthy one.</p> <p>9.2 MH confirmed the bank reconciliations were fine. The report shows the SDBC position that then feeds into the Parrett board position. MH asked the Board to <i>'Approve the Parrett Board Finance report.'</i></p> <p>Prop: Colin Passmore Sec: Stuart Kingham All in Favour</p> <p>9.3 MH asked the members to look at the Audit report. MH was happy to report that the external auditors have given the highest assurance they can give, which should help the Board to answer the AGAR questions.</p> <p>MH asked the Board to answer the AGAR questions. The Board decided to take the questions as a block rather than 1 by 1. MH read these questions out to the Board.</p> <p><i>'The Board answered yes to all of the AGAR questions'</i> Prop Stuart Kingham Sec Colin Passmore All in Favour</p> <p>9.4 Section 2 of the AGAR – MH asked the Board to approve this. Prop Stuart Kingham Sec Colin Passmore All in Favour</p> <p>9.5 MH talked through the reserve position. The reserve position is £757K. The Board is at the level that they planned to be. This will help to cover any unexpected events and works. CP said that he appreciated MH's concise presentations and it is very appreciated by the Board. The Chair also praised MH for her hard work. The Chair also thanked CP for his work as F&W Chair and for his work alongside MH.</p> <p>9.6 The Rate collection position is in a good place, MH is pleased that income is coming in despite the cost-of-living situation a lot of people are contending with.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 2</p> <p>RESOLUTION 3</p> <p>RESOLUTION 4</p>

	Reminders for unpaid rates will go out in the second week of July.	
10. Operations and Engineering Report	<p>10.1 IDS stated that the report is very comprehensive and contains just one officer recommendation.</p> <p>Operationally it's been a difficult year so far with regards to managing water levels - the weather has been extremely wet.</p> <p>There project engineering information included in the report is also comprehensive.</p> <p>IDS was very pleased to report that the development control team is now fully populated. Virginie Martin and David Colbourne have been developing a great system data management system which is undoubtedly helping.</p> <p>The Chair asked about the maintenance work that wasn't done last year due to wet weather, will this be done this year?</p> <p>MW said that he had spoken to Nick Lockyer (AS) and areas of concern are OMW and Podimore, but as long as ground conditions are ok we will want to make an early start with annual maintenance.</p> <p>10.2 MW mentioned the recommendation he had added to the report. He said that a meeting was held with contractors and there is an issue with tracking through maize and crops and this causes issues with costs. MW said there is a need to be consistent across all Boards. MW is recommending that a Joint SDBC Committee is formed to agree a suitable policy across all Board areas.</p> <p>The Chair said he was in agreement for a sub committee to be formed for this. Stuart Kingham, Barrie Bryer and David Vigar volunteered to be part of this committee representing the Parrett Board. MW said that he will be in contact shortly with a suitable meeting date.</p> <p>IDS added that there will need to be a firm policy which needs to be consistent across all Boards, so that contractors and staff are clear.</p> <p>MW said that its important for Officers to maintain good relations with land owners where possible.</p> <p>10.3 Regarding the Operational Report . MW said he would try to answer any questions but if he couldn't provide an answer, he would take back to RK when he returns from leave.</p>	<p>Action P/20240618-01 - MW</p>

The Chair said that the water levels on the KSD have been unsatisfactory. The EA either pen it too high or let all the water go. They haven't yet reinstated summer pen. The Chair felt it needs more control. The Chair asked that RK has a word with the EA to see what can be done.

Action
P/20240618-02 -
RCK

Stuart Kingham (SK) said he was interested to see the use of the modern equipment mentioned in the report such as the drones. IDS said it is a useful piece of kit that helps give us more information, it can be used to check maize planting areas, water levels, channel conditions etc .

David Vigar (DV) mentioned the KSD banks -IDS said this would come later in the meeting under the SRA report.

10.4 Engineering report

Caroline Murray asked to take the report as read.

She updated the members on the engineering projects status.

IDS added that the engineering challenge that we have across the 3 Boards significant but we are making good progress. However it will be difficult to take on any more work of our own or for others. IDS wants to manage expectations that anything in addition to those in this financial year probably couldn't be done. IDS said it's important to prioritise where possible.

CP said he was worried that things need to be driven forward harder. IDS replied there is a need to be sure the money doesn't run out. CP felt the Board needs to look to drive things forward without unreasonable expense.

IDS may be able to bring in more people but we would need to look at using reserves.

WB asked what's the balance between internal scheduled projects and the shortlist of desirable projects? Are we happy that the balance is right at the moment?

IDS responded that we are catching up on last year's work and several projects have been completed. Resources are being put into KSD Sowy project for the EA/SRA, the peat project for DEFRA and Water injection dredging for EA /SRA. TB and IDS have reflected on the relative importance of the projects – there is a benefit of getting issues on main river sorted out, because if those aren't, anything done on viewed rhynes has limited benefit. There will be unexpected events that pop up through the year that will have to be factored in as well.

CP said is the fact we are pushing forward, affecting the Axe Brue and NSL Boards in a negative way? IDS replied that he doesn't feel this is a problem overall but IDS

reiterated we need to be careful we don't take on too much.

CP felt that the reserves could become embarrassingly large if we are not careful. IDS said if they got any larger then perhaps, but currently, they are at the level that the Board wanted them to be.

WB asked if the Board was happy that this extra work wasn't at the detriment of our core enterprise.
TB said that work outside of IDB areas will have to be carried out by the IDB but funded by the SRA. We will be stretched but felt that we were in a good position to get on with some of the work.

IDS added that the Board is in a much better position now that it has been, but we can't carry out everyone else's work, so we need to clearly manage expectations.

The Chair asked about KSD bank work -how much water will be sent down through the system? If the EA want to send water over– how do the Board feel about this? Do we agree to it? It's a debate for another day and we will need to discuss before the winter comes.

IDS showed a slide regarding Flooding claims – IDS said his opinion is to claim.

The Chair said you can't contact the Rural Payments Agency, they contact you.

IDS said this was a difficult situation and he would be disappointed if the Board didn't allow flexibility in the operating on the Soway system.

Mark Heywood said his perception is that it's being operated very differently now, they are now using Monks Leaze first and once the system is full they are using the spillway.

WB said this is the situation that ELMS was designed for.

The Chair said he would like this added as an Agenda for the next meeting.
Prop : D Vigar
Sec: B.Bryer
All in favour.

10.5 Virgine Martin Development Control
 VM said that Development Control has been very busy. George Maltby and Izzy Ingledew have both recently been recruited and this has made a positive impact on the team and managing workloads.

SK asked about engagement with the Gravity Project. VM said they are talking with them regularly regarding consents.

10.6 Phil Brewin – Environment Report

RESOLUTION 4

PB circulated his report and apologised for the delay in getting this report out.
PB said there have been good discussions in recent the committee meeting - particularly in regards to eels. PB is working alongside Caroline and the Engineering team to consider passage for eels in structures.

PB talked about the Beavers Strategy from the Wildlife Trust. This looks at the management of Beavers – there are already Beavers in Somerset and they have been seen in the Axe Brue area. There is an opportunity for us to be involved with plans to manage Beavers in the near future.

PB showed the members a slide regarding the peat project, this shows SSSI peaty areas. PB discussed the route of water and how it works its way around the system. PB said there is a possibility of pushing water into an area insufficient of water directly from the KSD. No water in ditch is negative for flora and fauna and also for the farmers and their livestock.

IDS commented that the photo shown by PB shows that there is too much mud in the ditch – is some of the water level problems because the beds need to be lower? PB said we need to understand why the water isn't getting to these areas. PB said channel maintenance is important but so is key structure.

BB said that some ditches have not been cleaned for 20 years - the system will only work if ditches are regularly cleaned out. Landowners are receiving higher payments and a condition of this is to clean the ditches. This needs to be emphasised.

PB said he agrees with what BB said and said that water levels are not being achieved.

Henley Corner EA structure is in desperate need of improvement. There is a volume of water being lost and we need to be more efficient. Pumps are old and can breakdown.

DV said that the River Cary acts as drainage for High Ham and Henley – if it was changed there will be winter flooding. PB said he was looking at this problem. The Chair suggested that PB and DV discuss this at another time.

PB continued showing slides including Fyddlers End , where there was pipe obstructions and it was subsequently jetted.
PB showed a photo of a penstock on the KSD where there are various attempts to stop it leaking, he said we may need better control for the winter subject to permission from landowners.
PB showed a photo of a tilted weir in a SSSI area. He said that the headwalls are rotted out and therefore it is no longer water retentive. There are various hazards to staff

when operating this structure too. Improvement is needed to this and a design is in progress for this.
CP asked if these are viewed Rhynes. PB replied that they were historically viewed rhynes but were taken out of view.

CP said this area is totally neglected and he was shocked to see this.

IDS said that when the raised water level scheme was first built, the Board's view was to focus efforts outside of the scheme. At the Board's request many rhynes were taken out of view. PB will look to see where this is now causing an issue and how this can be rectified.

CP said this shouldn't have been allowed to develop.

The Chair said he would like to move the meeting on at this point.

PB said he would like to extend telemetry sites to better understand water flow issues.

PB said there is investment from Natural England on a solar pump that can lift water at the KSD.

DV asked who is the landowner? PB said mostly Natural England but some other private landowners.

PB said that Justin Lockyer (DAS) is currently collecting samples for phosphates. PB showed the data report to members. He said there are some very High readings where we might not expect.

CP said Steart has had no fertiliser on it has one of the highest readings. PB said this may be due to water evaporating and more concentrates.
CP felt that it turns everything that has been said about phosphates on its head. PB said that he cant explain this at this stage.

Donna Gowler added that Northmoor readings have been taken by Natural England and suggested that we should share data. PB agreed.

10.7 SRA Update

IDS said the SRA work is included in the report. Currently we are promoting several projects including KS Sowy Banks, KS outfalls, Parrett maintenance dredging and shoulder works.

IDS showed some slides of water injection dredgers. IDS showed slides of cross sections, showing materials that was dug off and what material was moved by the water injection dredger. It has proved that this method is effective at moving this material and that the water injection dredger is effectively dispersing material. This is a change to the existing protocols and permissions and therefore it needs to be shared with the EA and Natural England.

	<p>IDS said we will be promoting this as a success story in terms of the ability to move silt, but we will need to work with partner organisations to how we use this effectively in the future. We would need to look at putting in place a new contract to carry on for another 5 years.</p> <p>The Chair felt that the reeds need to be cut every year – the flow would be better.</p> <p>IDS said that a lot of time in the SRA meeting was promoting the AB works.</p> <p>CM said KSD bank survey started this week to check volumes of material. CM working at familiarising with the various constraints on the KSD. Due to hold a meeting with Natural England.</p> <p>Donna Gowler asked have the EA done surveys on this? CM said they had used LIDAR and this has been shown to be less accurate.</p> <p>CM talked about the KSD outfalls, the condition assessments have now been completed. Quotes for dewatering have been received. CM said that we are pausing on the dewatering exercise whilst we go back to original engineers to look at other options that may be more cost effective.</p> <p>IDs said that the SRA have now published their strategy and copies are available on the SRA website. IDS was pleased with the strategy and its core purpose and principles.</p>	
11. ADA	<p>11.1 The Chair said that Rebecca Horsington will be attending a meeting in London for ADA next month.</p> <p>IDS said that the SWADA meeting was very helpful. He was able to talk with Innes Thompson and other IDBS. SWADA is very helpful in being involved with. There are a number of opportunities to engage with ADA.</p> <p>David Jenkins passed on information that RFCC has a national meeting. The issue was pressed regarding the adjustment between maintenance and capital funding. The EA Board recognised that they need assistance with maintenance funding and this will be taken up with the new government once formed. IDS said that he remains optimistic.</p> <p>IDS said he is working closely with EA colleagues regarding the asset recovery and repair fund.</p> <p>The Chair thanked IDS for his work on this with the EA.</p>	
12. Correspondence	None	
13. AOB	None	
12. Date of next meeting	The next meeting will be 5 th November 2024 at 2.00pm.	

	The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 16.27pm.	
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Annex:

A. Parrett Board – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIR..... DATE

**ANNEX A TO
PARRETT BOARD MINUTES
DATED 18 JUNE 2024**

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 rhyne between Parchey and Sutton Corner	Operations Manager
P/20240130-03	Reinstatement of Chedzoy Moor Drove following damage by Wessex Water	MSW/ Contracts Manager
P/20240130-04	Prompt EA to jet Sam Gamblins Corner	Clerk/CEO
P/20240130-05	Speak to the EA regarding removing the trees from the River Parrett	Clerk/CEO
P20240416-01	IDS to write to all members regarding importance of meeting attendance	Clerk/CEO
P20240416-02	To write to EA regarding comments at the meeting	Clerk/CEO
P20240618-01	Matthew Wall to provide a suitable meeting date to discuss maize.	MSW/ Contracts Manager
P20240618-02	Rob king to talk to EA about the KSD water levels at summer pen which are deemed unsatisfactory	Operations Manager