

**MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON TUESDAY
22 APRIL 2025 AT 10.30**

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr B Clapp Mr A Franks Mr A Gilling (Chair) Mr J Stradling Mr D Tratt Mr M Watts Mrs W Welland Mr T Whitcombe	Appointed Members: Cllr P Clayton Cllr N Cottle Cllr J Cousins Cllr B Filmer D Gowler P Holms J Grischeff	Officers: Mr I Sturdy Mr M Wall Mrs N Johnson Mrs C Murray Mrs V Martin Mr P Brewin Mrs K Carleton	Public:
Approved Apologies:			
Mr M Lunnon	Cllr M Healey Cllr R Keen Cllr B Knickerbocker		
Non-Approved Apologies:			
Mr N Lukins	Cllr S Hart Cllr A Hendry		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance & Apologies	The meeting started at 10.33 . Attendance as per the register.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	The Chair announced that sadly Jeff Fear passed away last week. The board stood and held a minute of silence to remember him. The board also remembered Richard Heal, a past member of the old Lower Brue Board, who has also passed away since the last meeting. Iain Sturdy (IDS) remembered that Jeff interviewed him when he first started. IDS wanted it noted in the minutes that Jeff had been an excellent chair who had supported the organisation unwaveringly and provided personal support to him and to the staff over the years. He wanted his gratitude, thanks and affection minuted. Matthew Wall (MWa) echoed this sentiment. The Chair added his recollections of Jeff from his time as a senior member of the Highbridge Young Farmers Club. He stated that we owe Jeff a debt of gratitude, he was a role model to the local community as well as the IDB.	
3. Declarations of Interest	Martin Watts (MW) declared an interest in Tor Rugby Club. Will be covered in Item 6.	
4. Members of the public	None present.	

<p>5. Minutes of the Axe Brue Full Board Meeting held on 27 January 2025</p>	<p>IDS explained this is the optional meeting of the year. And is intended to be more operations/engineering focused. Little to no finance input is expected as its not specifically required at this meeting. Cllr Phil Holms confirmed his attendance at Jan 27th meeting. The minutes were updated to reflect this.</p>	
<p>6. Matters Arising</p>	<p>Paragraph 3 MW asked about money for main river work. He had read on Somerset Live that the IDB and EA would receive £3.5 million to do works on rivers in Somerset.</p> <p>IDS explained that there have been some extra pots of money that have been made available by the Ministry at short notice over short periods of time over the last year. These are year-end or year-constrained funding. The SDBC has accessed £50k of this funding in the last year to carry out main river work not being done by the EA. We have also engaged with ADA to try and influence Westminster to make more funding available generally for main river maintenance. There is a widespread recognition of underinvestment in maintenance of flood risk assets, so Defra are finding ways to shift money away from capital towards Grant In Aid (GIA) for maintenance. IDS has asked the EA what the local impact of this means for Somerset. They have advised that the additional £1.7 million GIA to the local EA covers increase in operational costs (pay increases, higher material costs etc). We have a document from the EA showing what will and won't be done this year.</p> <p>Bob Clapp (BC) asked what funding the IDB's received.</p> <p>IDS explained we applied for £651k from the DEFRA flood recovery fund to support the EA with Main River Works funding this year. Unfortunately, by the time the funding was made available the EA were unable to commit to delivering the work within the Grant Conditions Timeframe and withdrew their support. As a result we revised the bid and were awarded £75k to do restorative maintenance on the River Cary, the Mark Yeo, the River Axe and the Blind Pill. The work was carried out successfully, within timescales and budget.</p> <p>AG said that as an adjacent landowner, he was very impressed with the work done. He wonders if we will be asked to do the same next year.</p> <p>Paragraph 4 MW asked about Tor Rugby Club. This will be covered under outstanding actions.</p> <p>“that the minutes of the Full Board meeting held on 27 January 2025 are signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held”. PROPOSED: Wendy Welland SECONDED: Peter Clayton All in favour</p> <p>IDS explained that minutes will be produced more quickly going forward, and that actions are being captured, logged and followed up more promptly.</p> <p>Actions from previous meeting:</p> <p>AB/20220411-01 Investment Group: a revised policy has been close to completion for some time but the sticking point is ethical investment as</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 01</p>

this is more difficult to identify/less traceable. IDS suggested reconvening the Finance Committee to see how far we will take it.

Nick Cottle (NC) suggested speaking to Somerset Council. IDS explained we have tried, but this has made it a bit more difficult. In the meantime Maggie has opened accounts with better interest rates.

AB/20250127 - 01 Tor Rugby Club consent issue: VM has visited the site. The Drain in question has not been filled in, but has had a filter drain installed so there is still a connection. It has been decided that although the work was not consented, it could remain unless an issue arises. It was felt that if they had applied, it would probably have been consented on H&S grounds. The pipe can stay in place.

NC asked if these works have had any impact on drainage behind Meyrick Road and Bailey Close as he has had some complaints and wondered if linked.

VM advised that the ditch was only connecting going north - away from rugby ground not towards the town, so not connecting anything else. Other rhynes are connecting to the wider system so she thinks it unlikely.

IDS suggested NC and VM meet on site.

MW asked about bylaws which state that if you fill in a ditch you need to compensate for loss of storage. He doesn't agree with them filling in their storage area. He asked Asking if the area is still pumped. He feels the fields are wetter.

VM is not aware of previous pumping. Currently it will only affect 2 fields on the rugby ground and make their own fields wetter. Not anyone else.

The Chair suggested that MW joins VM/NC meeting to resolve.

VM said they had applied for consent but didn't provide all the info required before carrying out works. It only affects them.

IDS said the assessment shows it only affects the Rugby ground, but as there have been reports of this affecting others, the site meeting will be undertaken to check/resolve this matter.

AB/20250127 - 02 MWa updated that he has not written as he will discuss in pre maintenance meetings which are taking place in May. He will flag issues at the meetings.

MW asked MWa about contractors working on highways after what happened on Godney Moor. The Chair asked MW to direct questions via himself rather than direct to officers.

MWa explained this is being looked at. There was only one contractor impacted. When the contractor raised a H&S concern, we recognised and follow up with a Safe System of Work.

IDS explained that when a contractor raises a H&S concern, we need to address this. Hierarchy for dealing with risks is: Eliminate, Reduce, Inform, Control of risks. Would consider all options before continuing.

Trevor Whitcombe (TW) asked about the incident.

IDS explained that a member of public was allegedly knocked off their bicycle by a contractor who was working on the highway. Under their

**Action:
AB/20250127
- 01**

	<p>Safe System of Work, the contractor was letting traffic pass, but didn't see a cyclist at the back of traffic. There was no serious injury. The contractor and staff member were sanctioned via the H&S Committee as the incident was not initially reported, this was a lesson learned for the contractor.</p> <p>AB/20250127 – 03 IDS has written to Charlie Riches thanking him for his exceptional contribution to Board life.</p> <p>AB/20250127 – 04 Visitor from SERP. Phil has completed the request for information to Vanessa. He also ran an Eel training day.</p> <p>AB/20250127 – 05 Confidential minutes are not on the website.</p> <p>It was asked if confidential minutes were approved. Confidential minutes were not issued. Will be done at next meeting.</p>	<p>ACTION: AB/20250422 - 01</p>
<p>7. Health and Safety Report</p>	<p>Verbal update from Naomi Johnson (NJ)</p> <p>Incidents reported: 2 of verbal aggression from landowners. One in person to an Area supervisor, one over the telephone to finance regarding arrears. These have both been recorded and support provided where needed.</p> <p>Working by the road has been covered in matters arising. This matter highlights the importance of reporting and driving improvements, so can be seen as constructive.</p> <p>NJ has set a timetable for monthly awareness topics. She will send out updates to all staff with a monthly focus on H&S. The first is risk awareness & risk assessments. Future topics to include COSHH, ladder safety, asbestos awareness, fire safety, accident & near miss reporting, wellbeing, manual handling, lone working and driving for work. It is intended that over 12 months this will keep knowledge up to date and H&S culture embedded.</p> <p>Full H&S audit took place last year (5 yearly). The annual update from Worknest is due next week.</p> <p>Training: 3 staff have recently undertaken Lantra 4X4 training. The new Deputy Area Supervisor has also completed Defra water safety awareness training. Jody has completed Mental Health First Aid training to support the business going forward.</p> <p>Alan Franks (AF) suggested cameras on contactors machines to capture any incidents.</p> <p>NJ advised there was a camera present in the reported incident for visibility but it was not recording. MWa confirmed this. NJ noted that more cyclists now wear cameras. She will add this to the H&S Committee agenda.</p> <p>Bob Clapp (BC) asked if contractors carry fire extinguishers.</p> <p>NJ explained they carry them where they carry fuel, but they are not advised to try and extinguish a vehicle fire due to the speed which the fire can spread.</p> <p>MWa explained it is an aid to enable them to leave the cab safely.</p> <p>NJ reiterated that prevention and maintenance is best.</p>	<p>ACTION: AB/20250422 - 02</p>

	<p>David Tratt (DT) asked if MWa could raise the matter of cameras when he meets with contractors?</p> <p>The Chair noted that there are instances of appeals from police for dashcam evidence, but up to contractor for their own defence/insurance.</p> <p>IDS explained that this has been raised before. In the recent incident the contractor only had a camera for visibility but this clearly didn't provide the evidence needed. We need to establish if we are now asking all contractors to have recording cameras on their machines as a contractual requirement.</p> <p>Joe Stradling (JS) asked if we are making distinction between working on highways rather than fields.</p> <p>MWa recalled an incident in the Parret area where a machine ran over a cow, so felt perhaps we should ask contractors to have them on at all times when they are working for us.</p> <p>NJ pointed out that a camera won't prevent an incident, it will just record it. Prevention is a more important focus.</p> <p>MWa will review the Safe System of Work for highways with contractors and will suggest cameras.</p> <p>The Chair felt we should encourage this and thought it may provide benefits on their insurance.</p> <p>MW asked about the legal requirements for signage when working on the highway.</p> <p>NJ explained that contractors write their own RAMS, we approve and ask that they adhere to Red Book code of practice as minimum. It can be reported if not felt to be sufficient and the Area Supervisors are trained to pass comment if needed.</p> <p>MW feels there are not enough signs. Council roadworks have more signs for roadworks.</p> <p>MWa clarified that signage must start half a mile each side of works in any direction and is about making other road users aware.</p> <p>MW thought they should be 75m before the works.</p> <p>MW explained that our works are mobile works. The requirements for stationery works (usual for the Council) are different.</p> <p>IDS confirmed that all our contractors comply with the Code of Practice on temporary mobile works, which are different to fixed works.</p> <p>The Chair asked for this to be covered at the next H&S Committee meeting. Add to agenda.</p>	<p>ACTION: AB/20250422 - 03</p>
<p>8. Staffing Update</p>	<p>IDS introduced a new colleague, Katy Carleton (KC) appointed as Senior Governance Officer. This will mean that we will endeavour to make Minutes available as a published draft much more quickly.</p> <p>KC explained that Kendra is retiring just after the June board meeting. It was established that she has 17 years service. The Chair would like to mark her exceptional service to the Board in some way.</p>	<p>AB/20250422 - 07</p>

	<p>IDS has not done any, however this board is an amalgamation of 4 boards and is working effectively Apart from the duplication of tasks required servicing 3 Boards and the Consortium. The recent change to the Unitary Somerset council was given as an example of inefficiency. IDS replied that he had been told by the Chair of the SRA (Councillor Stanton) that great savings had been achieved in terms of operating costs, but the increase in adult social care costs has counteracted these efficiencies.</p> <p>Jon feels evaluation of previous amalgamation would help inform this proposal.</p> <p>IDS explained that there were obvious efficiencies in time etc, but the end service to ratepayers needs to be the main focus of any paper. Donna Gowler (DG) asked if we would be looking at the name too, for example Internal Water Level Management Boards rather than drainage.</p> <p>IDS advised ADA would like a formal change, but it would be if the law changes not a decision of the Boards.</p> <p>The Chair said we need to be aware of any potential changes. MW said that it's all a bit up in the air. He had read somewhere that the Government is looking at changing the area.</p> <p>IDS said there is piece of work by ADA who have developed a new system looking at changing the way land is valued. The system developed is as close as possible to neutral in the balance between special levy and drainage rates. We are not compelled to adopt this, and have not done so. It was developed to allow new IDB's to be set up and expansion of boundaries of existing IDB's.</p> <p>MW noted this was in the last ADA Gazette.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property sub-committee membership <p>The Axe Brue board own the building we operate from. In 2023 there was serious rainwater ingress. A subcommittee was formed but didn't meet at the time as repairs were less costly than expected. However maintenance needs are now building up, so we are reminding members from Oct 2023. There was only one elected member. In the interest of balance we would like to add one or two more elected members and to confirm a schedule of future maintenance, works and funding.</p> <p>NJ confirmed current members: Roger Keen, Nick Cottle, Joe Stradling and Alistair Hendry.</p> <p>Volunteers needed for additional members. David Tratt agreed to join. A date was proposed of 6th May, JS can't make this.</p> <p>The meeting will be arranged as soon as possible</p>	<p>ACTION: AB/20250422 - 04</p>
<p>10. Somerset Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>James Grischeff (JG) Board member representing SWT presented background on a landscape recovery project in the Brue Valley. This Landscape Recovery Project is about bringing together groups of landholders to deliver collectively outcomes they would not be able to do alone. About 3 years ago there was an opportunity to apply and submit bids to develop projects to meet Defra objectives. In this instance they have brought together a group of 15 local landowners (inc SWT) to develop a proposal. Over the last 2 years these farmers have consulted on what they want to do that Defra will fund. They have formulated an intention to deliver something for landscape recovery, but have not yet signed up to go ahead During the 2 year development</p>	

phase they teamed up with organisations such as SWT/FWAG/RSPB and have conversations with farmers to understand what is on the land, how the business works, what might they want to do and come up with a proposal which meets Defra objectives. SWT has led a Brue catchment landscape recovery project on behalf of landowners. Three specific objectives have been agreed with landowners: securing peat; eels and community engagement. It is now up to landholders to look at how they proceed. At this point a proposal is being put forward to Defra who will then ask how it will be delivered and use the information to negotiate/decide funding levels. There are several landscape recovery projects in Somerset.

The project needs to achieve a certain water table to deliver its objectives This is why they have approached the IDB. There are broader ambitions, to work beyond these 15 landholdings to make it more sensible. An example was given of Honeygar where there are lots of (12) structures to maintain the water level for peat, but it would be better to have less structures across a wider area and work with the IDB. The project will be a 20-year agreement with Defra.

James feels that the drainage board is a crucial stakeholder in delivering these objectives if the board feel it is appropriate.

His question/request to the board is that the project needs operational support from the IDB to support those landholders. He feels that firstly there needs to be an in-principle discussion on whether the board is in agreement to support them. Secondly he is asking if there is an appetite to make the scheme more widely available.

JS declared an interest as one of the 15 landowners. He understands the aspiration to widen the scheme, but wonders if any farmers joining later would be paid at the same rate as the initial 14. He feels that nobody should be forced to sign up if they don't want to, and that there is a duty of care from the board to ensure those that don't are not affected negatively. He feels that if the scheme were expanded, the existing number of structures could control a wider area.

James confirmed the bid has been submitted. Negotiation is still to take place, so no information is yet available regarding payments. These first projects are pilots, however SWT will be negotiating for the best possible outcomes for farmers.

BC feels that we need to be careful trusting Defra as support payments have recently been withdrawn from farming and overall their budgets are reducing.

JG explained that SWT will not be signing anything on behalf of anyone and stressed the project is still in negotiation phase. If contacts are signed, Defra are obligated for 20 years.

TW noted that he has learned more from James than from the project working committee. He would advise SWT to buy land further away from Honeygar as it is on one of the highest areas. He is concerned any raised water will come his way. The mention of stakeholders also worries him as this will increase visitors to a rural area that doesn't have the facilities for them.

JG advised TW to speak to him if worried about Honeygar on-site. There is no relationship between increased visitors, buses and landscape recovery.

	<p>Alan Franks (AF) declared himself one of the 15 farmers and confirmed the site is on the drier side of the Brue. In terms of IDB involvement he feels that half his farm will flood as it is not protected. Farmers need to find income and farm as best they can but the SSSI payments ruined the moors as they were being paid to do nothing. Tealham moor used to be full of wildlife, but has changed dramatically and is a disaster. He feels it will just be farming rushes like Westhay has developed.</p> <p>12.17 Bob Clapp left the meeting</p> <p>Jon Cousins (JC) thanked James for his explanation. He asked if a hydrological unit is connecting pieces of land together through the water system.</p> <p>JG explained that across the 15 landowners, they are not all hydrologically connected and they would like to include more to connect them and make it more sensible. Structures currently disconnect different areas.</p> <p>JC asked if those farmers not joining would be affected.</p> <p>JG advised the project has engaged with engineers etc to look at ways of using structures to keep separate if needed.</p> <p>IDS agreed we need to have technical local discussions. In the context of the 3 objectives. If peat is to be preserved, the current advise is that a high-water table is needed so an agreed water level management regime would be needed. This fits within responsibility of IDB to ensure this activity is regulated and the Board can meet its own environmental responsibilities. It will be difficult to balance the needs of a project like this with any of our ratepayers who do not wish to be included. We have lots of experience and knowledge of raised water level schemes and their impact, this one just has slightly different mechanisms and objectives. Agreed that the board shouldn't approve anything to the detriment of others, so we will continue to discuss and scrutinise in future meetings. It is clear this is about changes in water level, so we will enable, facilitate and work with SWT. It will probably treat it as a land drainage consent matter requiring a flood risk assessment.</p> <p>JG confirmed there is no obligation for any farmers already involved to engage in something they do not want to, an individual can have their own ideas. Going forward, engaging is key as they can't do anything if not in agreement.</p> <p>IDS added that we need to also be mindful of government policy as behind this is Defra. There is still a need to reduce carbon and providing other environmental benefits through water level management. We can't get it wrong or be seen to be in the way as an IDB. We need to be careful, professional and thorough.</p> <p>DT said that the elephant in the room is the amount of water that is available to these projects. "Gravity" site at Woolavington will also be a large consumer. The time is ideal to look at this.</p> <p>Chair asked for no further questions and thanked James. This needs future discussion.</p>	
11. Flooding and	<p>Phil Brewin (PB) update with slides:</p> <p>Defra Peat projects: 2 undertaken in Parrett and North Somerset using engineering and telemetry. These were chosen as water was not</p>	

<p>operational issues</p>	<p>getting to peat in dry times. By reducing leakage they were able to increase capacity to deal with dry periods. The lack of water had been impacting wildlife and farmers.</p> <p>There is a critical pump built by EA which is always broken; we wanted to use Defra money to design and rebuild. PB needs project capacity/help from technicians and engineers to complete projects like this. Some work is completed, some is not. ADA think there may be some money available later in the year to complete works. Currently looking at ideas for infrastructure to complete in peat areas. Obvious examples are West Hay/Lewis Drove, also Queens Sedgemoor control structures.</p> <p>North Somerset telemetry project conceived and developed by PB. He has sourced a new supplier providing non-contact radar units which need less maintenance. Still work to be done to operationalise them and work on data, just needs some technician support to help with the workload.</p> <p>Eels have been in decline in recent decades. Sustainable Eel Group has worked with the IDB, and ran a training day for staff and members making and testing eel ropes. Eels are using the passes and structures in place. There are some formal pass projects using funding from natural England. Kewstoke and Old Yeo will have new passes. Crossman's hatch will need a pass as will any new structures to comply with regulation. There will be an Axe Brue focus this year.</p> <p>Mink was discussed at the AGM using an example of successful mink control in East Anglia. We are looking at the possibility of introducing something similar in Somerset. Mink is not within the IDB remit, but water voles are. May come back to the board to look at how we might fund and deliver a plan.</p> <p>Invasive species floating pennywort has been controlled well in the past, but we struggled with capacity last year. It has spread into new systems and is very hard to control. The best control is to prevent its spread via machinery. Our contractors have and follow a biodiversity policy. The EA are also talking about species control using new more effective substances.</p> <p>Beavers have been reported in the area so we are preparing. SWT have done some work on how to manage them which also explains licencing. Phil attended an ADA training day for all IDB ecologists, and he is now qualified and licenced to reduce any impacts.</p> <p>PB ran through a list of current topics, most specifically Defra's Land Use Framework which is a document on what is required to meet their objectives on housing/nature/carbon. Defra are looking at changes in land use management and carbon and how IDB's fit in, working with local partners. There is a meeting on this next Tuesday if any members want to attend.</p> <p>NC queried the use of chemicals as he is not keen. He gave an example of Splotts Moor where wildlife has disappeared and he puts this down to chemicals. He would like to see wildfowl reintroduced and would rather farm and make a profit.</p> <p>PB explained that chemicals are used as a last resort and those used are licenced and considered safe. Ultimately the risk of floating pennywort is worse.</p>	
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	<p>MW asked if eels like clean or dirty water.</p> <p>PB said they like food. Glass eels have been in decline, but numbers have recovered a bit since trafficking and exporting have stopped.</p> <p>MW asked if water voles like banks .</p> <p>The Chair asked for the meeting to stick to the agenda.</p> <p>PB suggested managing silt as well.</p> <p>Phil Holms asked about the impact of phosphorous in watercourses on biodiversity and asked if this was being addresses.</p> <p>PB advised that rapidly growing plants impact both nature and water flow. Silt is also rich in phosphorus. Could we mitigate and manage silt.</p> <p>JG suggested that operationally the Environment Committee could perhaps assist and formulate a project plan to tackle these issues. He also said that in terms of mink control, SWT are keen to help. They could also offer support for biosecurity and advising contractors.</p> <p>Donna Gowler (DG) asked about the Defra Land Use Consultation which closes on 25 April. Has IDB sent a response?</p> <p>IDS explained that amongst the boards there is concern, (especially the Parrett Board). He shared a press article with the chairman about taking farmland out of production. Will be meeting with Defra and others next week. There will be a response.</p> <p>IDS has received paperwork from the EA on which main river work which is no longer affordable. The summary was read out to members: Only 63% of the money they bid for was awarded. The additional £1.2 million alluded to earlier in the meeting will only keep pace with inflation. Some work will now be contracted out. There has been a 5% increase in the precept we pay which enables them to keep pace with inflation, so the maintenance level will be similar to last year. There was some SRA additional funding for weed cutting in areas where it might not have been done. IDS read out a list of watercourses which won't be maintained in any way by the EA and concluded we are facing ongoing reduced maintenance of main rivers. We are trying to identify additional funding where possible. We will continue to do our best. Should IDB's reprioritise to help cover this?</p> <p>DT asked what the cost was to the boards for main river work done last year.</p> <p>IDS confirmed it was just over £50k – all funded externally.</p> <p>DT is concerned that maintenance is not the biggest issue, but rather the pumps/capital aspect.</p> <p>IDS confirmed that the EA agree with this and are continuing to put money into programmes of repairing, restoring and improving larger capital assets e.g. Dunball Sluice, pump replacement at pumping stations. They are focused on their assets and legal obligations rather than areas under permissive power. Riparian owners can do maintenance,</p> <p>The Chair noted that in his view a well-maintained river is a good defence against flooding.</p>	
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	<p>MW asked if the EA pay drainage rates.</p> <p>IDS will check.</p> <p>AF asked if elected members could have a list of what won't be maintained. IDS to share.</p> <p>AF explained he has applied to carry out works on his banks having obtained EA permission.</p>	<p>ACTION AB/20250422 - 05</p>
<p>12. Maize/ Crops update</p>	<p>MWa gave an update on the subcommittee which met to discuss the issues around crops being planted against watercourses. We have consulted with our legal advisors Wilkin Chapman and established that there can be a legal claim under Section 14 of the Land Drainage Act for loss of crop if we cause damage and we would be liable for a compensation claim. We will need to offset this against the cost of revisits and will update the Board at the next meeting.</p> <p>IDS has also received a follow up from Wilkin Chapman confirming that we will need a clear policy on the matter. This will mean that if we have given correct notice of entry for maintenance and a landowner still chooses to plant, then they are complicit in the loss. A tribunal would consider this and it would mitigate against the amount of any compensation. Officers will produce wording for the policy and bring an update to the June meeting.</p> <p>The Chair noted that grass is considered a crop.</p> <p>TW suggested leaving tramlines as the ground is wet. We don't alternate banks for ease, but he feels we should consider it.</p> <p>MWa advised we do try to alternate, but have to be economical.</p> <p>IDS advised that we are not obliged to share the "pain" but a policy will give clarity and consistency</p> <p>MW said he had read in the ADA Gazette of IDB's paying farmers to not plant all of their land.</p> <p>MWa clarified that this was in East Anglia and pertained to high value crops which are not comparable to maize.</p> <p>IDS to bring an update to the June meeting.</p>	<p>ACTION AB/20250422 - 06</p>
<p>13. Operational & Engineering Reports</p>	<p>Operations: Rob King is unwell. IDS ran through slides of his work. All structures have been inspected following H&S report, there is now a schedule of works, and measures are being put in place. Summer penn is on track in most areas.</p> <p>Contractor Maintenance: MWa showed slides of Ivydown Ditch desilting following a survey of silt to be removed.. There was a near miss with flooding, so this is reactive work. We are dealing with one difficult landowner where we served notice and went in to carry out desilting work in dry conditions. This resulted in complaints of track marks, MWa showed pictures of very minimal marking. We are dealing with the landowner and are being reasonable. We will be going back in with a lightweight roller to roll the track marks out.</p> <p>MW asked if we will reseed.</p> <p>MWa confirmed we will and this will be ongoing as we need to maintain in the future.</p>	

Grant Funded Main River Maintenance

River Axe: photos were shown displaying long reach maintenance works.

River Cary (Parrett): is now in good order for the coming year. Positive feedback from EA..

Mark Yeo/Blind Pill: photos of works were shown. Weed cutting and repair of a gateway access with stone laid for future access.

MWa showed the plan of EA proposed works maintenance work for the coming year which showed continued reductions in Main River Maintenance by EA. The potential for IDB to undertake some if this work again was discussed but it was recognised we will be restrained by finance and resources

JS asked about contractors list. Do we tender for other works/projects or use current suppliers.

MW we use our list of approved suppliers and treat it as additional works under existing contracts.

IDS confirmed we do have a much bigger approved supplier list to cover more specialised contracts as well as our routine work

Engineering: Caroline Murray (CM) gave an overview of all 3 board areas which showed 11 projects completed, 10 in progress, 6 pending. Caroline is happy to share more detail to any that want it. Photos were displayed of completed works at Applewithy connection culverts and desilting, Wells Road bank slip, Burton Row, Cornmoor desilting and replacement of access culvert to increase size for flood relief. Caroline showed slides outlining an overview of programme from April 2025, and SRA projects.

IDS noted that the theme is that we started with unhappy landowners who are now happy. Calm are getting through a large programme of outstanding works which is easing flooding for communities and improving water level management.

Development Control: Virginie started with the largest site they are dealing with which is Agratas at Woolavington (Also known as the Gravity Site). The ROF site is now demolished, rhynes have been infilled. No compensation for loss of flood storage has been provided as not a perceived flood risk. No limitations on surface water outfall agreed at planning years ago. There is a new 11KV/33KV transformer on the south east of the site, just outside the IDB area.

Wells Rugby Club: Diagram showed potential surface water flooding extent. They provided a proposed plan consent application. We have objected to a building at the bottom of the site as it is too close to a viewed rhine. There was considerable discussion about whether the ditch infilling was increasing flood risk. A further site inspection will be undertaken and report back to the Board

Somerton Road, Street (outside IDB area). Proposal for site shown: They have put in two green corridors across the site to divert the water.

Starbucks site, we are in discussions with developers to keep access to the viewed rhine.

Finance: changes to double cab pickups tax implications. They are being treated as cars not commercial vehicles under new rules. We don't pay corporation tax so there is no implication. They are also not used for personal use, so there is no benefit in kind.

	Outstanding drainage rates balance: £7554. This is currently double this time last year. Liability orders are all in place, and we continue to chase.	
14. ADA & SWADA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWADA Spring meeting Weds 7th May, Junction 24 	
15. Any Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendy asked if the IDB would like to display a stand at her Open Farm Sunday on 8th June. They receive lots of questions about water/rhynes. This is a free family event with demonstrations. 	
16. Date of Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance & Works Mon 2 June. • Full Board Mon 16 June. Will be finance focused. <p>The chair thanked members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 13.37</p>	

**ANNEX A TO
AXE BRUE BOARD MINUTES
DATED 22 APRIL 2025**

AXE BRUE BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
AB/20220411 - 1	To carry forward to a later date the investment group meeting – Information with the Clerk to review.	MH/IDS
AB/20250127 - 01	Tor Rugby club consent issue will be investigated and an update given to the Board at the next FB meeting. VM/NC/MW to arrange to meet on site	VM
AB/20250422 - 01	Issue Confidential minutes to sign off at next meeting.	KC/IDS
AB/20250422 - 02	Add use of cameras by contractors to H&S Committee agenda	NJ/MWa
AB/20250422 - 03	Add signage for roadside works to H&S Committee agenda	NJ/MWa
AB/20250422 - 04	Convene Property Subcommittee	NJ/IDS
AB/20250422 – 05	Share with members EA maintenance schedule	IDS
AB/20250422 - 06	Prepare draft Crops/compensation policy wording when ready	IDS/NS/MWa
AB/20250422 - 06	Mark retirement of Kendra Kingston across boards	AG/IDS/KC