

**MINUTES OF THE AXE BRUE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT BRADBURY HOUSE ON
MONDAY 17 JUNE 2024 AT 10.30**

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr A Franks Mr A Gilling (VC) Mrs W Welland Mrs D Gowler	Appointed Members: Cllr R Filmer Cllr R Keen Mr C Riches Mr P Holms Cllr J Cousins Cllr N Cottle	Officers: Mr I Sturdy Mrs M Hammond Mr P Brewin Miss N Cornish Mr M Wall Mrs C Murray Mrs V Martin Mr G Maltby Mrs J Farthing Mr C Ford Miss I Ingledew	Public: Mr P Smart Ms H Corgill
Approved Apologies:			
Mr J Fear (C) Mr M Watts Mr M Lunnon Mr B Clapp Mr J Stradling Mr D Tratt	Mr D Bridge	Mr R King Mrs N Johnson	
Non-Approved Apologies:			
Mr T Whitcombe Mr N Lukins Ms L Scott	Cllr P Clayton Cllr M Healey Cllr S Hart Cllr B Knickerbocker Cllr A Hendry		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance & Apologies	1.1 Attendance and apologies as per the above Attendance List.	
2. Items additional to the agenda	2.1. Andrew Gilling (Vice Chairman) as Acting Chairman opened the meeting and informed members that Jeff Fear (Chairman) was still in hospital but hopes to be discharged soon. He asked that members join him in sending continued best wishes to Jeff. 2.2. Maggie Hammond (MH) asked Members not to have sub meetings whilst the Board Meeting is going on as all the	

	<p>whispering is picked up on the recorder and it makes it hard to transcript the minutes.</p> <p>2.3. Bob Filmer said he noticed there were quite a few elected members missing from both this meeting and the previous one. He asked if a friendly reminder of meeting dates could be sent out. Iain Sturdy (IDS) said the Council have a lot going on at the moment but he thinks it would be worth doing a reminder. Andrew Gilling asked Members if they could contact the office before the meeting so they can establish before the meeting if they will be quorate or not</p>	
<p>3. Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>3.1. Declarations as per the register of member's interests.</p> <p>3.2. Andrew Gilling declared an interest in Stokemoor Pumping Station.</p>	
<p>4. Members of the public to address the Meeting</p>	<p>4.1. Phil Smart attended the meeting to put pressure onto organisations to get the River Brue dredged because he feels the absence of dredging the Brue over the last few decades has been a very significant contributor to the flooding event that was experienced in January, February and March. He said although he can't stop the rain they can get rid of the water as quickly as possible when it does arrive. He had done some research which shows money was allocated in 2015 to carry out the dredging but an agreement was never reached over what should be done. After attending an SRA meeting he said there seems to be two schools of thought; some who want to spend the money on computer modelling with no set date as to actually achieving anything and the second idea which the Chair and Vice Chair support as well as the IDB says that while the modelling valid it is getting in the way of dredging the Brue. He added that there are several interventions which could take place to go some way to alleviating the problem should there be a severe weather event this coming winter. He is pleased to hear support from the IDB but feels there needs to be more pressure. Jon Cousins said as a Member of Glastonbury Town Council they are very supportive of the petition. IDS added that they could not have tried harder at the meeting to make the case and get the SRA Board to make a start on getting on with the obvious things that will made a difference.</p> <p>4.2. Alan Franks asked about the nature element of peat and keeping it wet to retain the carbon in the peat. He said there is a lot of money being put into farming this land the correct way but he thinks it should not be allowed until there is a drainage system in place to be able convey the water when necessary.</p> <p>4.3. Jon Cousins queried if there was merit in the IDB having a response to the petition from the Parish Councils or resolution from this meeting. IDS said they would continue to engage with Mr Smart and his consortium. He added the idea of the model was so it could be used to show the benefit that dredging could bring but thinks they should put the banks back to the level they should be at, fixing the poor</p>	

	<p>condition assets, vegetation control and restoring cross channel section in the model.</p> <p>4.4. Alan Franks asked Phil Brewin (PAB) how much devastation has the past few months of flooding done to nature. PAB said short term it puts a lot of pressure on farmers as they lost a lot of their crops and had to go through recovery funding and do reseedling but generally recovery was quite quick. He added that some will take time to recover but there will be natural regeneration.</p>	
<p>5. Minutes of Axe Brue Full Board 17 June 2024</p>	<p>5.1. Andrew Gilling went through the minutes page by page and asked for any comments.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Charlie Riches, SECONDED: Bob Filmer “that the minutes of the Full Board meeting held on 15 April 2024 are signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held”. All in favour</p> <p>5.2. Roger Keen entered the meeting room at 11am.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 01</p>
<p>6. Matters Arising</p>	<p>AB/20220411-1 – Investment Policy – This has been discussed at the Finance & Works meeting and the actions are to look into ethical investments - Ongoing</p> <p>AB/20221109-02 – Stoke Moor Pumping Station – IDS said Stokemoor Pumping Station was is an Upper Brue asset that was sold to an ex Board Member in 1994 and who has now asked the IDB to lift the covenant associated with the sale. A sub committee was formed to look into the issue and Ashfords were instructed. There has been a response from the owner through Ashfords to say they would like the covenant lifted to maintain the existing historic building on the site but the covenant does not need to be lifted for maintenance to be carried out. He concluded that either they respond to say carry on with the maintenance or do not respond at all - ongoing</p> <p>PROPOSED: Jon Cousins, SECONDED: Bob Filmer “to respond to Mr Lukins saying they can carry on with the maintenance without the covenant being lifted”. All in favour</p> <p>AB/20230417-02 – Dog Leg Ditch – IDS advised that Alan Franks had asked for an investigation to take place on how to move forward. He added that CALM have been asked to take a look into the issue. Alan Franks said there are 6 trees in North Drain that the Environment Agency need to remove There are investigations ongoing and meetings with people involved.- Ongoing</p> <p>AB/20240129-02 – Inform Mr Watts of any rerating of agricultural land and when it goes into special levy – Complete.</p> <p>AB20240129-03 – Inform Somerset Council Highways of the need for reinstatement of permanent barrier railings on Black Ditch – Rob King (RCK) has notified Highways of the issue.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 02</p>

7. Health & Safety Report

7.1. IDS asked Members to take the report at read. IDS told Members Work Nest (the Boards external H&S advisors) have carried out an audit with several actions in the report including:

- Ensure asbestos management plan is regularly reviewed and the person who has the duty to manage asbestos is deemed competent by the employer. Also, recommends contractors sign the asbestos register if working near asbestos within the building
- Review COSHH assessments annually
- Arrange for fixed electrical wiring to be tested by a competent electrician and maintain a test certificate on file.
- A fire wallet be kept in reception with all emergency information and contacts
- Hazard signage placed on cupboard doors to warn of dangers i.e. gas meter

7.2. Wendy Welland said somethings Members have to go out to areas and she asked whether Members are aware of any VIP in their area. IDS said the process in the office is before any visits are undertaken, a quick check of the VIP list is done to see if anyone new has been added. He added there is no problem sharing the details with Members for legitimate purposed but they do have to be aware of GDPR.

7.3. Phil Holms asked what systems are in place for safeguarding of staff. IDS responded by saying through Work Nest the IDB have access to HR support including staff support.

7.4. Charlie Riches said the audit report was discussed at the H&S meeting and it was very positive. The IDB has a strong health and safety culture.

Also, Somerset Fire Safety attended the office to carry out the 5 yearly Health and Safety audit and deemed the building low risk with a high level of detection. There were a few recommendations including:

- Carry out electrical wiring test and inspection
- Advise staff not to overload multi use adaptors
- Ensure fire doors have 'Fire Door Keep Shut' signage

7.5. Training sessions completed as follows;

- Four members of staff attended Lantra Mobile Works training.
- Five members of staff did a 1 day Emergency First Aid at Work training
- Upcoming training includes a half day First Aid Annual Refreshers

	<p>7.6. IDS updated Members on the unpleasant drain smell around the side entrance to the building. An internal cause has been eliminated by jetting the drains and the issue has been referred to Wessex Water</p>	
<p>8. Governance update</p>	<p>8.1. IDS informed Members there is a vacancy on the Finance & Works Committee and the last meeting was not quorate. He asked if the Members on the F&W Committee were still able to make the commitment. Nick Cottle said his intention is to attend if he can but he has poor health at the moment. A couple of the other Members are farmers and with the nice weather they would be out working. IDS said it would help if the vacancy could be filled and he will write to appointed Members.</p> <p>8.2. IDS updated the meeting on recruitment saying we are doing really well particularly with the Development Control Team which is fully staffed There are still Engineering vacancies but the Board is currently using CALM Engineering to cover engineering projects. In the absence of a clerk assistant Andrew Gilling offered his personal gratitude to Maggie for all the extra help she is giving.</p>	
<p>9. Finance Report</p>	<p>9.1. MH told Members the bank statements up to the end of April 2024 have been reconciled. She added the Finance and Works Committee had met to scrutinise the finance report and figures. The committee wasn't quorate but they agreed to put forward the figures to be approved by the Full Board. MH asked Members to accept the SDBC account and approve the Axe Brue accounts.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Jon Cousins, SECONDED: Roger Keen “to accept the SDBC account for the year 2034/24 and approve the Axe Brue accounts for the year 2024/25”. All in favour</p> <p>9.2. MH asked members to look at the Internal Auditor report saying she 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. MH asked the Board to answer the AGAR questions and read the questions out to the Board.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Jon Cousins, SECONDED: Roger Keen “to answer yes to the questions within AGAR Section 1 as per Appendix A Internal Audit Report and agrees the Chair and Clerk can sign it as approved.” All in favour</p> <p>9.3. MH asked the Members to approve Section 2 of the AGAR MH ran through the AGAR statement section 1 document.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Charlie Riches, SECONDED: Roger Keen “to approve the AGAR Section 2 and agrees the Chair can sign it as approved.” All in favour</p> <p>9.4. MH gave an update on the drainage rate position as at 31 March 2023 saying there is currently £7554.89 outstanding</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 03</p> <p>RESOLUTION 04</p> <p>RESOLUTION 05</p>

	<p>and there is one account which has over £2000 outstanding. Alan Franks said he has ratepayers around his area saying they are not going to pay their drainage rates because of the flooding. He said a lot of people do not understand how it works, that the EA and IDB are separate organisations. MH said if the demands have not been paid by October then outstanding rates to a certain amount will be taken to court. Bob Filmer queried if they would put a charge on land of landowners who don't pay, then asked how much the potential write offs are. MH said putting a charge on land is something that needs to be looked into and the write offs this year were very small amounts.</p> <p>9.5. Jon Cousins said he's hearing people are disgruntled because of what's happening with nature and the climate and asked whether it is something which will only get worse over the years. He asked if it was a risk to the IDB and did any mitigation needed to be put in place? MH said it is on the risk register but at the moment it is a very low risk. IDS said as an organisation there should be an overall policy around Water Level Management and Flood risk and almost every Board in the Country has adopted a national template saying this is what we do and why we do it.</p>	
<p>10. Operational, Engineering & Environmental Reports</p>	<p>10.1. 1 IDS stated that the report is very thorough and contains a recommendation. Operationally it's been a strange year and there has been challenges with getting it right for everybody – he said the IDB do not provide an individual service for every ratepayer but try to provide an overall service on a strategic scale with regards to managing water levels.</p> <p>10.2. Matthew Wall (MSW) said the hydrometric summary shows it was the wettest year on record from May to April and he said they have done very well with 95% of the maintenance completed. Alan Franks said one of the bad areas is Westhay Bridge to Sand Drove and he would like to record an interest.</p> <p>10.3. MSW said the contractors have said they are having issues getting access to the rhynes because of maize and wheat and there was discussion around the problems this causes. MSW is recommending a joint SDBC subcommittee be formed with three elected members from each board to review the existing watercourse policy and considering amendments to help overcome the ongoing issue of crops impeding IDB maintenance works from being undertaken. Wendy Welland suggested sending an email to all elected Members to ask who would like to be involved.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Wendy Welland, SECONDED: Alan Franks “to form an SDBC subcommittee to review the Watercourse Policy.” All in favour</p> <p>10.4. Bob Filmer had previously raised flooding concerns at Brent Knoll and an investigation was undertaken to look at the private drainage within the area. He said there is water</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 06</p>

	<p>sitting next to the green and properties nearby and there could be a possible blockage and there is a need for further investigation. MSW said he believed there was a need to investigate further as it could turn out to be a bigger issue.</p> <p>10.5. Nick Cottle said a post was knocked down in Glastonbury about a year ago and there is a high risk of caravans ending up in the rhyne. MSW responded by saying it was a collapsible bollard which caught the bottom of a machine as it went through. It has been reported to the Council to repair as it is their responsibility. MSW added that he feels the bollard wasn't fitted properly as it was too proud out of the ground.</p> <p>10.6. Caroline Murray (CM) asked Members to take her report as read and updated the members on the engineering projects using the projector to show current projects and their status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CM said she's received the quote for the Environmental Survey at Vole Road and Robins Lane. • Swallow syphon on the SRA programme CM told Members she has a meeting with a specialist who has done a lot of syphon investigation in the past and who would hopefully be able to advise of the best and safest way. • A consultant has been appointed to commence the work on Dog Leg. • Ditch Burton Row culvert design is nearing completion and there is a contractor lined up to deliver the works. <p>Bob Filmer thanked the team for the West Town Gutter and Burton Road</p> <p>10.7. Virginie Martin (VM) said the report summarises the most important issues since January. They have been more thorough with planning, objecting more and making sure to keep to 9 metres. The two biggest issues are Isleport where the culvert has been put in at the wrong level and the Wain Homes site in East Huntspill where they have been asked to do more work with regards to mitigation of the surface water.</p> <p>10.8 Jon Cousins reported an interest on page 13 of the report 'Land at 348747 138907 Middle Drove Glastonbury 2024/0036/OUT' as he is a member of the board who put in the application.</p> <p>10.9. 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.</p>	
<p>11. Somerset Rivers</p>	<p>11.1. IDS gave an update on SRA saying many people turned up asking how to bridge the gap between reports and</p>	

Authority update	getting action on the ground. He said part of the problem is finding the organisation who has the power to do the works. Johnathan Hudson gave a comprehensive report focussing on natural flood management and upper catchment attenuation and slow the flow. Andrew Gilling said the Government has cut the Environment Agencies funding by 69% which is a major block to the work of the IDB.	
12. Issues & items to be raised with ADA	12.1. IDS asked Members if there were any issues that the IDB should be working with ADA on to raise to a higher level. We have been working on getting access to some of the 75 million asset and improvement money that the Government made available for works to protect agricultural land and rural communities. IDS said Somerset is different in that the EA maintain the pumps, the main channel and flood banks so we have got DEFRA permission to work with the EA to bid for some of the money and work with the EA so we can approve projects for them to spend on pump refurbishment, desilting of channels, removal of trees etc and there is a list of works.	
13. Correspondence and engagement with other authorities	13.1. None	
14. Any Other Business	14.1 None	
15. Date of next meeting	15.1 The next meeting will be 4th November 2024 at 10.30am. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting @ 13.12	

CHAIR.....DATE

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.	Clerk & RFO Ongoing
AB/20221109-02	To set up a meeting to discuss Stoke Moor Pumping Station	Mr M Wall & Mr Sturdy Ongoing
AB/20230417-02	To contact Mr Andrew Rowlands to discuss changes to the engineering and operation of Dog Leg Ditch. A formal investigation to be undertaken.	Clerk/Operations Manager Ongoing