

**MINUTES OF THE NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
FINANCE AND WORKS MEETING AT BRADBURY HOUSE 23 OCTOBER 2024 AT 14:30**

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr T Bush (C) Mr R Mitchell	Appointed Members: Cllr J Tonkin	Officers: Mrs M Hammond Mr G Oliver	Public:
Apologies:			
	Cllr P Burden Cllr C Hunt	Mr I Sturdy	
Non-Attendance			
Mr J Harris Ms S Hearne Mr C Redding			

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1 Apologies as per the above Attendance List. Unfortunately the Clerk has Covid.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1. Maggie Hammond (RFO) would like to add Chairmans allowance to the agenda.	
3. Declarations of Interest	3.1. No declarations at this time.	
4. Approval of Minutes	4.1. As the meeting was not quorate The Chair went through the minutes and asked the Members if they thought it was a fair recollection of the meeting. MH said the minutes will be signed at the next Finance & Works Sub-Committee Meeting if it is quorate.	
5. Matters Arising	5.1. NSL/20210323-01- To discuss options for adequate insurance cover of Sampson's Sluice and propose a new way forward. Giles Oliver (GO) said at the time of the inspection a valuation was generated for the sluice. There has not been a detailed scrutiny as yet but it is a professional appraisal and comes in at around £2	Action NSL/20210323-01 - Complete

	<p>million. Subject to discussions with the engineering team this amount can be proposed to the insurers as a true and fair valuation for the replacement of the sluice. MH said she will get a quote from the insurers and it will be up to the Board to accept the quote or accept the risk that if Sampsons Sluice breaks there is no insurance for it.</p>	
6. Health & Safety report	6.1 There is no update but this will be discussed at the Full Board meeting	
7. Finance Report	<p>7.1. MH reported the quarterly reconciliation of bank statements have been fully reconciled and there are no issues to report</p> <p>7.2 MH told Members the first item is the AGAR. The external auditors have said everything is fine in accordance with the regulations but they wanted to bring to the Members attention that there are quite a few outdated policies and procedures. Cllr James Tonkin asked how MH will tell the Members about the updates. MH said if there is a major change there will be a brand new policy but if only a few items have changed she will highlight them in the policy.</p> <p>7.3. The SDBC budget forecast is based on information known at the time of writing and will change. The estimate currently is to have an underspend of £19k. The biggest variances are staff costs because of the vacancies but the underspend is being used for CALM Engineering to provide engineering services.</p> <p>7.4. MH said the North Somerset Levels position is an overspend of £65K, however, the budget is showing some money raised in previous years on schemes and this does not show as coming from reserves it looks like an overspend. Bob Mitchell asked whether the Consortium has reserves and MH responded by saying no because at the end of every year any surplus or deficit is spread across the three Boards in the Consortium as per the agreement.</p> <p>7.5. The outstanding drainage rates as of the meeting are £6,609.21 and this time last year it was £8,121.44 which is a good position. However, there are some outstanding drainage</p>	

	<p>rates and the next step is taking people to court. MH recommends any ratepayers owing more than £50 are taken to court.</p> <p>7.6. MH talked about investments saying there is very little money in the NatWest current account as they keep as much as possible in the deposit account which is 1.6% interest. The Money Market funds are giving just over 4% and the money with North Somerset Council is 4.98%. The Chair asked why there is money in the HSBC which pays so little interest. MH said this was an inherited account and when the investment policy is complete they can take the money out and a meeting will be arranged to discuss better investments.</p> <p>7.7. MH discussed the Chairmans allowance saying this is to recompense for all the time and effort put in to chairing and attending meetings which is an onerous task. The Axe Brue Board has suggested the amount goes up to £2000 and the Parrett Board have agreed. Cllr James Tonkin said he would propose this action and MH will add it to the Full Board agenda.</p>	
<p>8. Crossman's Hatch Reappraisal Report, Tender Report & future funding</p>	<p>8.1. The Chair said Members have received the report and asked Dan Alsop (DA) if he would like to add anything. DA confirmed he had put all information into the two reports supplied saying the first report is about the completion of the job which was started in 2019. Surveys and structural checks had to carried out and it was quite a complicated job with the work being greater than expected and the costs were much higher. There were four contractors asked to tender but only two tendered and if the figure comes out close to what is expected the recommendation is to let the contract to the lowest bidder. The second report addresses the high price of the tenders and the necessity of the job. With £67k already being spent on the project and the tilting weir waiting to be put in the Board are committed to doing the job. The options are how to go about it which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandon the scheme but this would not solve the problems and would waste money already spent. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with job and draw on North Somerset Levels reserves. • Take longer to complete the job which would help finances but would need to be retendered. • Try and make the design cheaper as he has put in erosion protection work. • Defer, build up reserves and retender in 2/3 years. <p>DA said the logical way to proceed is to draw on reserves and review the reserves policy. Bob Mitchell asked if the scouring was the extra cost which DA said no, that is about £17k. DA added that a tilting weir would be an improvement. Cllr James Tonkin thanked DA for his report and proposed to accept the recommendation of using reserves and take it to Full Board with The Chair and Bob Mitchell agreeing. MH said if the predicted forecast happens the free reserves would be £480k at the end of the financial year and with the project costing £154k there would £326k free reserves left. This means to achieve the reserves of £750k there would need to be an increase of £43k per year.</p> <p>8.2. DA discussed the longer term programme saying most structure replacements have been done over the last 20 years. The gauge boards and telemetry need sorting and there is grant aid available for this and it is being worked on at the moment. The elver passes are not progressing and with £30k being allocated over 2/3 years and none being completed it is frustrating.</p> <p>8.3. The Chair said an issue that has arisen recently is EDF wanting to flood part of Kingston Seymour. Potentially there is negotiation for compensation for all sorts of bodies of which the IDB could be one.</p>	
<p>9. IDB Funding for Main River maintenance including PSCA schedule</p>	<p>9.1. Matthew Wall (MSW) reported on the paper included in the agenda saying they have now heard from the EA on what they will and won't maintain this year and he feels like it will be a repeat occurrence. He said the Parrett Board have signed a PCSA agreement with the EA to undertake work on the River Cary which hasn't been maintained for two years and this work should help alleviate flooding around that area.</p>	

Within the Axe Brue area three watercourses have been identified for possible maintenance, the Mark Yeo, River Axe and Blind Pill. Blind Pill rhyne is the main one being considered as there is a flooding issue with water coming through the bank and causing issues with IDB watercourses. MSW said the response from the other Boards is to do something but as a one off and not taking on the work annually. He is seeking approval from the Board as to whether they can do it or not and then they can see what can be done. Questions were asked about how much it would cost and if there are the resources. MSW said there is a contractor lined up for the Axe Brue work and once the PCSA is completed in the Parrett Board in 4/5 weeks he hopes to have a contractor available. There was discussion around what work would be done with MSW saying the IDB will work to EA specifications. MH said that under the scheme of delegations anything that costs less than £20k more than the budget can be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. She added that if MSW is given the go ahead to start work it would be a good idea. The Chair said there could be an issue with the Land Yeo running through Clevedon. MSW said maybe the IDB could do the easier part to avoid any problems in central Clevedon. MSW said he is assuming that the work will cost more than the Boards rhyne maintenance. The Chair asked if the money for the Land Yeo will be coming out of the Boards reserves which it would and MSW said it could also be underspend on the maintenance budget. The Chair confirmed that the committee gives the go ahead to discuss at Full Board meeting.

9.2. The Chair asked to discuss Health & Safety. MSW said there was an issue with a contractor in the Axe Brue area where the contractor pulled over to allow three cars to pass then when he slewed the machine around to carry on work there was a cyclist and the machine came into contact with her and knocked her off the bike, she was injured and went to hospital. There have been discussions on how to improve the SSOW and it has been flagged up about the increase in cycle traffic in the North Somerset area. A SSOW has been put in place for Sampsons Sluice so the footpath can be closed

	<p>while the contractor is in there working and this exercise may have to be repeated in similar locations.</p> <p>9.3. The Chair said he has heard that the Area Supervisors have had banksman training but they are not allowed to act as banksmen and asked why that is. MSW said this is correct, they are not allowed to give instructions to road users or plant operators but they can supervise the Contractors on site and close footpaths before work commences on site. If the Area Supervisors are directing traffic on the highway the IDB becomes complicit with any issues which may arise.</p> <p>9.4. MSW told Members the Area Supervisors have been carrying out asset surveys and using an app to record the condition structures are in and there are about 600 structures to inspect across all the Boards. This has been initiated because a child got their leg trapped in a hole in one of NSL structures. It has been reported to HSE and a claim will be made to the Boards insurers.</p> <p>9.5. Bob Mitchell told Members that the motorway bridge in Banwell will be closed to everything except pedestrians, cycles and buses so this will affect traffic. GO will look into this.</p>	
<p>10. Environment Agency Precept for 2025/2026</p>	<p>10.1. MH told Members all the Boards pay a precept to the EA and in the last few years the increase has been 2% but it will go up this year. For North Somerset a possible 5% increase will be an additional £5,973.18 and £5,187 of that is for the precepting authority. The Chair asked if the precept is based on the work the EA do for the IDB? MH said it is for work done within the IDB area so they should be able to tell us what they have done.</p>	
<p>11. Any Other Business</p>	<p>11.1. MH updated Members on the Drainage Ratings System (DRS) saying it is currently supplied and supported by Water Management Alliance (WMA). WMA have advised that from April 2025 they will no longer support DRS. ADA have looked into developing a system but they don't have the expertise to do it. The WMA have developed a new system based on the old one</p>	

	and they have made it available to drainage boards at an increased cost. There are several options going forward but we do not want to lose all the information on the current DRS system.	
12. Date of Next Meeting	12.1. Wednesday 15 th January The Chair thanks everyone for coming and the meeting was closed at 16.05	

Annex:

A. NSLIDB F&W Meeting – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIRMAN.....DATE

**NSLIDB F&W COMMITTEE MINUTES
DATED 23 OCTOBER 2024**

NSLIDB F&W MEETING – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee: