

MINUTES OF THE NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT KINGSTON SEYMOUR VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2025 AT 14:30

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Tim Bush (Chair) Nigel Cole John Harris Simon Hutchings Peter Kingcott Alistair Mead Bob Mitchell Chris Redding	Appointed Members: Cllr P Burden (Vice Chair) Mr J Cato Cllr C Gibbons Mr P Harris Mrs Sandra Hearne Cllr C Hunt Mr R Westwood Mrs D Yamanaka	Officers: Mrs M Hammond Mr A Brinson Mr M Wall Mr R King Mr G Oliver	
Approved Apologies:			
Eric Adams Bob Parsons Graham Plaister	Cllr M Bird Cllr J Tonkin Cllr B Petty Cllr D Shopland	Mr D Alsop Mrs N Johnson Mr P Brewin Mr D Crossman	
Non-Approved Apologies:			
George Atwell Ben Letts Colin Pyke	Cllr M Pepperall Cllr D Thomas		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. 1.2 Attendance & Apologies as per the above	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	2.1 Bradley Fowler is happy to join the board. Nominated by Peter Kingcott and seconded by Nigel Cole 'to elect Bradley Fowler to the board' All in favour	RESOLUTION 01
3. Declarations of Interest	To declare through meeting	
4. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Meeting	None in attendance	
5. Minutes of the NSLIDB Full	5.1 It was noted that Peter Harris was in attendance and Matthew Wall was not in attendance at the November meeting. Minutes to be adjusted to reflect this.	

Each Board is a statutory public body with responsibilities for flood protection, land drainage and the environment.
All are members of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

<p>Meeting 6 November 2024</p>	<p>5.2 Page 2, Item 3.4. Change wording to 'Bio-diversity net gain'.</p> <p>Proposed by John Harris and seconded by Cllr J Cato 'to sign the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held' All in favour</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 02</p>
<p>6. Matters Arising and review of actions</p>	<p>6.1: Update on EDF Consultation (Item 5.3, Pages 4 & 5) Discussion: IDS updated the board regarding the letter received from EDF, informing that the consultation has been delayed, with no new date provided.</p> <p>Peter Burden (PB) advised that Rachel Reeves (Chancellor of the Exchequer) is not allowing environmental issues to delay major projects.</p> <p>Tim Bush (TB) commented that there is a lack of enthusiasm for saltmarshes in the EDF project.</p> <p>6.2: Update on River Maintenance Grant (Item 7.6, Page 6) Discussion: IDS provided an update on the grant application for the cost of main river maintenance. The grant agreement is pending signatures, with a total of £75k across SDBC. No PSCA with the Environment Agency (EA) is in place for NSL, but efforts are ongoing to establish this.</p> <p>John Harris asked if there is a time limit for the grant. IDS confirmed that the deadline for completion of the work is the end of this financial year.</p> <p>6.3: Precept Options (Item 12.4, Page 11) Discussion: IDS reported that precept options have been considered by the Environment Agency, and a 5% increase was agreed upon at the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, which will increase the Special Levy charged to the Local Authorities.</p> <p>6.4: Peter Burden (PB) noted that the minutes were excellent but suggested that they could be refined to reduce length, as there is a lot to go through. IDS responded that while refinements could be made, trimming too much might lead to losing the essence or "flavour" of the meeting. John Cato emphasised the importance of keeping the detail in the minutes, noting it is a balance between brevity and thoroughness.</p> <p>6.5 Action NSL/20221116-2 Investment Group will be convened once the revised Investment Policy is ready.</p> <p>6.6 Action NSL/20240619-2 The tour of inspection was arranged but due to lack of members availability was postponed. The Chairman suggested narrowing the scope to the NSL area if organising a consortium-wide tour proves difficult due to availability.</p>	

<p>7. Health and Safety Report (Enclosure 2)</p>	<p>7.1: IDS presented the Cross Consortium Report for Naomi Johnson who was not present. The report was thorough, and attendees were invited to ask questions.</p> <p>7.2: Incident of Child Injury including the potential of an insurance claim. Sandra Hearne inquired whether the incident involving a child getting their leg stuck had led to an insurance claim.</p> <p>IDS responded that the incident has been reported to the Health & Safety Executive (H&S Executive). As of the meeting date, no feedback has been received from the H&S Executive or other parties involved. An inspection of all relevant structures has been conducted, with several issues identified and addressed. The incident has helped improve procedures, ensuring better safety measures moving forward.</p> <p>Our insurers have been briefed by IDS</p> <p>Action Points: IDS will continue to monitor the situation and update the group on any developments.</p>	<p>New Action: NSL /20250129-1</p>
<p>8. Finance Report (RFO)</p>	<p>8.1 Quarterly Reconciliation of Bank Statements Discussion: The R.F.O. confirmed that the reconciliation of bank statements had been completed to the 31 December 2024. Board Member Bob Mitchell has reviewed these to the 30 October 2024. The R.F.O. thanked Bob Mitchell for coming into the office to do this.</p> <p>8.2 EOY Financial Report & Proposed Budget FY2025/2026 The Chairman confirmed that the Finance & Works Committee had considered the report and any questions that the Finance & Works committee asked were answered by the R.F.O.</p> <p>The End of Year (EOY) Financial Report was presented and discussed.</p> <p>Members were asked to note the year-end forecast figure being an overspend of £49,772.</p> <p>8.3 Members were asked to approve the creation of a new ringfenced reserve for the environmental underspend in 2024/25. There is no proposal to raise a budget for these items of spend next year.</p> <p>Proposed by Peter Burden and seconded by John Cato 'to approve the creation of a ringfenced reserve from the environmental underspend in 24/25 for environmental spend going forward' All in favour</p> <p>8.4 A proposed budget for the FY2025/2026 was also presented. The proposed budget was approved with the following motion: Proposed by Sandra Hearne and seconded by John Harris 'to approve the proposed budget for the</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 03</p>

	<p>FY2025/2026 creating a penny rate of 10.833 in the pound' All in favour</p> <p>8.5 Outstanding Drainage Rates The R.F.O. shared the outstanding drainage rate position with the board. The R.F.O. took non-payers of drainage rates to court on 21st January 2025, where 6 liability orders were granted.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 04</p>
<p>9. Operational, Engineering and Environmental Report</p>	<p>9.1 Combined Report Update Discussion: IDS provided a combined report update. The report was taken as read.</p> <p>9.2 Maintenance Update – Matthew Wall Matthew Wall shared slides indicating that 94% of maintenance had been completed, despite a challenging year. The team has managed to adapt well to the difficulties.</p> <p>9.3 Piece of debris from flail into Cab in Parrett Area: The work was reviewed and information has been gathered by the Area Supervisors (Anthony Brinson’s update is still awaited). We have identified 206 locations/82km across the whole SDBC area where there is high hedge and we would not want to use a flail. The use of a cutter bar as an alternative method is being used for the motorway channels. This work is safer, but slower. Maintenance plans for the year are being updated accordingly. Flailing on banks will continue.</p> <p>Peter Burden raised a concern about clippings being left on the bank. Matthew Wall addressed concerns about flailing clippings, explaining that once the work is undertaken there will be some material left and will need to be managed. Going forward there should only be 2-3 years’ worth of growth so the impact will be less.</p> <p>9.4 Repairs and Asset Surveys Rob King provided an update on the number of repairs completed based on asset surveys. Safety issues have been addressed, with 215 issues completed across the consortium.</p> <p>The early winter penning has been successful across all three boards.</p> <p>9.5 Engineering Projects Update Caroline Murray presented a slide showing 40 ongoing projects across the whole Consortium, with 2025/26 being a busy year for project delivery.</p> <p>NSL area projects were highlighted on a map. Several completed projects were noted with a target for completion by 31 March 2025. The 2024/25 programme includes work on elver passes, with orders planned for elver passes on two structures. Bank slip assessments will be conducted once water levels drop.</p>	

A project for Crossman's Hatch is moving forward, with an order already placed and work starting in April/May 2025.

A grant agreement for asset improvements was discussed, with an application set for submission by tomorrow, and a decision expected by end February. If successful the funding for Crossman's Hatch from reserves will no longer be required.

9.6 John Harris asked whether the What3Words (W3W) system has updated the mapping of assets. IDS clarified that the report gave the asset numbers and not anything else. Rob King confirmed that W3W is being used for structures and that their signage includes W3W. All of the Pen structure numbers are on the map on our website.

9.7 Alistair Mead discussed the winter penning saying it didn't feel any different to previous years and asked when is the normal winter penning and why can we not go earlier.

Anthony Brinson replied that we have a 2-week window either side of 1st November. Alistair Mead asked why can't we go to winter pen in September as we get bad storms in October. Rob King highlighted that farmers with cattle out would present challenges in doing so This year the boards have taken a proactive approach with winter penning, addressing issues like the Puxton SSSI where EA involvement is crucial. IDS said that the world is changing and said that we should be more responsive. We rely on main river in many places and would need to engage the EA in discussions about this issue.

9.7 Henley Door and Risk Assessment

John Cato raised concerns regarding the Henley Door. IDS confirmed that this is in the Parrett area and is a large main river structure which does not meet the criteria to invest in it. It is a huge structure for environmental issues including eels but is just outside of the scope for GIA and is beyond the reach of sufficient environmental funding.

There is an enormous risk that as a society we are not investing enough in the maintenance of our flood risk assets IDS advised members that they can share all of the information that has been shared with them about the lack of funding for the EA. A Parrett board member, Julian Taylor wrote to Emma Hardy (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Water and Flooding)) asking why the EA in Wessex were telling us there were unable to maintain their flood risk infrastructure. Highlights from the reply are

- Funding is consistently distributed across the country wherever the risk is greatest and where the benefits are highest
- 93.1% of EA high consequence flood risk and coastal erosion risk management assets are at target condition.
- Spreading the burden far and wide including local authorities and riparian owners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to Wessex the maintenance budget has not been cut <p>We continue to meet with our local MPs about this issue.</p> <p>Richard Westwood asked if members could have a copy of the letter. IDS will share if he can.</p> <p>9.8 Beaver Licensing and Eel Training Day Sandra raised concerns about beavers being protected including their dams and the fact that they cannot be dismantled. IDS clarified that a licensed person could dismantle the dams if necessary. Eel training day was discussed, and it was noted that Peter Burden and John Cato would attend, while Tim Bush would not be able to.</p> <p>9.9 A discussion was had about working at the side of a road and cyclists. Matthew Wall confirmed that we expect our contractors to be compliant with Chapter 8 and to have the correct signs. We cannot stop cyclists but can manage road users</p> <p>9.9 Planning Applications and Consents Sandra Hearne raised a personal interest regarding planning applications on North Lane and asked for further investigation into culverted watercourses. IDS confirmed that Virginie Martin would look into the details and follow up on non-statutory consultee concerns.</p> <p>Tim Bush inquired about the impact of certain applications within the IDB area, and IDS emphasised the need for proper assessments.</p>	<p>New Action: NSL/20250129 - 2</p> <p>New Action: NSL/20250129 - 3</p>
10. Issues and items to be raised with ADA	<p>10.1 Peter Burden - Letter from Minister Peter Burden raised the topic of the letter from the minister. IDS mentioned ongoing concerns about underinvestment in the main river maintenance and the difficulty of raising these issues. Innes Thompson of ADA is a route to the ministry.</p> <p>10.2 Consultation on Standards & Behaviour in Public Life Discussion: The Consultation on Standards & Behaviour in Public Life was discussed, and IDS confirmed they would be responding. The consultation includes the Nolan Principles and the Code of Conduct, which are being picked up by ADA. Tim Bush requested that a copy of the Nolan Principles be provided to the new member. IDS confirmed that a member pack will be issued, which will include the Nolan Principles.</p>	
11. Any Other Business	11.1 None	
12. Date of Next Meeting	16/04/25 – Planning meeting Full Board Wednesday 23 April 2025	
	The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance. Closed at 4pm	

NSLIDB BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
NSL/20221116 - 2	Group of Board members to debate investments across the consortium of Boards and develop a policy for investment. The policy is currently under development.	M Hammond - In progress
NSL/ 20240619 - 2	To arrange a suitable date in Early September for a Board Site Inspection.	I Sturdy – To be arranged 2025/26
NSL/20250129 - 1	To monitor the situation re potential insurance claim and update the group on any developments	I Sturdy
NSL/20250129 - 2	IDS to share letter to and from Emma hardy with members if he can.	I Sturdy
NSL/20250129 - 3	North Lane further investigation into culverted watercourses, look into the details and follow up on non-statutory consultee concerns	VM