

**MINUTES OF THE NSLIDB FULL BOARD MEETING HELD AT KINGSTON SEYMOUR VILLAGE HALL  
ON WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE<sup>[151]</sup> 2025**

<b>Attendance:</b>			
<b>Elected Members:</b> Tim Bush Nigel Cole Brad Fowler John Harris Peter Kingcott Bob Mitchell Bob Parsons	<b>Appointed Members:</b> John Cato Sandra Hearne Cllr Clare Hunt Wendy Griggs	<b>Officers:</b> Maggie Hammond Iain Sturdy Virginie Martin Giles Oliver Rob King Caroline Murray Matt Wall Anthony Brinson David Crossman	<b>Public:</b>
<b>Approved Apologies:</b>			
George Atwell Simon Hutchings Alistair Mead Graham Plaister Chris Redding	Cllr Peter Burden Cllr Catherine Gibbons Peter Harris Cllr Dan Thomas Cllr Richard Westwood Deborah Yamanaka		
<b>Non-Approved Apologies:</b>			
	Cllr Mike Bird Cllr Marcia Pepperall Cllr Bridget Petty David Shopland Cllr James Tonkin		

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>Detail:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
1. Attendance & Apologies	The meeting started at 14.32  Apologies received from Dan Alsop. Others as per the attendance list.	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	The Chair advised that it was his sad duty to inform the Board that Tom Letts has passed away. Members stood for a moments silence. The funeral is on 1 <sup>st</sup> July.  Matthew Wall (MW) advised of a collapsed wall on Littlemoor Rhyne. Contractor Maggie Hammond (MH) noted that discussion was needed regarding the HSBC account, will be covered under finance (Item 9).	

3. Declarations of Interest	Will be declared as they arise during the meeting	
4. Members of the public	None in attendance	
5. Minutes of the NSLIDB Full Board Meeting	<p>Nigel noted that he was in attendance to change from approved apologies</p> <p>P1 Wendy updated that her appointment has gone to full exec</p> <p>P3 John Cato Avon Pension Fund Committee - NS council representative</p> <p>P7 Sandra Hearne SH) asked if re point 9.3, a ratepayer can opt to have their demand by email. MH explained we do if requested.</p> <p>P11 end of 12.3 thanked Virginie Martin for presentation accuracy</p> <p>SH – Defra land use framework.</p> <p>IDS please provide copy</p> <p><b>“that the minutes of the Full Board meeting held on 23 April 2025 with the corrections noted above are signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held”.</b></p> <p><b>PROPOSED: Sandra Hearne</b></p> <p><b>SECONDED: John Cato</b></p> <p><b>All in favour</b></p>	<b>RESOLUTION 01</b>
6. Matters Arising	<p><b>NSL/20250423 - 01</b> Chair and CEO to discuss/plan Tour of Inspection later</p> <p><b>NSL/20250423 – 02</b> Paper on amalgamation. IDS noted the paper has been drafted and is in progress, there is an analysis of costs and benefits still to do. We are not minded to rush this item and will bring it back at a future meeting.</p> <p>The Chair advised that in the SDBC Management meeting, Tony Bradford had suggested a change to meeting formats, with Finance &amp; Works staying separate, but other meetings being joint. That way the workload for common items such as H&amp;S, policies, environment etc could be reduced.</p> <p>Members discussed meeting dates needing to comply with statutory returns, as well as the audit threshold and related charges. Officers advised that ADA are looking at and asking for the threshold to be reviewed and raised.</p> <p><b>NSL/20250423 - 03</b> Matt Wall and Dan Thomas are arranging a meeting re the traveller site at Heathgate Rhyne/Puxton.</p>	
7. Health and Safety Report	<p>The Report was taken as read.</p> <p>IDS advised that Naomi now moved into her new finance role. We are in the process of recruiting for a H&amp;S Officer. During this time, day to day H&amp;S is being covered by IDS/NJ/RK/MW</p> <p>There have been two incidents: a hired minibus bumped a gatepost; and in the office a piece of security door fell on member of staff.</p> <p>Working from the Highway/Safe Systems of Work: Temporary mobile works are sometimes difficult. This will be covered in the Operational Reports (Item 10). We are working across 2 highways authorities, and the matter will probably result in additional contractor manpower cost.</p>	

<p>8. Governance &amp; Business</p>	<p>8.1 The revised Good Governance Guide is available at the end of the meeting for members to collect and sign for.</p> <p>8.2 Policy Reviews: Many policies are approaching review dates and some require review, some of which are awaiting a review by ADA. Officers asked the Board how they would like to approach the review of policies.  <b>That the IDB Officers review policies in-house, with legal advice where there are gaps</b>  <b>PROPOSED: John Harris</b>  <b>SECONDED: Sandra Hearne</b>  <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>Officers advised that members of the Parrett Board had suggested extending policy review dates to make them compliant.  <b>That policy review dates are rolled over until policy reviews are completed</b>  <b>Prop: Wendy Griggs</b>  <b>Sec: Sandra Hearne</b>  <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>8.3 Risk Register: we need to show we are reviewing risk adequately to reassure the Boards on the AGAR question on risk. IDS has scored the risks on the register and went through the top 10 with the board and concluded that the risk profile appears stable and well controlled, with an increasing risk identified around partner organisations reduced funding.  <b>Recommend to review and confirm fit for purpose That the risk register management is adequate</b>  <b>PROPOSED: Claire Hunt</b>  <b>SECONDED: Nigel Cole</b>  <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>Officers clarified that as a public body, we review policies in line with legislative change.</p> <p>John Cato asked for copies of draft policies to be emailed to members.</p> <p>8.4 Maize Policy: MW has drafted compensation policy. The advice is that there is contradiction in Sections 14 and 15. The policy will also consider access to viewed rhynes and loss of crop, although there have been no claims for loss of crop historically. It will be a joint boards policy for consistency, and will look at claims case by case and apply an appropriate solution. It is a complicated matter and is still being looked at. The Working Group will reconvene before the next Full Board.  The IDB is obliged to give no less than 7-days notice of entry, which we serve annually in April/May with Drainage rates for maintenance through the summer.</p> <p>Members discussed existing policies in other IDB areas. Officers clarified that in East Anglia, boards pay compensation and have policies in place. We have not previously developed a policy fit for purpose, other than absorbing the cost of repeat activities, not maintaining or asking the landowner to maintain.</p> <p>Members agreed on the need for the policy to be consistent. They also discussed notice of maintenance and weather being a factor.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 02</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 03</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 04</b></p> <p><b>ACTION NSL/20250618-01</b></p>
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	<p>Officers confirmed that we send notice annually within rate demands. Maintenance usually coincides with cropping, but ratepayers know this, and a previous Ombudsman case concluded that this notices is sufficient. The policy will also consider tracking for access and will cover any/all crops. We can advise that there is a policy in the next round of rate demands/notices.</p> <p>7.1 Developing Future Objectives for IDB Water Level Management (Vision): IDS explained that there is no up to date policy statement, and it was previously done over 10 years ago, based on an ADA one. We are now being asked to engage in land management initiatives, so we need a statement around our legal obligations. This will need a sub group, but officers will draft something first.</p>	
9. Finance Report	<p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p>9.1 Quarterly Reconciliation of Bank Statements. All reconciled to end of May.</p> <p>9.2 End-of-Year Financial Reports (Enclosure 5). End of Year (2024/2025) Consortium Financial Report, and NSLIDB accounts. Report taken as read. NSLIDB F&amp;W have scrutinised recommended approval. Consortium management committee met and went through SDBC accounts, asked questions. All were happy, nothing expected to change. Will be formally voted on in July. The Chair confirmed that the members present were happy to recommend.</p> <p>9.3 End of Year (2024/2025) NSLIDB Financial Report. <b>To approve the NSLIDB accounts in Appendix B as recommended at F&amp;W</b> <b>PROPOSED: Sandra Hearne</b> <b>SECONDED: John Cato</b> <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>9.4 Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) F&amp;W recommended to approve <b>To approve the AGAR Statement Appendix B and respond Yes to all questions as recommended by F&amp;W</b> <b>PROPOSED: John Cato</b> <b>SECONDED: Clare Hunt</b> <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>9.5 Accounting Statements (AGAR). Finance &amp; works recommended to accept and approve <b>To approve the AGAR Section 2 Return as recommended by F&amp;W</b> <b>PROPOSED: John Cato</b> <b>SECONDED: Bob Mitchell</b> <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>The reserve status was explained by MH. Reserves are well within the policy, and funding obtained for Crossmans Hatch meant there was no need to use reserves.</p> <p>9.6 Internal Audit Report (Enclosure 6). This was discussed at F&amp;W and covered plans for Policies and the Risk Register.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 05</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 06</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 07</b></p>

	<p>9.7 Drainage Rates update as per Friday 13/06/25: £41,399k outstanding which is less than this time last year. Reminders are being sent in 2 weeks time.</p> <p>John Harris (JH) asked about an article in the ADA Gazette regarding higher land water contributions and wondered if we missing out on EA compensation on water coming from outside the IDB area.</p> <p>IDS confirmed that this has been considered historically. Other IDB areas have pumping up stream. We don't do this or have the associated cost, so it has previously been dismissed.</p> <p>Wendy Griggs (WG) asked if the figures are acceptable for benchmarking. MH confirmed that yes, the finances are in a good position.</p> <p>AOB – HSBC account: The Board has previously discussed signatories for Natwest account and agreed them, however HSBC account wasn't mentioned, and needs the same provision.  <b>That the same 4 members of staff as for the Natwest account and the Chair be signatories for the HSBC account.</b>  <b>Proposed: Claire Hunt</b>  <b>Seconded: Bob Mitchell</b>  <b>All in favour</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked MH.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 08</b></p>
<p>10. Operational &amp; Engineering Reports</p>	<p><b>10.1 Maintenance - Matt Wall (MW)</b></p> <p>Contaminated material has now been removed from Heathgate Rhyne. There was an accumulation on the traveller site which we have removed from the site, but it has been costly. We are hoping a site visit will help improve the situation. Anthony Brinson noted this has always been a problem. IDS advised that next time the material will be returned to their side.</p> <p>We have received an updated map from the EA on proposed main river work, now including what they will not be maintaining, and SRA funded work. MW asked members to please raise areas of concern if noticed.</p> <p>Nigel Cole (NC) mentioned that the Congresbury Yeo has never been maintained from the motorway to the sluice. The river is becoming narrower but is not a flood risk</p> <p>David Crossman (DC) highlighted the red rhyne at the top of the map could be an issue as it takes water off the M5, as well as a section of the River Kenn which takes water out of Nailsea.</p> <p>IDS confirmed we will continue to put pressure on. Additional funding for maintenance of new assets is in the funding review. Webinar to input funding formula for future.</p> <p>Giles Oliver (GO) asked where the EA are not maintaining will they ask riparian owners to do it. IDS confirmed that some board members have received an EA letter asking them to maintain their watercourses (with EA consent).</p> <p>John Harris asked about pieces in the ADA Gazette regarding review of funding and a refocus from maintenance to capital.</p>	

IDS felt this is a positive as there will be more money for flood risk for new build and maintenance on face value, however there is no detail yet.

NC asked about riparian ownership from Tutshill to Motorway where the owner is the EA on one side. It has been previously dredged to the landowners side, is he now responsible? Would the IDB be willing to take on main river maintenance as 20% of the rates are paid to the EA.

IDS noted that this is why main river is the responsibility of the public purse and feels it is withdrawal by stealth. Not enough money so prioritising. Less work would be done by the EA without the precept.

### **10.2 Operations – Rob King (RK)**

RK confirmed that 28 repairs have been completed this term.

A new 4x4 has been purchased for Anthony Brinson in North Somerset. The old one will become a pool vehicle.

Summer penning is in. The EA are holding main river levels higher due to the dry weather. Please contact Rob with any issues with levels.

The DAS position is still vacant. IDS noted this is an important role which needs the knowledge of existing supervisors. He urged members to encourage any suitable candidates. The position needs someone with particular skills.

Sandra Hearne (SH) asked about expensive training and noted that some organisations recoup these costs if a candidate leaves. MH confirmed that we have done this before for trainee posts and recouped as per contract, but this is not in the DAS contract and it is a non-development post.

An unsafe item on a working structure at Kewstoke now has new barriers denoting the end of the plinth.

### **10.3 Engineering – Giles Oliver (GO), Caroline Murray (CM)**

GO showed slides on progress from last board meeting on winter maintenance work.

CM provided an overview of completed and in-progress projects since 2024. Only 3 projects in the programme have not yet started. She then showed slides showing the next year's projects. GO updated on Crossmans Hatch: the Contractor is on site. The IDB asset fund team visited to review other EA works completed and also looked at Crossmans. They were happy with this and suggested future works might be done by the IDB. Access for works on both sides has been completed and we will divert the flow during construction. The tilting weir is ready to go in.

The Chair asked if we are being charged for storage of the weir, and if Board members can inspect the work.

GO confirmed we are paying £200 for storage. PPE and an induction are required to access the construction site.

Anthony Brinson asked about Hurstpool Weir, where the weir is in a poor state.

Giles updated that the design has been finished by Alex from Calm, and is with the EA for sign off then tender.

Nigel Cole (NC) asked whether possible future funding could be used for the refurbishment of Sampsons Sluice.  
GO noted that funding needs to be spent in-year, so it would need to be an oven ready job.  
John Harris (JH) said he has had a contractor on phone saying they are in limbo over the issues on operating from the highway. IDS explained we are in the hands of the highways authorities. We have met with the contractor and his H&S advisor, and we have well developed options waiting for LA's to consider. There are plenty of other works which can be carried out by the contractor. This is a recent development and we are dealing with it.

Wendy Griggs (WG) offered to raise the matter at the council  
MW noted that Somerset have been very pragmatic and they understand the work. North Somerset have been a bit less committal. The contractor is working within fields where he can. MW and WG to discuss.

#### **10.4 Development Control – Virginie Martin (VM)**

VM explained that there were not many updates. She has shared planning applications and consent in her report.

The team are currently busy with consenting on the Banwell Bypass, mainly regarding the embankment, temporary and permanent diversion of rhynes then culverts.

She has been consulted by NS Planning on a small site near Langford where there is a surface water runoff risk. It is over 1k from the board area. VM does not have much concern but wants to know the Boards' feeling about commenting on the planning application. Crookwell and other rhynes are not used to volume. The Chair asked if are we asking for attenuation. VM advised this is up to the LLFA to identify which are the most at-risk areas.

Anthony Brinson (AB) felt that whilst the site is outside the IDB area but comes into it, all 6 viewed rhynes are at risk.

The Chair felt that it outside the Board's competence to make a decision, but that VM to advise volume.

IDS explained that the lead local flood authority will be looking at. There needs to be joined-up thinking and we can add additional comments if our concerns are not considered.

#### **10.5 Environment – Phil Brewin (PB)**

PB asked the Board to take his report as read.

Water level management system/telemetry. Additional funding for peat from Defra has created more work. New system in North Somerset has been delivered, and the focus is on the older system in the southern board areas.

Eel Passes: a grant from Natural England has allowed us to install a dozen passes onto tilting weirs, including two in North Somerset at Kewstoke and Old Yeo. There is national interest and positive response to Board work. We are legally required to look at passage on new structures such as Crossmans Hatch.

Pete Kingcott (PK) asked how eels are getting from the sea into our system as the flap is not closing currently. Will a new door be mitigated to allow for the passage of eels. PB is confident it will have been considered, however he will check and report back.

AB asked if New Bow Sluice on the Old Yeo Rhyne, upstream of the Banwell River will have a pass. Phil will follow up. We need to check our own structures.

PB is confident there will be more funding for peat with a longer timescale, but it will be more competitive so we need to look at suitable structures.

**ACTION  
NSL/20250618-  
02**

	<p>JH noted it was an excellent paper, and that he had seen the eel article in the ADA Gazette</p> <p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies: there is a network of local plans with each areas' potential for a focus on nature. The levels and moors will be included under the Environment Act and we must take note and consider the strategy. There will be a 6-week consultation, PB will be asking for our Environment Committee to develop a response. Alongside this PB would like to reinvigorate our biodiversity action plan and update it, and would like it to sit within operations</p> <p><b>The Board delegate the task of preparing a strategic delivery plan for IDB environmental activities, in the form of an updated Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), to the IDB Environment Committee and that the Committee should be asked to determine budget requirements for plan delivery, scrutinise expenditure and outcomes, and report progress back to the Boards on a regular basis.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed: John Cato</b>  <b>Seconded: John Harris</b>  <b>All in favour.</b></p> <p>PB thanked Richard Westwood, who has stepped down from the Board for his membership of the Environment Committee over the years.</p>	<b>RESOLUTION 09</b>
11. Tour of Inspection	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> August was agreed as the most appropriate date for a Board site inspection.	
12. Any Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JH asked if there was any report on the visit of Rachael Hallos visit. This was led by needs in the area to look at emissions/farming/degradation of peat and changes /agri-environment schemes. Robert Caudwell attended and it was helpful to clarify misinterpretation of his report. The observation was that when water levels are managed as intended is consistent with the needs of peat. It was also identified that the needs of the environment and the economy are consistent with land management. There was also discussion on the proliferation of rushes where not managed. Rachel gained an understanding of the difference between our moors and those in Yorkshire. She was positive about upcoming payments on outcomes, and felt we should stop fighting climate change, and embrace adaptation and resilience.</li> <li>• Was there any Flood and Coast committee update</li> </ul>	
13. Date of Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance and Works Wed 22 October 2025, 2.30pm Bradbury House</li> <li>• Full Board Wed 5 November 2025, 2.30 Kingston Seymour Village Hall</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked members for their attendance.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 16.51</p>	

CHAIR.....DATE .....

**NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS BOARD MINUTES  
DATED 18 JUNE 2025**

**NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS BOARD – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
<b>NSL/20250423 - 02</b>	Paper on amalgamation	IDS
<b>NSL/20250618-01</b>	Copies of draft policies to be shared with board members	MH
<b>NSL/20250618-02</b>	To check IDB structure for eel passage.	PB