

**MINUTES OF THE NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD FINANCE AND WORKS MEETING AT BRADBURY HOUSE 4 JUNE 2025 AT 14:30**

<b>Attendance:</b>			
<b>Elected Members:</b> Mr T Bush (C) Mr J Harris Mr R Mitchell	<b>Appointed Members:</b> Cllr C Hunt Cllr S Hearne	<b>Officers:</b> Mrs M Hammond Mrs K Carleton Mr I Sturdy	<b>Public:</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>			
Mr C Redding	Cllr P Burden James Tonkin		
<b>Non-Attendance</b>			

<b>Agenda Item:</b>		<b>Action:</b>
1. Attendance and Apologies	The meeting started at 15.30 due to motorway delays. Apologies from Peter Burden, Chris Redding, James Tonkin	
2. Items Additional to the Agenda	Tom Letts has passed away recently. To remember at full board meeting.	
3. Declarations of Interest	None	
4. Approval of Minutes	Minutes of the North Somerset Levels F&W Meeting held on 15 January 2025 (Enclosure 1) P1 there was discussion about changing meetings to Thursdays, or to mornings. Officers do check the Council website to avoid clashes, but this is not always possible. It was felt to be more important that Full Board meetings don't clash and the village hall may not be available on Thursdays. To be looked at when scheduling the next year of meetings. P6 Amend minutes to clarify Total Expenditure budget down by 0.79%. <b><i>'That the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting held 15 January 2025'</i></b> <b>Proposed: Sandra Hearne</b> <b>Seconded: John Harris</b> <b>All in favour</b>	<b>ACTION NSL/20250604-01</b>  <b>RESOLUTION 01</b>
5. Matters Arising	<b>NSL/20250115-01</b> Minutes have been corrected <b>NSL/20250115-02</b> Development Control have not found anything on the site identified. It may be a pre-application. Claire Hunt thought this is not going ahead.	
6. Finance Report	6.1 Maggie Hammond (MH) advised that the bank was reconciled to 30/04/25 and all is as expected with no issues.	

6.2 She then summarised her Finance Report (enclosure 2, circulated with Agenda); the Internal Audit Report (shared in meeting); and the end of year report including Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) (Enclosure 3).

6.2.1 Finance Report Income: Bob Mitchell (BM) noted that the SDBC balance sheet net assets and revenue don't balance. MH confirmed the surplus figure is correct. The NSLIDB surplus income comes largely from budgeted work being covered by grants awarded after budgets set (Peat Project and Recovery and Asset Improvement Fund – being used for Crossmans Hatch).

6.2.2 Finance Report Expenditure: It was confirmed that the consortium figures are based on the area/value of each board, not on work carried out. MH confirmed the under-budget amount as £48k. Underspend occurred in areas including maintenance, board schemes, property expenses and board costs. Work on peat projects was time sensitive and accounts for the underspend on board schemes. JH asked about admin costs. MH confirmed this pertained to staff costs recharged to the peat project which must appear in the accounts as a cost first.

**6.2.4 Internal Auditors Report:** MH provided an update on the Audit report supplied at the meeting which showed reasonable assurance of compliance. The areas requiring action were:

- The Risk Register needs to be reviewed regularly. This will be discussed at the June Board meeting, but has not been in the last financial year.
- Policies need updating.

The Risk Register wasn't raised at last years Board Meetings, we will ensure this is now done. Iain Sturdy (IDS) will look at this and identify changes and risks, particularly around funding Defra and EA maintenance. In reality we have been managing risk, but it is not specifically labelled in meetings, other than under H&S incidents which would show a pattern.

Going forward we will review the Risk Register and update at Board Meetings. This will be picked up by the Senior Governance Officer and Nick Stevens.

Policies have not been reviewed within the timeframe specified. This does not mean that they are insufficient or out of date, but that review dates may be unnecessarily short on many. There is a plan to review all and look at dates with a timescale of the end of the financial year, including setting realistic review dates. Nick Stevens is working on them currently but nothing is giving us cause for concern. The situation is the same for all 3 boards as the policies are largely identical. We have been waiting for some model policies from ADA. In the meantime, a working group is being considered with initial reviews being done by officers.

The Code of Conduct is shown as requiring annual review, but it rarely changes within the industry. ADA are reviewing this with regards sanctions.

**6.2.5 AGAR Report:** MH went through the AGAR Governance Statement with members, and detailed the 8 questions explaining how we meet the criteria for each and section 2 of the AGAR with explanations for all figures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

***The North Somerset Levels Finance & Works Committee recommends approval of the accounts as presented to the Full Board.***

**Proposed: Claire Hunt  
Seconded: Sandra Hearne  
All in Favour**

**RESOLUTION  
02**

	<p><b><i>The North Somerset Finance &amp; Works Committee recommends the questions in Section 1 of the AGAR are all answered as Yes to the Full Board subject to the Risk Register being discussed at Full Board.</i></b>  <b>Proposed: Bob Mitchell</b>  <b>Seconded: John Harris</b>  <b>All in Favour</b></p> <p><b><i>The North Somerset Finance &amp; Works Committee recommends approval of Section 2 of the AGAR to the Full Board.</i></b>  <b>Proposed: Claire Hunt</b>  <b>Seconded: Bob Mitchell</b>  <b>All in Favour</b></p> <p>The reserves position was discussed. MH will add percentages to the chart for Full Board to make clearer. Earmarked reserves are unchanged, and will be used in the new financial year for Sampsons Sluice &amp; Crossmans Hatch. As we have not needed to withdraw from reserves due to grant funding, we will no longer need to add as much to reserves each year.</p>	<p><b>RESOLUTION 03</b></p> <p><b>RESOLUTION 04</b></p>
<p>7. Working from the highway</p>	<p>7.1 The Chair has received a call from a contractor who feels that he is leading a push for improved safety rather than the IDB. IDS explained that this is partially correct. It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide evidence of risk assessment as part of the tender process as the contractor is the one delivering the works.</p> <p>We work in accordance with Chapter 8 regulations on temporary mobile works. Following an incident involving a contractor whilst working from a highway, concerns have been raised and investigated. We have put the onus on the contractor to plan and mitigate for any change in risk. We have worked with the contractor and his H&amp;S adviser and have also taken advice from the two local authorities to confirm what is acceptable, and can it be made safer.</p> <p>We are largely compliant, however there will probably be a change to our safe system of work involving preparation and signage as well as some requirement for additional labour. This will not be carried out by IDB staff, it will be for the contractor to provide and may incur additional cost for the Boards.</p> <p>There was discussion about road closures, or the permissive path. Road closures are costly and have long lead times. Temporary mobile works are usually more appropriate and less disruptive, but need to be done appropriately.</p> <p>These changes will take effect for this years maintenance and have been raised at this committee as there is a financial implication which MH will need to take into account at budget setting.</p>	
<p>8. EA Main River Maintenance Programme</p>	<p>IDS updated the board to advise he has received new maps from the EA which will also be on their website showing what will be maintained. What we actually need is to see is what won't be maintained early enough in financial year to see what the impact will be for the IDB. There may be a call for us to carry out works, but we need to consider finance and resources.</p>	
<p>10. Any Other Business</p>	<p>The Chair raised the matter of a tour of inspection. There was consensus to pursue this for the NSLIDB. Discussions suggested telemetry sites, Crossmans Hatch, Hutton Moor/Haywood, a peat site, a site with work in progress, and possibly Banwell Bypass. The Committee are happy to put</p>	

	<p>this to board. It was felt that it needs to be in the summer, and will be good for morale/education. IDS/KC to find suggested dates before board meeting.</p>	<p><b>ACTION NSL/20250604 -02</b></p>
<p>11. Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>Full Board – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 14.30, Kingston Seymour Village Hall Finance &amp; Works Committee - Wednesday 22 October 2025 at 14.30, Bradbury House, Highbridge Sandra Hearne gave her apologies for this meeting in advance JH extended a vote of thanks to Maggie, the Chair agreed and stated that her work is appreciated by the board. The meeting closed at 16.51</p>	

Annex:

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

CHAIRMAN.....DATE .....

NSLIDB F&W MEETING – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
<b>NSL/20250604-01</b>	To check NS Council meeting dates and KSVH availability when planning next year's meetings	<b>KC</b>