

**Minutes of the SWADA Meeting held at Oak Tree Arena, Bristol Road, Highbridge  
at 10.30am on Wednesday 18 June 2014 Chairman: AED Bradford**

Introduction by JBH Watkis, Branch Secretary: delegates were advised that this meeting was being held in June due to the incorporation of ADA. Branch Constitution will be introduced, which will be put to the Board membership for approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held in December 2014. Wales's reformation has left Lower Severn without Branch affiliation, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

**1. Attendance and Apologies:** The Chairman welcomed Dr J Venables, Dr Rachel Burden, M Buckle and A Lovell to the meeting.

**2. Chairman's Introduction:** A Bradford (TB) welcomed delegates from ADA, the Environment Agency, North Somerset Levels and Lower Severn Drainage Boards. The Chairman's report included the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- 2013/14 floods: depth and duration
- Formation of Somerset Rivers Board(SRB); working together in an harmonious way for a positive outcome
- Dredging: 6 teams are currently working well on the initial dredging sites
- thanked Dr J Venables and ADA for the assistance and advice received towards the formation of a SRB

**3. Minutes of the meeting held 04 December 2013 (appended):** The minutes having been previously circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.

**4. Matters Arising:** none

**5. Branch membership: Lower Severn (2005) IDB -** G Littleton, Chairman LSIDB addressed the meeting: Wales IDB has become part of Natural Resources Wales; therefore LSIDB requested membership of SWADA. After discussion it was agreed that membership was a logical progression.

**P Maltby proposed, J Fear seconded 'that Lower Severn (2005) IDB becomes a member of the South Western branch of the Association of Drainage Authorities.'** All in favour **RESOLUTION 1**

T Bradford welcomed delegates from LSIDB to SWADA as members.

It was agreed that the annual subscription would be apportioned for 2014 to bring the payment into line with SWADA 2015.

**6. Interim Financial Report:** B Watkis (BHW) advised that the current bank balance is £7885, with the Secretary Honorarium to be deducted, which other than routine expenses is the only expenditure at this time. BHW further advised that subscriptions are being received favourably.

**6a. Secretary's Report:** B Watkis read the secretary's report, which was accepted by members present. After discussion it was agreed that preferred SWADA meeting dates would be April and November.

**7. Reports from SWADA Representatives on ADA Board of Directors and any other Bodies on which SWADA has been represented:** ADA Executive – a meeting was held in March 2014 to wind down the Executive Committee, which was followed by a meeting to set up the ADA Incorporation. The next scheduled meeting of the Incorporation will be 15 July 2014.

**8. Recent flood and aftermath:** N Stevens, Clerk and CEO to the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium advised that the flooding had been extensive and long lasting; local people using social media were able to organise and co-ordinate evacuation and assistance with setting up a voluntary group. The autumn is expected to be dry however much land is still wet.

A Lovell, WRFCC Chairman advised that the 20 year Flood Action Plan was written to represent the views of local people.

Dr J Venables, CEO ADA advised that Owen Paterson, Secretary of State is keen for local action, and the adoption of a local solution. However, if a challenge was made on a Ministerial decision, the Medway letter could be used as guidance as it states "the areas which may be brought within the limits of drainage districts are those which will derive benefit or avoid danger as the result of drainage operations".

**9. Information/Comments from the Environment Agency:** The Chairman introduced Dr Rachel Burden, responsible for delivery of Flood Action Plan Work Stream 1, Dredging and River maintenance. An address was given to the meeting which included the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- 8km dredging Rivers Parrett and Tone underway
- 6 gangs operational on dredging: due to be completed 31 October 2014

- Assess repairs (flood banks, spillways, pumping station repairs) to be completed by 31 October 2014
- Designing culverts for A372, Berewall scheme for delivery 2014
- Project team being set up for Sowy/Kings Sedgemoor system
- Sowy to be used as flood alleviation, ensuring no detriment to local properties and businesses
- Sowy project, if funded, to commence summer 2015
- 10 dredging locations have been identified, to be modelled by 31 October 2014
- Operational document for multi-agency use, including operation of Sowy and pumps at Dunball
- Looking to the future – a temporary suite of pumps is available to the Agency when necessary
- Flow gauges will be installed, post dredging, to monitor conveyance of water
- For clarification: definition of dredging is the removal of accumulated material in a channel

J Fear, Axe Brue IDB Chairman, advised that the River Brue dredging pilot is to be undertaken at Decoy Rhyne. This project is a national pilot, for landowners to complete works on main watercourses, the cost of which the Agency cannot justify.

**10. Philip Brewin, Ecologist for the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium:** P Brewin (PAB) advised that the public came together after the winter floods of 2012, and are working well and making an impact during the floods of 2013/14. The 20 year Flood Action Plan addresses the Board's Water Level Management Plan (WLMP). The WLMP highlights environmental constraints regarding dredging.

**11. Address by Jean Venables, Chief Executive Association of Drainage Authorities:** J Venables (JV) provided a briefing of the transition of ADA from a committee to incorporation, advising that the new Board with fewer members will meet in July 2014.

- ADA is encouraging the Agency not to undertake repair works out of maintenance budgets; EFRA committee drew attention to this in its latest report.
- Defra is withdrawing responsibility of land drainage from the Agency, without it being transferred; therefore the IDB will need to look after its assets.
- Public Sector Cooperation Agreements: a meeting will be held in the near future with the Agency and IDBs with the intention of IDBs undertaking works on behalf of the Agency; emergency works can be undertaken with a PSCA.
- The Secretary of State is keen for local delivery of local services; however funding is to be raised locally for maintenance.

**12. Question & Answer session:** no questions had been received prior to the meeting.

**13. Any Other Business:** Congratulations were expressed to T Bradford and J Venables for their appearance at the recent EFRA committee, where they answered questions relating to the Somerset floods.

**14. Date and venue of next meeting:** ADA Conference, 12 November 2014, London  
SWADA, 10 December 2014, Oaktree Arena

The Chairman thanked all attendees for their attendance and closed the meeting at 13.10pm.

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Chairman

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Date