

1. **Attendance and Apologies:** as recorded in the attendance book.
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3. **Chairman's Introduction:** The Chairman addressed the meeting:
 - All delegates were welcomed including H Cator, Lower Severn IDB Engineers J Thomas and J Drewett, J Rowlands, EA and new IDB appointed members Cllr L Corke and Cllr W Human.
 - Much work has taken place in Somerset over the last two years, in particular the River Parrett dredging, which has proven beneficial.
 - We need a strategy to allow works to take place on main rivers, to simplify the permissions, regulations and assessments.
 - SRA funding remains a key issue: For 2016-17 the government gave district/county council permission to raise council tax by 1.25%, allowing councils to raise £2.7m to continue SRA works for another year, however the SRA continues to lobby to become a precepting body; the funding mechanism should not affect works undertaken by IDB's.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2015:** Item 10 first line should be 2026, not 2016. With this one amendment the minutes previously circulated were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting held.
5. **Matters Arising:** none
6. **Secretary's Report:** Brian Watkis (BW) advised that:
 - Correspondence had been received from ADA, requesting information and reports to be included in the ADA Gazette
 - ADA news-stream is available online and key updates are now available on Twitter
 - ADA's new Vice Chairman has been appointed: Mr Robert Cauldwell.
 - Lack of SWADA visits discussed, and subject to approval of respective boards, a visit to LSIDB to be arranged.
 - November meeting to be significant as the election for Chairman for the forthcoming term will take place.
7. **Reports from SWADA representatives:** TB: welcomed suggestions regarding future meetings and visits.

Last ADA meeting held 18 March 2016 with the following key points:

 - Defra announced an additional £700m on flood defence until 2021 with an additional £4m per year on maintenance
 - Cumbria are looking to form new IDBs as well as two new IDBs proposed for the South-East
 - EA gave update on Cumbria partnership.

Q: Concern was expressed for new IDBs being set up, possibly approaching matters in a different way – how much input will existing boards have on how new IDBs will work?

A: Members were advised that the IDB's being set up will follow the same mechanism as existing Boards. It is understood that local knowledge is fundamental and effective to ensure funding is used appropriately, and stresses the need to give advice to new Boards under close collaboration.
8. **Invited speakers:**

Lower Severn (2005) IDB – James Thomas and James Drewett.

The Engineers gave a presentation with the following points of note (this list is not exhaustive):

 - Total Board area – 20,000 hectares
 - Includes several main rivers; Severn, Little Avon, Frome and Leven
 - Total of 550 km of maintained watercourse
 - Make up of Board - 2 engineers, 1 works supervisor, 7 machine operators and 1 fitter
 - Maintain 480 km of watercourse on an annual basis
 - Also maintain balancing attenuation ponds on a recharged basis or accumulative sum, usually as a result of large scale industrial or residential development
 - During summer months, 80 km of flail-mowing carried out, followed by excavators with weed-cutting buckets. Tree cutting undertaken during winter months using hydraulic tree sheers on excavators
 - De-silting and re-profiling work undertaken in the winter months, covering approx. 60 km per year

- Fleet includes specialised long-reach machinery with a 7 year replacement programme for excavators/tractors and 6 years for 4x4 flail mowers. Also 3 tracked excavators and 3 evergreen spearhead machines – 3 times faster than tractor and flail, designed to specification
- Six pumping stations within the district
- Eel regulations taken into account: Example of Elmore catchment. Carrying out modelling exercise to find ways of draining areas by gravity rather than pumping. System needs to be made eel-friendly, by replacing old pumps with 90 degree bends. Timescale provided by EA is 2021, however extension agreed to 2026. Approx. cost £2.5m. Exemption certificate will be required from EA. It is intended to build the first pumping station during the current financial year; Drainage rates have been increased accordingly.

TB thanked the engineers for their insightful presentation and invited questions:

Q: Funding: what grant funding is available from Defra, Board income and turnover?

A: total income is £1.2-3m per year before the rate was increased. It is not anticipated that future Defra grant funding will be forthcoming. Most of the pumping stations operated do not protect many properties, however research is being carried out into EU funding as one of the pumping stations has a large eel habitat.

A: The Board decided to raise the Drainage rate by 1p in the £ in order to raise sufficient funds.

Q: With a large geographical area, what office staff do you have?

A: 2 Engineers, 2 full time admin staff and 1 part-time admin staff member. Planning and Development Control is undertaken by the Engineers.

Q: How many water control structures do you operate and what is the level of SSSI?

A: There is one water control structure and 60 hectares of SSSI/RAMSAR.

Q: What percentage of income is special levy?

A: 92 %

SRA - Nick Stevens

An update was provided with the following points of note (this list is not exhaustive):

- MOU - using locally-derived funds: approx. £2.78 million for this year - £2.4m from SCC, £40k from districts, £20k from IDBs and £1.3k carry over from last year
- Also within control of SRA is LEP funding, overall £8-9m programme of works next year: Works to include Sowy/KSD arrangements, water-course-based budget on dredging, maintenance dredging, Parrett wall, tree work, prevention of flooding of roads etc. Also 'slow the flow' and 'hills to levels' projects, which are outside the main funding stream due to postcode lottery and other funding
- Board leadership on the preparation of a dredging strategy on the tidal lengths of the Parrett and Tone and also downstream reaches of Brue. HR Wallingford assisting investigations and development of strategy; expected draft June 2016
- Challenge to SRA is the issue of making the organisation a permanent body
- Land owner area charge outside of IDB will not be pursued

Members were advised that the Board representatives are P Maltby, J Fear, T Bradford and R Adlam, all of whom have spent much time and effort on SRA matters.

9. Address by Henry Cator, Chairman, Association of Drainage Authorities (this list is not exhaustive):

- Depth of knowledge held by Board members and officers has been demonstrated, questions asked and informative answers shows the depth of knowledge and professionalism provided by the Boards
- Challenges faced by the Boards and the SRA are being worked through: the message from ADA is that partnership, collaboration and working together are the ways forward
- Government accepts that IDBs do a very good job on the ground, however a lesson we can learn is communication, how we communicate what we do and work with others to achieve results
- Eel regulations are just one of the many challenges for IDBs; knowledge sharing is key
- Flood Ex provides an opportunity to raise funds for ADA; members were encouraged to attend
- ADA is working with parliament to express the importance of what ADA and IDBs do
- Boards need to encourage young people to become actively involved; North Level IDB is working with local schools to communicate the work of the Board
- Boards need to express the importance of following the whole watercourse rather than focussing on residential areas.
- Trust is fundamental in any partnership and working collaboration.

TB thanked H Cator for his address.

J Rowlands, EA provided a brief update on phase 2 dredging:

- Machinery is on site and works will commence in the near future
- Works will be land and water based, causing as little disruption as possible
- Removal of silt is necessary and communities will be involved
- A drop-in session will be held on Wednesday 4 May 2016, 3.30 pm – 6.30 pm at Moorland Village Hall
- Chedzoy Flap – this work is intended to commence during May 2016
- Beer wall control structures for RAMSARs to be put in place.

10. Any Other Business: None

11. Date of next meetings: Wednesday 23 November 2016, Oaktree Arena, 10.30am.
Wednesday 27 April 2017, Oaktree Arena, 10.30am.

The Chairman thanked Brian Watkis and Carrie-Anne Porter for their support, James Thomas, James Drewett and Graham Littleton for their presentation, Henry Cator for communicating the threat of flooding and flood risk management.

The Chairman expressed the need for comments from the IDB to take forward to ensure a representation of Somerset.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, especially appointed members, before closing the meeting at 12.50 hrs.

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Chairman

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Date