

Minutes of Braunton Marsh Drainage Board Meeting held on Thursday, 9 January 2025 in the Committee Room of Braunton Parish Council Offices, on the rising of the Annual General Meeting.

Chaired by: Mrs J Chesters		Clerked by: Mrs Sue Squire	
Present: Mr J Ashton Mrs J Chesters Mr D Chugg Mr H Dart Mr D Hartnoll Mr J Hartnoll Mr W Hartnoll		Agenda: - Welcome to Board Members who have been elected or co-opted Apologies Declarations of Interest Finance Matters Arising Review & Compliance of documents in place Maintenance Correspondence Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey 2024 White Cross Offshore Wind Farm Items to note Items raised at Chairman’s discretion Date of next meeting	
			Action:
1.	Welcome to Board Members who have been elected or co-opted, namely: Elected: Mr D Chugg, Mr H Dart, Mr D Hartnoll. Co-opted: Mr J Ashton, Mr P Ashton, Mrs J Chesters, Mr J Hartnoll, Mr W Hartnoll, Mr R Paelinck. Mr R Berry had also been co-opted at the Annual General Meeting but was not present. He had sent his apologies for the Annual General Meeting.		
2.	Apologies. District Councillors G Bell, S Maddocks and Mrs L Spear, Mr J Hartnoll.		
3.	Declarations of Interest. None.		
4.	Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 12 September 2024. Approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed by Mr D Hartnoll. Seconded by Mr J Ashton and unanimously agreed.		
5.	Finance.		
	Balances: Lloyds Bank Treasurers Account as at 9 January 2025: £106,626.72 Marsh Owners Levy Rate Invoices paid to date: £2,354.32 Marsh Owners Levy Rate Invoices outstanding: £1,465.74		
5.1	The following payments were approved and authorised: Proposed by Mrs Chesters. Seconded by Mr Chugg and unanimously agreed.		Clerk to make payments
	Mrs S Squire	Two monthly salary & expenses November 2024 (no meeting held) and January 2025	
		Redacted under Data Protection	

	HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE £312.40 for November 2024 and January 2025	£250.00	Clerk to prepare and send invoice to Braunton Marsh Inspectors for half of this amount
	Braunton Parish Council	Hire of room for meeting on 9/1/25	£17.00	
	Mr M Tucker	Deal with leak in drain, remove brambles, spraying Parrots Feather £696.00 (VAT is £116.00) Cleaning drains in November 2024. £5,569.20 (VAT is £928.20)	£6,265.20	
	Resourceful Bookkeeping	Pay documents for November 2024 £3.25 Pay documents for January 2025 £3.25	£6.50	
	Westpest Brothers	Treatment of wasps nest and a return visit to remove nest	£95.00	
	P K F Littlejohn LLP	Fee for 2023/24 external audit	£252.00	
	ADA	2025 Membership Subscription £135.60 of this amount is reclaimable VAT but this cannot be reclaimed until February 2025 as the invoice is dated 1/1/25. HMRC accepts claims for full months, i.e. 1/1/25 to 31/1/25.	£813.60	
5.2	To set the 2025/26 Marsh Levy Rate. Proposed by Mr Chugg that the Rate should remain unchanged at 5.5p in the pound. Seconded by Mr D Hartnoll and unanimously agreed.			Clerk to advise NDC and produce Section 48 Notice
5.3	To set the 2025/26 Budget. Part of this process involved a review of the Clerk's salary who left the room while this was discussed under Part II Confidential, due to it being a personnel matter. Proposed by Mr Chugg to approve and agree the Budget. Seconded by Mr P Ashton and unanimously agreed.			
5.4	Identification of Marshes. There has been no further progress with this, due to all avenues investigated by the Clerk resulting in no information being obtained. Mr D Hartnoll had made a start in identifying Marshes on a map and would continue to update it.			DH
5.5	North Devon Council Levy Rate – 2nd tranche. It was noted that the sum of £14,343.60 was credited to the Board's Treasurers Account on 30/9/24.			
5.6	IDB1 Form. The deadline date for completion is 28/2/25. The form has more questions than previously and the Clerk gave details.			
5.7	VAT Reclaim. It was noted that the sum of £711.00 in respect of the period 1/8/24 to 31/8/24 has been credited to the Board's Treasurers Account. It was further noted that the sum of £1,163.28 for the period 1/9/24 to 30/11/24 has been reclaimed and is expected to be received in January 2025.			
5.8	Clerk's Salary. The Chairman had not been able to carry out research / calculations as a result of the internal auditor's comments.			Next Agenda
6.	Matters Arising.			
6.1	Water Level Management Plan. This was now in place.			To be sent to new Members.
6.2	Mr Faulkner's Marsh. Mr Chugg advised he had not met the owner on site. The Clerk to advise Mr Faulkner that the pipe is going to be removed.			Clerk

6.3	Enforcement issues on the Marsh. District Councillors were not present to give the up to date details, although it was not that North Devon Council were taking enforcement action on Mr Faulkner in respect of an alleged building for which a retrospective planning application had been received, and one shed on his Marsh had been demolished. It was noted that there was dumped material on Mr K Best's Marsh.	
7.	Review and Compliance of documents in place. To review the following. Members have been circulated with the details ahead of the meeting for studying. District Councillor Bell had made the following points on the Biodiversity document: ▪ The section on EU Exit and ELMS appears to be out of date now. It is referring to plans for 2021. ▪ The Invasive species information is very interesting, Especially the minks which I assume will impact the water vole introduction? Do we have any way to monitor the changing levels of invasive species across the area. ▪ Plant monitoring. With so many unique examples of plant life, do we have any way to monitor their numbers as is done with the various mammals and bird species? ▪ Standing Orders ▪ Financial Regulations ▪ Anti Bribery ▪ Anti Fraud and Corruption ▪ Employees Code of Conduct ▪ Members Code of Conduct ▪ Risk Management Strategy ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Biodiversity Action Plan To consider a Schedule of Delegation. When researching this document, it was found that a Schedule of Reserved Matters should be in place. To consider a Publication Scheme Guidance document. To consider a Policy Statement on Flood Protection and Water Level Management. Proposed by Mr D Hartnoll to adopt all of the above documents. Seconded by Mr J Ashton and unanimously agreed.	The Clerk to put these questions to the North Devon Biosphere Clerk to update documents
8.	Maintenance. 8.1 Levelling Devices for the Sluices. The Board's contractor, Mr M Tucker was in the process of manufacturing these and his invoice was expected by the March meeting. 8.2 To discuss any other work required. None. 8.3. The Board was advised that Mr Dyer had informed that his field was not draining well. Mr Chugg had spoken to Mr M Tucker who will clean it in the Summer. 8.4 Mr Paelinck asked about the responsibility of banks, waterways and dykes. This to be addressed on a site visit of the Marsh. 8.5 Mr M Tucker had advised that is cannot clean the drains of the Christie Estate Marsh because of a fence that has recently been erected. The Clerk to advise Christie Estate that because of the fence, the machine cannot be maneuvered to get between the fence and the drain.	DH & RP to liaise Clerk

9.	Correspondence.	
9.1	North Devon Council Levy. It was noted that the Clerk had emailed a letter to the District Councillors for passing to the relevant Department regarding the amount of the Levy, as suggested by ADA. No District Councillors were present to give feedback.	
9.2	ADA – article in The Guardian. It was noted that the Clerk responded on behalf of the Board, due to a quick response being required, as to the next steps to be taken by ADA.	
9.3	ADA. Email – Ratings SI meeting with VOA and Defra, circulated to Board Members on 4/10/24. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.4	ADA. Email – Environment Agency FCERM Stakeholder update – September 2024, circulated to Board Members on 4/10/24. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.5	ADA. Email advising the date of the AGM as being 3 December 2024 by Microsoft Teams. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.6	Andrew St Joseph. The Clerk received a telephone call from this person regarding breaches in banks and provided pictures of what could be achieved.	
9.7	It was noted that the SWADA AGM was held on 27/11/24.	
9.8	Environment Agency. Notice of public consultation on drought management in England running from 8/11/24 until 10/1/25. <i>Noted.</i> 'Drought: how it is managed in England' is the updated version of the 'National Drought Response Framework' (available on GOV.UK) released in 2017. It describes how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects of drought on people, business and the environment. Each of the Environment Agency's 14 operational areas also produce their own area drought plans, which serve as operational guidelines for their response to drought. 'Drought: how it is managed in England' supports the area drought plans by providing a strategic overview of how the Environment Agency manages a drought to minimise impacts, and provides information for our staff, government departments and stakeholders to use in planning for and managing drought. The consultation is hosted on Citizen Space, the Environment Agency's online consultation hub: https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/drought-how-it-is-managed-in-england/	
9.9	ADA Flood and Water Conference. Tuesday, 25/11/25 at 1 Great George Street, Westminster, London. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.10	ADA. IDB Fund Tranche 2B announcement. This is for capital projects only and closes on 31/1/25. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.11	ADA. Environment Day, 5/2/25 at Peterborough. <i>Noted.</i>	
9.12	ADA. Environmental Audit Committee – New Inquiry: Flood Resilience in England. Call for evidence with a deadline of 13/1/25: <i>Noted.</i> - To what extent are current flood resilience assets and interventions fit-for-purpose and what are the strengths and weaknesses? - To what extent are current metrics for monitoring the effectiveness of flood resilience fit for purpose, and what improvements could make them more effective? - How effectively and how frequently do flood risk management authorities work together to tackle flooding issues and do they have sufficient resources and skills available to carry out their work?	

	- Is there a backlog in maintenance of existing flooding adaptation/resilience assets and in identifying where new ones could be introduced?	
9.13	ADA. Waste Exemption Reform and New Charges. <i>Noted.</i> This applies to IDBs where dredged material from waterways is deposited on the banks for screening and removal of water. The EA proposes to bring in new charges for this activity as follows: It is proposed that waste exemptions will be subject to both a new 'registration charge' of £56 to register one or more exemptions, and a further 'compliance charge' per exemption. The compliance charge is split into bands based on the EA's assessment of the risk of the activity. Band 1 exemptions are considered highest risk, whilst band 3 lowest risk. There are some existing exemptions that will be transitioning into waste permits too (classed as 'upper band'). Those in each band will be subject to different inspection and assessment: • All band 1 waste exemptions assessed within the 3-year registration period • 50% of band 2 waste exemptions assessed within the 3-year registration period • Band 3 compliance assessed through targeted campaigns and desk-based assessments • All upper band compliance waste exemptions (T8, T9, U16) assessed annually Below are the proposed compliance charges for an exemption in each band: • Band 1: £420 • Band 2: £212 • Band 3: £30 • Upper band: £1,236 For awareness the D1 exemption will be in Band 2. Where multiple exemptions are taken the EA proposes to have a reduced rate for each additional exemption in bands 1, 2, and the upper band, as follows: • Additional band 1 or 2 compliance charge: £76 • Additional upper band compliance charge: £227 For farmers there will be a 'common on-farm' compliance charge that packages a range of exemptions for on-farm activities. The EA has proposed a 'common on-farm compliance charge' of £88. If the total cost of compliance charges for waste exemptions to be registered is lower than the 'common on-farm' compliance charge, the lower of these total charges would apply. ADAs initial reading of this is that the 'common on-farm compliance charges' will not be available for IDB activities. The consultation closes on 20 January 2025. ADA would welcome members' views on the impacts on these new charges on their flood and water level management activities and encourage you to respond. ADA had not previously been notified by the EA regarding the consultation and is concerned that no assessment of affordability to smaller public authorities has been considered nor the implications for risk management authorities.	
9.14	ADA. Local Audit Reform Consultation, running until 29/1/25. <i>Noted.</i> Access to the MHCLG consultation is: Local audit reform: a strategy for overhauling the local audit system in England - GOV.UK	

9.15	ADA. There is a consultation on Local Government Funding reform which closes on 12 February 2025. Para 2.3.20 mentions flood defence, land drainage and coastal protection and invites views on the merits of a bespoke formula. <i>Noted.</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-funding-reform-objectives-and-principles	
9.16	ADA. A consultation on Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, which closes 26 February 2025. <i>Noted.</i> https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england Whilst this does not cover IDBs currently (it does include Parish Councils etc). We will use the consultation to raise questions of its application to IDBs, and/or whether there should be alternative mechanisms to strengthen IDB standards and to find a suitable conduct framework for them.	
10.	Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey 2024. The Clerk received a form for completion where the deadline was 4/10/24. This was done and a copy of the form circulated to Board Members for information.	
11.	White Cross Offshore Wind Farm. North Devon Council required more information by 1/2/25.	
12.	Items to note. The Clerk will be on leave from 20/2/25 to 3/3/25 inclusive.	
13.	Items raised at the Chairman’s discretion. A Board Members’ meal was discussed and it was left that Mrs Chesters would make more enquiries.	JC
14.	Date of next Meeting: Thursday, 13/3/2025 at 7.30pm in Braunton Parish Council Committee Room. The meeting ended at 9.48pm.	
Summary of Decisions: ➤ Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 12 September 2024 ➤ Payments ➤ The Marsh Levy rate to remain unaltered at 5.5p in the pound ➤ The 2025/26 Budget ➤ Policies and Compliance documents		
These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.		
Signed: Chair of Braunton Marsh Drainage Board.		Date: