

Minutes of Braunton Marsh Drainage Board Meeting held on Thursday, 11 September 2025 in the Committee Room of Braunton Parish Council at 7.30pm.

Chaired by: Mrs J Chesters		Clerked by: Mrs S Squire
Present: P Ashton R Berry Mrs J Chesters D Chugg H Dart from Minute No. 4 W Hartnoll R Paelinck		Agenda: - Apologies Declarations of Interest Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2025 Talk by a Representative of Love Braunton regarding the Whitecross Wind Farm Finance Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2025 Maintenance Correspondence Items to note Items raised at the Chairman's discretion Date and time of next meeting
		Action:
1.	Apologies. Mr J Ashton, Mr D Hartnoll, District Councillor S Maddocks.	
2.	Declarations of Interest. None.	
3.	Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2025. Approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed by Mr D Chugg. Seconded by Mr W Hartnoll and unanimously agreed.	
4.	A representative from Love Braunton had been due to address the meeting regarding the Whitecross Wind Farm and in particular, the hydrology of the area which could impact the Marsh but because of other commitments, it was not possible for them to attend. The Clerk to advise the representative that the Board is waiting to hear from the Environment Agency (EA) and it is not pertinent to attend a meeting until the matter of a Hydrology Report has been discussed. The Chairman explained that the White Cross Wind Farm had been granted planning permission without all of the relevant documents being received. The Chairman had been in touch with the EA regarding a Hydrology Report and had ascertain that such a document has not been produced. She enquired the cost of producing such a document with the EA and if they would contribute towards it. She advised the EA that a site meeting is required and that the Drainage Board would be prepared to pay for the partial cost of the Report. To be an item on the November Agenda when it was hoped that details of the cost would be known.	Clerk November Agenda
5.	Finance.	
5.1	Balances: Lloyds Bank Community Account as at 11 September 2025: £103,972.94	

5.2	To authorize the following payments: Proposed by Mr P Ashton. Seconded by Mr D Chugg and unanimously agreed. <table border="1" data-bbox="231 286 1323 633"> <tr> <td>Mrs S Squire</td><td>Two monthly salary & expenses</td><td>Redacted under Data Protection</td></tr> <tr> <td>HM Revenue & Customs</td><td>PAYE</td><td>£131.20</td></tr> <tr> <td>Branton Parish Council</td><td>Hire of room for meeting on 11/9/25</td><td>£17.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Resourceful Bookkeeping</td><td>Pay documents for September 2025</td><td>£3.25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lloyds Bank</td><td>Service Charge. 1/8/25. 29/8/25.</td><td>£4.25 £4.25</td></tr> </table>	Mrs S Squire	Two monthly salary & expenses	Redacted under Data Protection	HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE	£131.20	Branton Parish Council	Hire of room for meeting on 11/9/25	£17.00	Resourceful Bookkeeping	Pay documents for September 2025	£3.25	Lloyds Bank	Service Charge. 1/8/25. 29/8/25.	£4.25 £4.25	Clerk to make the payments by BACS
Mrs S Squire	Two monthly salary & expenses	Redacted under Data Protection															
HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE	£131.20															
Branton Parish Council	Hire of room for meeting on 11/9/25	£17.00															
Resourceful Bookkeeping	Pay documents for September 2025	£3.25															
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge. 1/8/25. 29/8/25.	£4.25 £4.25															
5.3	VAT Reclaim. It was noted that the sum of £1,787.20 was reclaimed for the period 1/6/25 to 30/6/25 and credited to the Community Account on 23/7/25 and the sum of £190.06 from 1/3/25 to 31/5/25 on 24/7/25, making a total received of £1,977.26 bringing the VAT to be reclaimed up to date as at the end of July.																
5.4	2025/26 Levy Rate Invoices. These have been sent to Marsh owners and a steady rate of payments is being received. The total amount to be received for 2025/26 is £2,749.40. There are arrears of £107.53. The Clerk is actively chasing this. The amount received to date is £727.28. The Clerk is no longer using a paper method to record the details on a spreadsheet which will be reflected in the information provided on the IDB1 form. This is the preferred way of keeping the information.																
6.	Matters Arising from the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2025.																
6.1	Mr Chugg advised that the tilting weirs were working properly after a slight adjustment. It had been noted that weed which has floated along the drains tends to get stuck on the weirs.																
6.1	Enforcement issues on the Marsh. Email from the Enforcement Officer on 2/9/25 advised: The Planning Officer has made a decision and confirmed that the Department will proceed with a formal Notice, this will be for the unauthorised material change of use of land to a storage use and for the unauthorised construction of a building with associated extension, generator store, block wall and solar panels on the land for storage purposes and laying of a hardstanding. I need to obtain authorisation to issue the Notice and then draft the papers which I hope to do within the next week or so. I will email again once I have issued the Notice and will set out the relevant timescales involved for compliance.	Clerk to check the position ahead of the November meeting.															
6.2	The Chairman to report on her conversation with Mr H Dart regarding a Members' Barbecue. This would not go ahead. Instead, a Festive lunch at the Imperial Hotel on 28/11/25 was suggested.	Clerk to obtain menu and circulate to Members.															

6.3	Abstraction of Water. Mrs Chesters report on her conversation with the Environment Agency regarding the details of the Abstraction Licence. A Grid Reference was required which was provided and as a result, a visit had been made with a return visit planned.	
6.4.	Clerk's Actions, not mentioned elsewhere on the Agenda: ❖ Made payments ❖ Responded to North Devon Council in respect of the planning application ❖ Contacted ADA regarding the correct details for Members to receive the publication. ADA has confirmed that their records have been updated. ❖ Updated Policies that had been reviewed and adopted ❖ Has sent the link regarding the XLinks Morocco Project, not now going ahead, to Members	
7.	Maintenance. Mr Chugg advised that the area around the fence on the road side of the main sluice is overgrown and requires cutting back. He suggested asking Mr Chris Wallis to do this and there were no objections. Mr Paelinck advised that it had been necessary to replace the sluice gate on his Marsh and a steel flap is now in place.	DC
8.	Correspondence.	
8.1	North Devon Council. Pre-App Enquiry – ENQ/0524/2025 – RMB Chivenor, EX31 4AZ. The deadline date for the Board's response was 18/8/25. Board Members were circulated with details on 4/8/25. To ratify the response given, which was as follows: The response from the Board is 'no comment'. Proposed by Mr Chugg. Seconded by Mr Berry and unanimously agreed.	
8.2	North Devon Council. Planning Application Consultation. 80657 – Infill extension between garage and dwelling at 9 Tarka Way, Braunton, EX33 2FG. The deadline date for the Board's response was 29/8/25. Board Members were circulated with the details on 18/8/25. To ratify the response given, which was as follows: Braunton Marsh Drainage Board has no comments to make on this application. Proposed by Mr Paelinck. Seconded by Mr Ashton and unanimously agreed.	
8.3	North Devon Council. Planning Application Consultation. 80545 – Erection of dwellings (fallback position to 76973 and 77983) to include air source heat pump, pond, solar arrays and other associated works at LPG Storage Yard, Sandy Lane, Braunton, EX33 2NU. The deadline date for the Board's response was 2/9/25. Board Members were circulated with the details on 18/8/25. To ratify the response given, which was as follows: Braunton Marsh Drainage Board has no comments to make on this application.	

	Proposed by Mr Chugg. Seconded by Mr Paelinck and unanimously agreed.	
8.4	North Devon Council. Planning Application Consultation. 80618 – Change of use from live/work property to full residential use at Grafton House, Saunton Road, Braunton, EX33 1HG. The deadline date for the Board's response was 1/9/25. Board Members were circulated with the details on 18/8/25. To ratify the response given, which was as follows: Braunton Marsh Drainage Board has no comments to make on this application. Proposed by Mr Chugg. Seconded by Mr Berry and unanimously agreed.	
8.5	North Devon Council. Planning Application Consultation. 80681 – Application for permission in principle for the development of 9 dwellings for social / local connection rental purposes at Broadlands Farm, Saunton Road, Braunton, EX33 1HG. The deadline date for the Board's response is 17/9/25. It was noted that the land belongs to a Member of the Board who was not present at the meeting. Proposed by Mr Dart to respond: Due to the location of the proposed development, Braunton Marsh Board Members understand that the development is to be on mains drainage and this would therefore not affect the Braunton Marsh drains. Seconded by Mr Berry and agreed. Mrs Chesters abstained from voting.	Clerk to submit response to North Devon Council
8.6	The following was received the day before the meeting and circulated to Board Members: North Devon Council. Planning Application Consultation. ENQ/0579/2025 – Flood defence at Toll Road, Braunton Marsh at Crow Point Toll Road Embankment, Braunton, EX33 2NX. The deadline date for the Board's response is 23/9/25. Proposed by Mr Berry to recommend approval. Seconded by Mr W Hartnoll and unanimously agreed.	Clerk to submit response to North Devon Council
8.6	ADA. Email giving ADA's draft response to Defra Flood Funding Consultation circulated to Board Members on 19/7/25. <i>Noted.</i>	
8.7	ADA. Email asking for feedback from IDBs about problems they are facing due to the dry weather circulated to Board Members on 19/7/25. <i>Noted.</i>	
8.8	ADA. Main river maintenance. Request for information – straw poll. Email received on 7/8/25 asking for a response by 12/8/25 in connection with the Somerset Consortium of IDBs encountering a recent serious issue with the Environment Agency who have notified many landowners of their intention to permanently withdraw maintenance to a range of low and medium consequence stretches of main river, giving people six months notice. The Clerk was on leave at that time and on her return on 18/8/25, replied advising that most of the answers would have been 'No', adding that the Board does not	

	have any communication with the EA except when their culvert becomes blocked at the automatic penstock which they maintain remotely.	
8.9	SWADA. Email dated 11/8/25 informing of an Extraordinary Meeting on 18/8/25. Due to the Clerk's leave, this was not picked up until the day of the meeting, and an email was sent explaining the reason why it had not been possible for the details to be circulated to Board Members in time for them to make arrangements to attend.	
8.10	ADA. Email received as follows: Some IDBs have recently received audit returns from the External Auditor, who has highlighted a change to the Practitioners' Guide 2025 and a new assertion to be added to the 2025/26 AGAR in relation to Digital and data compliance The external auditor's letter states: <i>We would like to draw your attention to a change within the Practitioners Guide 2025 which is mandatory for the 2025/26 period. Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 relate to an additional assertion to be included in the 2025/26 AGAR, Assertion 10, regarding email management, websites, compliance with both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the requirement to have an IT Policy. The requirements in relation to Assertion 10 are listed in Paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 and the local authority should review these requirements and take appropriate steps to ensure compliance.</i> The same mandatory rules applied to Parish Councils and the Clerk has researched and written an IT Policy tailored to Braunton Marsh for Members to consider adopting. The document had been circulated to Members for studying ahead of the meeting. Proposed by Mr Paelinck. Seconded by Mr Chugg and unanimously agreed.	Clerk to update and upload onto website
9.	Drainage Board Website. This item links with the above item. The latest 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide brings important updates for authorities preparing Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2025. The most notable changes to the Practitioners' Guide this year are: ▪ Email management – every authority must now have a generic email account hosted on an authority-owned domain, e.g. clerk@abcdrainageboard.gov.uk or clerk@abcdrainageboard.org.uk rather than abcdrainageboard@gmail.com or abcdrainageboard@outlook.com ▪ New Assertion – a new Assertion 10 has been added to clarify data compliance, previously covered under Assertion 3. ▪ Updated Assertion – Guidance on Assertion 9 (Trust Funds) has been updated to reflect changes to the AGAR for 2025/26 when Cell 11a and Cell 11b will. Be replaced with a single Cell 11. These updates streamline processes, enhance transparency, and improve governance standards to help ensure your authority is ready for these changes. The Clerk suggested that Board Members agree a new .gov.uk website to comply with the changes in time for the 2025/26 end of year audit.	Clerk to advise Town & Parish Websites that a new website is required. Clerk to arrange for all documents

	The Clerk also suggested that a new website is constructed by Town and Parish Websites, with whom she has had positive experiences with the websites they create being easy to use and can be updated by her. The cost is in the region of £1,500.00. The present website is very difficult to manage and any alterations have to be sent to the webmaster, Vision ICT, involving a cost which would no longer be the case with a more user friendly website. The current website domain and hosting expire on 31/5/26 and the suggestion will be made that the new website, which must be in place by 1/4/26 is in place from 1/1/26. Proposed by Mr Paelinck. Seconded by Mr W Hartnoll and unanimously agreed.	to be provided to Town and Parish Websites. Clerk to advise Vision ICT that the website with them will no longer be required from 1/1/26.
10.	Items raised by Board Members.	
10.1	Mr R Paelinck had requested the following Agenda item: Large planned South West Water works on the East side of the river. South West Water wish to construct a road through his Marsh and require access to a pumping station from the Wrafton side as some equipment cannot get through across the bridge from the Braunton side. He is currently in conflict with South West Water regarding these plans but wanted to advise the Board to comply with the Board Rules circulated to Board Members with the 2025/26 Levy Invoices.	
11.	Items to note. None.	
12.	Items raised at the Chairman's discretion. Late item. Email from ADA – IDB Funding and Costs Research. Defra's consultants, ICF and Logika are leading on Defra's comprehensive review of IDBs' operations, focusing on financial efficiency, value for money, and the broader benefits they deliver. The research is structured around three core objectives: Funding and Financial Review: To analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs, and financial pressures over the past decade, and explore future funding options. Benefit Evaluation: To assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally. Data Modernisation: To explore how the annual IDB1 Forms can be improved and modernised for better data collection and reporting.	
13.	Date and time of next Meeting: Thursday, 13/11/2025 at 7.30pm in Braunton Parish Council Committee Room. The Annual General Meeting will be held ahead of the Board Meeting. Mr Chugg and Mr W Hartnoll gave their apologies in advance. The meeting ended at 9.17pm.	

Summary of Decisions:

- **Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2025**
- **Payments**
- **Planning including the ratification of responses submitted between meetings**
- **Approval of an Information Technology Policy**
- **Agreement for a new website to be constructed by Town and Parish Websites, replacing the website currently with Vision ICT**

These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.

Signed:
Chair of Braunton Marsh Drainage
Board.

Date: