

Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board

**Tonge Suite
County Showground
Weston Road
Stafford
ST18 0BD**



Meeting Papers

***Wednesday 1 November 2017
Meeting at 11:00am***

**Shire Group of IDBS
Epsom House
Malton Way
Adwick le Street
Doncaster DN6 7FE**

T: 01302 337798

**info@shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk
www.shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk**

Meeting Papers

Prepared by Paul Jones BSc (Hons) MSc (Eng) GMICE

Engineer to the Board

Reviewed by Ian Benn HNC/D, Dip NEBOSH, PG Dip H&S

/Env Law, Grad IOSH, MCQI CQP

Clerk to the Board

Purpose

These meeting papers have been prepared solely as a record for the Internal Drainage Board. JBA Consulting accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Drainage Board for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

Carbon Footprint



A printed copy of the main text in this document will result in a carbon footprint of 173g if 100% post-consumer recycled paper is used and 220g if primary-source paper is used. These figures assume the report is printed in black and white on A4 paper and in duplex.

Agenda

1.	Governance	4
1.1	Apologies	4
1.2	Declaration of Interest.....	4
1.3	Complaints and FOI.....	4
1.4	Minutes of Meeting 21 June 2017	4
1.5	Matters arising there from not elsewhere on the Agenda.....	7
2.	Clerk's Report	8
2.1	Training Session	8
2.2	Policy	8
2.3	Legislation.....	8
2.4	Defra	8
2.5	The Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)	8
2.6	Board Website	9
2.7	Board Key Performance Indicators.....	10
3.	Financial Report.....	11
3.1	Rating Report.....	11
3.2	List of Cheques.....	12
3.3	Other payments	12
3.4	Audit.....	13
3.5	Budget Comparison for the Year Ending 31 March 2018.....	13
3.6	Five Year Budget Estimate	15
4.	Engineer's Report.....	16
4.1	Asset Management.....	16
4.2	Planning, pre-application advice and consents	18
5.	Health and Safety Report.....	19
5.1	Health and Safety Boards Contractor	19
6.	Environmental Adviser's Report.....	20
6.1	Legislation.....	20
6.2	BAP 2015-2020	20
7.	Any other business	20
8.	Date of next meeting	20
9.	APPENDIX A: Internal Audit Report 2016/17	21
10.	APPENDIX B: Annual Return 2016/17.....	26
11.	APPENDIX C: BAP Monitoring Results	33

1. Governance

1.1 Apologies

1.2 Declaration of Interest

1.3 Complaints and FOI

1.4 Minutes of Meeting 21 June 2017

Present

Ray Sutherland (RS)
John Hilderley (JH)
Frances Beatty (FB)
Andrew Harp (AH)
Anthony Parrott (AP)
Geoff Rowlands (GR)
Jeff Sim (JS)
Ralph Cooke (RC)
Royston Wright (RW)
Alan Perkins (AP)

Also in attendance Phil Bates (PB)

In attendance on behalf of JBA Consulting, Clerk, Engineer and Environmental Adviser:

Ian Benn (Clerk to the Board)
Paul Jones (Engineer to the Board)
Craig Benson (Finance Officer to the Board)

Apologies for Absence

2017.29 None were given.

Declaration of Interest

2017.30 There were no declarations of interest. The Clerk gave a quick overview of this issue and suggested members would benefit from a formal training session specifically on Declarations of Interest. Members agreed.

Complaints and Freedom of Information Requests

2017.31 None had been received.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

2017.32 Minutes of the last meeting held on 8 February 2017 copies of which had been previously circulated to members with the meeting papers were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

- 2017.33** There were no matters arising.

Clerks Report

- 2017.34** The Clerks Report, copies of which had been circulated to members with the last meeting papers, was considered and adopted.

Matters Arising

- 2017.35** **Training Sessions** – The Clerk further elaborated on opportunities for training for Board Members and suggested at the end of each Board meeting time is allowed for a training session.
- 2017.36** **Policy** – Members were informed of the National Audit Office Report on IDBs and the recommendation for all IDBs to have appropriated policies in place. The Clerk also briefed members on how to deal with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. FB enquired if the Board were aware of any restructuring of DEFRA as she was to attend a National LEP meeting where this was an Agenda item. FB would update the Board at the next meeting.
- 2017.37** **Environment Agency** – The Clerk described the current demanding and asset management transfer philosophy of the EA.
- 2017.38** **Key Performance Indicators** – The Chairman questioned the KPI's and the adequate scoring of one section. PJ explained the Board's Assets were the 40km of open and piped watercourses and the current commitment to annual maintenance and how that is currently quantified. PJ further explained developments with the EA with regard to Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCA's) that would enable the Board to undertake works on Main River systems. AP considered that the KPI's were good and both the Chairman and Clerk thanked him for his comments.

Financial Report

- 2017.39** The Financial Report, copies of which had been circulated to members with the last meeting papers, was considered and adopted.

Matters Arising

- 2017.40** **Rating** – Members noted the latest balance outstanding and the action being taken against debtors.
- 2017.41** **Schedule of Payments** – The Board approved payments totalling £53,494.48 of which £294.25 was approved by the Officers only. The Board also approved payments made direct from the bank account totalling £359.19 all of which were approved by the Officers.
- 2017.42** **Audit** – The Finance Officer confirmed that the Internal Audit had been completed and that the report would be issued to members along with the minutes of this meeting.
- 2017.43** **Annual Return** – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement. The return, copies of which had been circulated to members, was considered for approval. AH proposed, FB seconded and this was approved by the Board.

- 2017.44 Accounts for the Year Ending 31 March 2017** – the Finance Officer reviewed the year end accounts and FB proposed, JH seconded and members approved that the accounts as presented.
- 2017.45 Annual Return** – Section 2 Accounting Statements. The return, copies of which had been circulated to members, was considered for approval. AH proposed, RC seconded and this was approved by the Board.
- 2017.46 Five Year Budget Estimate** – the Board noted the five-year forecast.
- 2017.47 Bank Mandates** – Members approved the addition of AH and the removal of JH from all Bank Mandates.

Engineers Report

- 2017.48** The Engineer's Report, copies of which had been circulated to members with the last meeting papers, was considered and adopted.

Matters Arising

- 2017.49 Watercourse Maintenance** – JS informed the Engineer that he had the code for the combination lock for the gate off Blackberry Lane and confirmed that he would email the code to him.
- 2017.50 Bellway Homes** – The Engineer briefed members on the issues around this development and referred to the table of events that was included in the meeting papers. The Board then discussed possible alternatives and opportunities for taking this forward and potential commuted sums. AP mentioned the lack of joined up thinking in planning circles and questioned why this was being discussed at this point. RW didn't believe the IDB was at fault with this problem. Discussion centred around the appropriateness of commuted sums. FB mentioned the use of a management company. RW noted if the IDB considered a commuted sum then at least the work would be done properly. FB proposed that the Board should inform Bellway Homes that they would not consider a commuted sum and that it was for them (Bellway Homes) to resolve the future maintenance of the site. AH seconded the proposal and this action was approved by the Board with one abstention.
- 2017.51 Main River Sow** – The Engineer confirmed that the letters mentioned in the papers will be emailed to members. It was also noted that a Flood Action Group for Eccleshall area was to be created to discuss the issues in this area.
- 2017.52** A Schedule 3 is to be drafted detailing where the IDB and EA could work together, subject to annual agreement on actual work required and funding. Works could be considered on Main Rivers such as Silkmere Drain (Rising Brook), River Sow (from Eccleshall) as presented to the Board in February 2015, on trash grid clearance before rainfall events, and other flood response activities. The Boards' Contractor Littlehales is ideally locally placed to assist the EA and therefore the IDB Drainage District in time of inundation.
- 2017.53 Planning** – Members noted the two planning applications that had received comment between 20th January 2017 and 5th June 2017.
- 2017.54 Consents** – Members noted the two consents that had been issued on behalf of the Board.

Health and Safety Report

- 2017.55** The Health and Safety Report, copies of which had been circulated to members with the last meeting papers, was considered and adopted with no accidents or incidents to report since the last meeting.

Environmental Adviser's Report

- 2017.56** The Environmental Adviser's Report, copies of which had been circulated to members with the last meeting papers, was considered and adopted. It was confirmed that Staffordshire Wildlife Trust would attend the next meeting to deliver an update on the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Any Other Business

- 2017.57** Nothing further to consider.

Date of Next Meeting

- 2017.58** The next meeting will be held on 22 November 2017, Tonge Suite, County Showground, Stafford.

1.5 Matters arising there from not elsewhere on the Agenda

Change of Meeting date – When the Officers tried to book the venue for the next Board meeting, it was confirmed that the Showground could not accommodate the Board on the 22 November. Therefore, following discussions with the Chairman, the meeting will now take place on 1 November 2017 at the Tonge Suite, County Showground, Stafford.

2. Clerk's Report

Recommendation:

- Members note information contained in the Report

2.1 Training Session

Riparian responsibilities.

2.2 Policy

Nothing to report.

2.3 Legislation

Nothing to Report.

2.4 Defra

2.4.1 Demaining and Asset Transfer

The five pilot schemes are progressing well and the next stage in the process is to consult with the public at community drop in sessions.

2.4.2 Humber Flood Risk Management Steering Group – Update

The Environment Agency invited specialists within the Management Team to attend and participate in workshops identifying criteria for consideration in the Comprehensive Review of the Humber Strategy.

2.4.3 The Isle of Axholme Strategy – Implementation.

Board officers continue to work with the EA seeking to deliver cost effective and holistic solutions to the strategy.

2.5 The Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)

2.5.1 ADA Annual Conference

The 2017 ADA Annual Conference & AGM will be held on Thursday 16th November 2017 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3AA.

The Conference will once again bring together delegates from across the flood and water level management industry, including the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards, local authorities, regional flood and coastal committees, Natural Resources Wales, DfI Rivers and many suppliers.

This year's Conference is particularly special as it marks the start of our 80th Anniversary celebrations since the Association of Drainage Authorities was formed on 2nd December 1937. With this, comes some exciting additional surprises, accompanied by an influential line-up of speakers who will be presenting at this year's Conference:

- Thérèse Coffey MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment & Rural Life Opportunities
- Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive, Environment Agency
- Councillor Derek Antrobus, Lead Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, Salford City Council
- Lord Deben, Chairman, Committee on Climate Change.

2.5.2 Technical & Environment Committee

Discussions surrounded:

- Vehicle Operator Licences, IDB machinery not Exempt under Agricultural Exemption. Requirement for lorry, cab and trailer to be subject to regular testing and inspection similar to inspections by road hauliers. IDB vehicles should use white diesel. IDB work similar to that undertaken by EA which obtains all appropriate licensing.
- Committee workstreams.
- Biodiversity 2020 and changes to the Annual Return IDB1 covering BAPs including review since produced, targets and actions, and reporting thereon.
- Demaining and asset transfer.

2.5.3 Policy & Finance Committee

Discussions surrounded:

- Information displayed on IDB websites, specifically looking at general public and the level of transparency required.
- Membership of ADA and the level of any subscription increase to be proposed at Conference. The Committee agreed to support a 1% increase.
- Success of the ADA stand at the Lincolnshire Show.
- Changes to the IDB1 form.
- Committee workstreams.

2.5.4 ADA Trent Branch & Environment Agency Joint Meeting

This meeting is scheduled to take place on the morning of Thursday 9 November 2017. The venue is yet to be confirmed.

2.6 Board Website

Nothing to report.

2.7 Board Key Performance Indicators

		Key Performance Indicators				
		Inadequate	Work to be done	Adequate	Good	Very Good
SOW & PENK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Management of the Board	Compliance with Audit Requirements				
		Health & Safety				
		Partnership Working				
		Overall				
	Reduction of waterlogging & Flood risk to assets	Asset Management				
		Flood Risk management strategy				
		Flooding- Learning Outcomes				
		Overall				
	Environment	Water Framework Directive				
		Invasive Species/Designated Sites				
		Conservation & Biodiversity				
		Biodiversity Action Plan				
		Overall				
	Supporting	Financial Statements				
		Receipt of Drainage Rates				
		Governance Documentation				
		Overall				
	Overall Performance					

3. Financial Report

Recommendation:

- To note the information contained in this report
- Approve Internal Audit Report
- Approve External Audit Report
- Approve the List of Payments

3.1 Rating Report

Details of the Rates and Special Levies issued and payments received up to and including 16 October 2017: -

	£	£
Balance Brought forward at 1 April 2017		1,193.05
2017/2018 Drainage Rates and Special Levies		
Drainage Rates		10,800.56
Special Levies		
Stafford Borough Council	97,699.00	
South Staffordshire District Council	3,634.00	101,333.00
Total Drainage Rates Due		<u>113,326.61</u>
Less Paid: -		
Drainage Rates		10,465.41
Special Levies		
Stafford Borough Council	48,849.50	
South Staffordshire District Council	3,634.00	52,483.50
Total Drainage Rates Paid		<u>62,948.91</u>
Balance Outstanding as at 16 October 2017		<u>50,377.70</u>

3.2 List of Cheques

DATE		CHEQUE	REF	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	
		NO.				CHEQUE	
2017						£	
Jul	25th	000824	12	Staffordshire Showground Ltd	Meeting Expenses	180.00	*
	31st	000825	11	JBA Consulting	1/4 Salary & Expenses	5,497.73	
Aug	21st	000826	13	Environment Agency	Flood Defence Levy	2,158.75	
Oct	4th	000827	17	ADA Trent Branch	Branch Subscription Fees	45.00	
		000828	18	Littlehales Plant Hire Ltd	Maintenance	33,877.38	
				Total Amount of all Cheques		41,758.86	
				* Total Amount of Cheques sent out signed by the Clerk Only		180.00	

3.3 Other payments

DATE		REF	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	
					£	
2017						
May	15th	-	NatWest	Bankline Fees	27.50	*
	31st	-	NatWest	Bank Fees	12.80	*
Jun	8th	7	ADA Trent Branch	Conference Fees	80.00	*
		40	Doncaster East IDB	Cardnet Fees	10.12	*
	15th	-	NatWest	Bankline Fees	27.50	*
	30th	-	NatWest	Bank Fees	12.24	*
Jul	14th	-	Danvm DC	Consent	50.00	*
		10	Brodericks GBC	Internal Audit Fee 2016/17	774.00	*
		9	Staffordshire Showground Ltd	Meeting Expenses	60.00	*
	17th	-	NatWest	Bankline Fees	28.30	*
	31st	-	NatWest	Bank Fees	7.63	*
Aug	15th	-	NatWest	Bankline Fees	28.70	*
	31st	-	NatWest	Bank Fees	7.47	*
Sep	15th	-	NatWest	Bankline Fees	27.50	*
	25th	16	Danvm Drainage Commissioners	Website Development, etc.	70.30	*
		15	Environment Agency	Flood Defence Levy	2,158.75	*
		14	PKF Littlejohn	Audit Fee 2016/17	480.00	*
	29th	-	NatWest	Bank Fees	7.77	*
			Total Amount of all Payments		3,870.58	
			* Total Amount of Cheques sent out signed by the Clerk Only		3,870.58	

3.4 Audit

3.4.1 Internal Audit

The Internal Audit report was circulated to members via email on 4 July 2017. A copy is included at Appendix A.

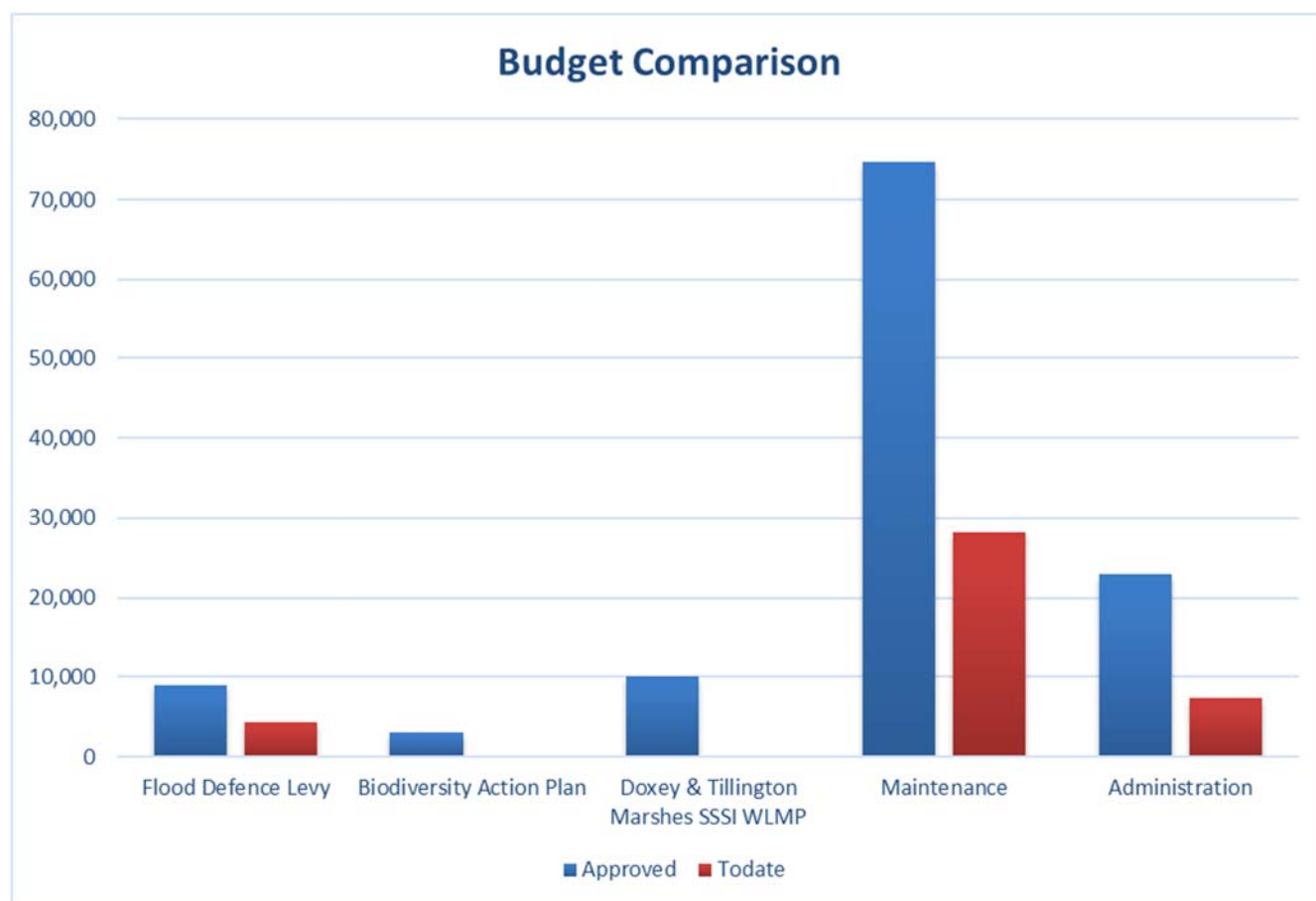
3.4.2 Internal Audit Review Meeting

This meeting will take place on Monday 27 November at the Doncaster Office.

3.4.3 External Audit

The external audit is now complete. The completed Annual Return is attached at Appendix B.

3.5 Budget Comparison for the Year Ending 31 March 2018



	2017/18				2017/18	
Approved Estimate		Actual Todate				
£	£	£	£	09 October 2017		
				INCOME		
				Drainage Rates on Agricultural Land:-		
10,828		9,840		6.24p in £ on AV of £173,729	90.88%	
				Special Levy:-		
				Stafford Borough Council		
97,699		48,849		6.24p in £ on AV of £1,565,683	50.00%	
				South Staffs District Council		
3,634		3,634		6.24p in £ on AV of £56,159	100.00%	
10,000		0		EA Grant - Doxey & Tillington Marshes SSSI WLMP	0.00%	
200	122,361	83	62,407	Interest etc	41.68%	51.00%
				EXPENDITURE		
9,000		4,318		Flood Defence Levy	47.97%	
				Conservation Budget:		
3,000		0		Biodiversity Action Plan	0.00%	
10,000		0		Doxey & Tillington Marshes SSSI WLMP	0.00%	
74,675		28,231		Maintenance	37.81%	
23,000	119,675	7,354	39,903	Administration	31.97%	33.34%
	2,686		22,504	Surplus - (Deficit)	837.83%	
	133,617		133,129	Balance Brought Forward	99.63%	
	6,000		0	Transfer to Doxey & Tillington Marshes SSSI WLMP ACC		
	130,303		155,633	Balance Carried Forward	119.44%	
Penny Rate : £17,956						

3.6 Five Year Budget Estimate

Sow And Penk IDB		0	1	2	3	4	5
Revenue Account	2017/18	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	App	Estimated Out-turn					
	Budget						
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Income							
Drainage Rates	10,828	10,828	10,828	11,280	11,280	11,713	12,147
Special Levies	101,333	101,333	101,333	105,555	105,555	109,615	113,675
Doxey & Tillington Marshes SSSI WLMP	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Interest, Other Contributions	200	200	200	200	200	850	900
Total Income	122,361	122,361	112,361	117,035	117,035	122,178	126,722
Expenditure							
Flood Defence Levy	9,000	8,635	8,894	9,161	9,436	9,719	10,010
Refurbishment Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Administration	23,000	23,000	23,230	23,462	23,697	23,934	24,173
Maintenance of Drains	74,675	74,675	76,915	79,223	81,599	84,047	86,569
Biodiversity Action Plan	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,377	3,478
Doxey & Tillington Marshes SSSI WLMP	10,000	10,000		-	-	-	-
County Show Budget	-	-	10,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Expenditure	119,675	119,310	122,129	116,029	119,010	122,077	125,230
Surplus/(Deficit)	2,686	3,051	(9,768)	1,006	(1,976)	102	1,492
Transfer to Doxey & Till Marshes Account	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Balance Brought Forward	133,617	133,128	130,179	120,411	121,417	119,441	119,543
Balance Carried Forward	130,303	130,179	120,411	121,417	119,441	119,543	121,034
Doxey & Tillington Marshes Acc	34,860	34,870	39,680	44,500	49,320	54,140	58,960
Penny Rate in £	6.24p	6.24p	6.24p	6.50p	6.50p	6.75p	7.00p
Penny Rate £17,974	109%	109%	99%	105%	100%	98%	97%
Rate Av £173,531	6.09p	6.07p	6.78p	6.44p	6.61p	6.74p	6.92p
Levy Av £1,623,923							
	2017/18	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Doxey & Tillington Marshes Acc	App	Estimated Out-turn					
	Budget						
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income							
Transfer from I&E	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Interest	30	30	40	50	50	50	50
Contribution to Scheme							
Total Income	6,030	6,030	6,040	6,050	6,050	6,050	6,050
Expenditure							
Capital Expenditure							
Maintenance	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230
Total Expenditure	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230
Surplus/(Deficit)	4,800	4,800	4,810	4,820	4,820	4,820	4,820
Balance Brought Forward	30,060	30,070	34,870	39,680	44,500	49,320	54,140
Balance Carried Forward	34,860	34,870	39,680	44,500	49,320	54,140	58,960

4. Engineer's Report

Recommendation(s):

- To note the information contained in this report

4.1 Asset Management

4.1.1 Ordinary Watercourses

Ordinary Watercourse maintenance is currently 97% complete for the 2017/18 season with completion anticipated over the next few weeks.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust received a complaint regarding freshwater swan mussels found upon the bank side of the watercourses and an excavator working near the access track without a banksman within Doxey Marshes, identified as the IDBs Contractor Littlehales Plant Hire Ltd.

Littlehales has expressed their sincere apologies about the situation and do wish to continue to work with the Wildlife Trust at all times, and offered to assist the Trust with any remedial action in relation to return swan mussels into the watercourse.

Littlehales do employ a banksman where working on or near public footpaths etc., however, there is an area on the reserve where Littlehales work about 8-9 metres away from a footpath/access track and do not employ a banksman. From this point forwards, we have agreed with Littlehales that in this situation steel pins and tape will be set out to demark a separation between the plant and footpaths in the reserve.

Littlehales will contact the reserve in terms of future maintenance activities.

With regards to swan mussels and other species/ points of interest in the reserve; we have asked the Trust to share information with the IDB Contractor on key species that may be encountered within the reserve and any mitigation/constraints currently adopted by Wildlife Trust Contractors. This would be a very useful addition to the current IDB specification in addition to Water Vole and Badger, and invasive species.

4.1.2 Riparian Watercourses (Doxey Road, Bellway Homes)

Bellway Homes were notified of the Boards decision on 26th June 2017 as recorded:

Board Decision (21st June 2017)

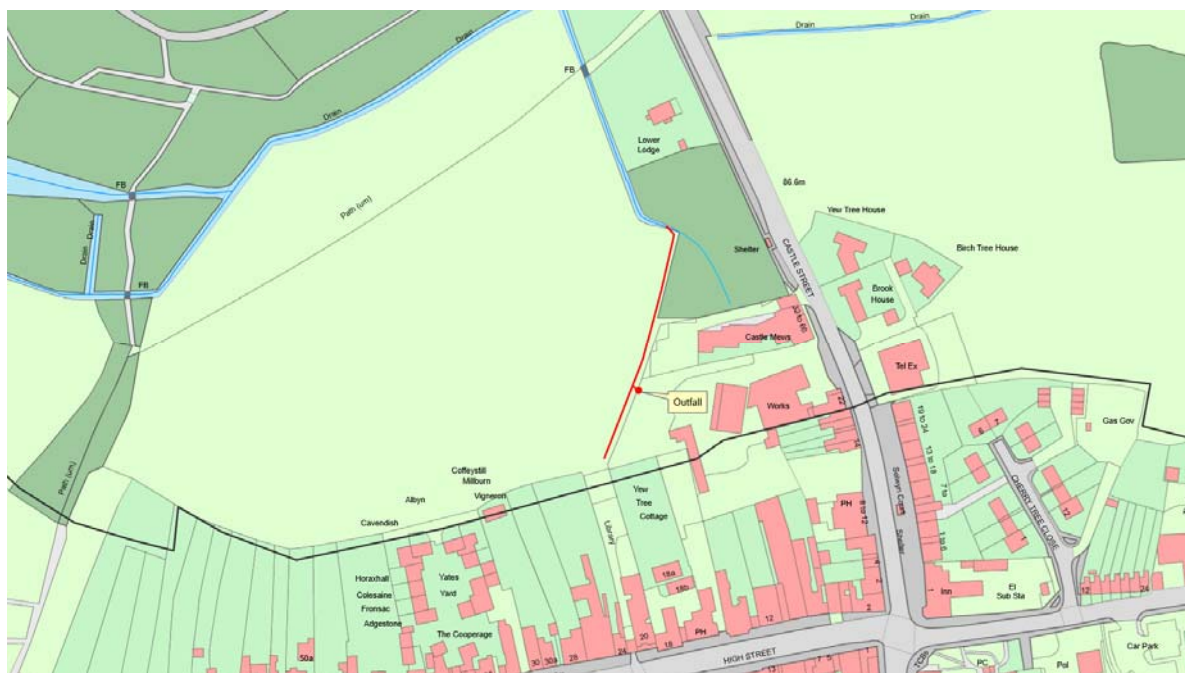
The Board considered Bellway Homes request to commute riparian obligations for the Board to maintain 340 metres of watercourse, 80 metre long attenuation pond, culvert, headwalls and control structure for the updated/costed commuted 'one-off' sum of £177,139. An extensive discussion took place regarding liabilities, interest rates etc. and after a proposal from Members; the Board rejected the request at this time.

4.1.3 Main River

A change in EA representatives has slowed down the process of agreeing Schedule 3, however, we continue to work with the EA to offer assistance from the IDB Contractor in relation to clearance of trash screens in the Stafford Area, with future maintenance of Main River to be determined. Further to the previous Board meeting, a copy of the DEFRA final ministerial decision is included a separate item to the meeting papers.

4.1.4 Ecceshall Flood Action Group

We will be attending the Group meeting on 19th October 5.30pm, Royal Oak, Eccleshall, as concerns have been raised regarding historic piping/culverting of watercourses and flooding in Church Mews.



The Flood Action Group has also prepared a Draft Leaflet as below for comments.

Contact Details

Staffordshire County Flood Risk Team: Tel: 0300 111 8000
email: flood.team@staffordshire.gov.uk
Environment Agency Floodline: 0345 988 1188 or visit
www.gov.uk/flood [including kitemark flood protection products]
Severn Trent Water: report online at www.stwater.co.uk or
tel: 0800 783 4444
County Highways: Tel: 0300 111 8000 or report online at
www.staffordshire.gov.uk
Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board: 01302 337798
email: info@shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk
Clerk to Eccleshall Parish Council: 01785 282296
email: eccleshallpc@gmail.com
Eccleshall Flood Action Group:
email: eccleshallfloodag@btinternet.com
National Flood Forum: www.floodforum.org.uk
tel: 01299 403 05

Eccleshall Flood Action Group Contacts

Deborah Hall	National Flood Forum	07874 282926
Chris Archer	Chairman	01785 850100
Kath Lynch	Secretary	07474 463906
Jeremy Pert	County and Borough Councillor	07740 924659
Tina Price	Parish Councillor	07968 506515

To find out more or to let us know of flooding that affects you, send an email to eccleshallfloodag@btinternet.com

Eccleshall Flood Action Group



What is the Flood Action Group?

The Flood Action Group (F.A.G.) meets on a regular basis and is made up of local people with direct experience of flooding, it includes some Parish Councillors together with County and Borough Councillor, Jeremy Pert. It was set up with the help of the **National Flood Forum**, a national charity which is dedicated to supporting and representing communities and individuals at risk of flooding. Our multi-agency meetings allow the community to work in partnership with the flood risk management agencies and authorities to agree a way forward to alleviate flood risk and have a say in what will be done.

Which agencies are working with the F.A.G.?

We are working in partnership with the leading authorities for all types of flooding, meeting regularly with **Staffordshire County Council's Flood Risk Team**, the **Environment Agency**, **Severn Trent Water**, **County Highways** and **Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board**. See back page for all contact details.

Principle Action Plan objectives as at October 2017

1. Investigate reasons for increased flooding of the River Sow upstream of the road bridge at A519 and the poor quality of the water in the river. The Environment Agency, Sow and Penk Main Drainage Board and Staffordshire County Highways are investigating reasons for this flooding occurring.
2. Investigate reasons for sewers in the town having inadequate capacity, blowing manhole covers and causing flooding and pollution on a regular basis, most significantly on Stafford Street. Severn Trent Water Ltd. and Staffordshire County Council are undertaking investigations to better understand the sewer and drain layouts in the town and the function that they provide. Monitors are to be put in the sewers at key locations to better understand the effects that storms have within the sewers. Following this, they will be investigating the capacity issues and what can be done to improve the situation. Reports of flooding and photographic evidence by the public are vital to get priority for any improvements.
3. Investigate the impact of new developments in Eccleshall on the already overstretched sewerage system and surrounding properties. Severn Trent Water Ltd. are legally obliged to make adequate provision for water generated by the new developments and will take on that responsibility on completion of each development.
4. Staffordshire County Highways record gully locations and monitor silt levels. Gullies in key locations should be emptied more regularly but the public are asked to report gullies being silted up or blocked with falling leaves

How can Residents help the Flood Action Group?

- Report flooding of property to SCC Flood Risk Management team on 0300 111 8000 **All reports will be treated confidentially**, and not disclosed to insurance companies.
- Report flooding of sewers to Severn Trent Water Ltd. to either their Hotline on 0800 783 4444 or on-line to www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/report-a-problem/. If you phone in on a stormy night be prepared for a long wait for the phone to be answered. Ask for a reference for your incident.
- Report flooding on the highway and blocked or silted gullies to SCC at 0300 111 8000 or online to the SCC website and follow the link to report a problem.
- If possible take photographs of the source of the problem reported to STW or SCC and pass copies to the FAG by e-mail to eccleshallfloodag@btinternet.com or tel: 07474 463 906 giving location and time of the incident with any reference number obtained.
- Only by reporting incidents (with photographic evidence where possible) will we get any priority to the water problems in Eccleshall.

REMEMBER: Tell us your stories of problems with flood, storm or foul water. Any information passed to the Flood Action Group will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

4.2 Planning, pre-application advice and consents

4.2.1 Planning applications

Our email address for planning enquiries is planning@shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk

Planning applications have been reviewed and 1 application has required comment on behalf of the Board between 6th June and 16th October 2017.

Planning Ref	Proposal	Address	Applicant	Work in, on, under or within 9m of an Ordinary	Alteration to surface water discharge or	Consent Form and Information provided
17/26393/FUL	Conversion of underutilised agricultural building to a residential dwelling	Fledgling Farm, Old Hall Road, Mill Meece	Mr & Mrs Antony & Ruth Key	no	no	yes

4.2.2 Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 23 and 66 (Byelaw) Consents

Our email address for consent applications is consents@shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk

No consents have been issued on behalf of the Board between 6th June and 16th October 2017.

5. Health and Safety Report

Recommendation:

- Members note information contained in the Report

5.1 Health and Safety Boards Contractor

5.1.1 Accidents and Incidents

There have been no accidents or incidents to report since the last meeting.

6. Environmental Adviser's Report

Recommendation:

- Members note information contained in the Report

6.1 Legislation

Nothing to report.

6.2 BAP 2015-2020

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will give an update on the progress of the BAP. A copy of the BAP Monitoring Results report is available at Appendix C

7. Any other business

8. Date of next meeting

7 February 2018

9. APPENDIX A: Internal Audit Report 2016/17

A copy of the Report can be found over the following pages

Sow & Penk Internal Drainage Board

Report of the Internal Auditor on the internal controls of the Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2017.

Dear Sirs

We have audited the Internal Control System of Sow & Penk Internal Drainage Board operational for the year ended 31st March 2017.

1) Scope and Responsibility

The Board is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Board also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Board is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Boards functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2) The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Boards policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3) The Internal Control Environment

The key elements of the internal control environment, which the Board have addressed, are in ensuring that they:

- ☐ Prepare its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.
- ☐ Make proper arrangements and accept responsibility for safeguarding public money and resources in its charge.
- ☐ Have only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.
- ☐ Have given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the board's accounts.
- ☐ Considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly
- ☐ Arranged for a competent person, independent of the board's financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the board and reviewed the impact of this work.
- ☐ Responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
- ☐ Disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.

4) Review of Effectiveness

JBA Consulting are Clerks to the Board. Certain procedures are prescribed by statute. Our internal audit has covered the procedures and controls exercised by JBA over the Drainage Board. Our audit has been carried out on a test basis.

An assessment of the risks facing the organisation is being updated by JBA on an ongoing basis. This is then discussed with ourselves and reviewed on an annual basis and updated further as appropriate. The risk assessment is summarised using the following heads:

- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Operational
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ External
- ☐ Compliance with Law and Regulation

The risks identified are categorised depending on the assessment of their impact on the organisation and their likelihood of occurrence. Each area is been attributed an:

- ☐ A Denoting immediate action, or
- ☐ B Denoting consider action and have a contingency plan, or
- ☐ C/D Consider action or keep under periodic review.

The risk assessments are also currently reviewed and discussed as part of the 'Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit' meeting, which currently takes place annually in November.

In addition further work has been carried out in establishing the administrative and accounting procedures in terms of segregation of duties and recording of financial information.

Specific Internal audit review work

The following areas relevant to Sow & Penk Internal Drainage Board were reviewed in detail in line with the principal of ensuring the standards and characteristics of an effective internal control system are evident:-

The Board's governance arrangements should include and ensure

- There is clarity of purpose and strategic direction.
- They act within their legal framework.
- Roles of officers and board members are clear and documented.
- Decisions are transparent and clearly reported
- Conduct of Board members and officers is of a high standard.

The Board's decision-making framework should include and ensure

- The board has a scheme of rules, including standing orders, which have been subject to minister approval.
- The make up of the board is in accordance with the land drainage act 1991.
- Adequate minutes of all board meetings are maintained.
- Adequate financial regulations are in place and followed.
- No conflicts of interest are evident.

Budgets

The budget process undertaken by the board is reviewed in detail during the course of our internal audit work. This incorporates both the process itself and details comparison between the budget set and actual income and expenditure. This culminates in the calculation of any variances and then ascertaining the reasoning and explanations for these variances.

This is underpinned by the budgetary work undertaken on an ongoing basis during the course of the year by the clerks to the board as follows:

- On a monthly basis the sage 200 software is exported through to the formal accounts produced in order to ensure all items of income and expenditure are included.

- The figures from the accounts are then pulled through to the approved budget statement and a percentage comparison from budget to actual is calculated automatically on the spreadsheet.
- This is then reviewed fully by the clerk to assess the ongoing budgetary position.
- Reporting to the board can then be undertaken promptly as necessary.
- Within the November meeting all budget reports and reviews updated at that point in time are included within the meeting papers for discussion and ultimate approval.

Change to Internal Control Procedures

During the year under review the internal control system relating to purchase invoices was updated. This was mainly necessary to adapt the current system to cater for the increasing number of suppliers who submit their invoices to the board electronically.

Once received all purchase invoices (whether received electronically or posted and then scanned in) are held in a folder named awaiting authorisation. These are then moved to a folder awaiting input, then through awaiting payment until ultimately being moved to an account paid folder.

Moving forward no hard copies of purchase invoices will be kept.

Our internal control system notes have been fully updated to reflect the above.

5) Significant Internal Control Issues

In general, the Drainage Board is underpinned by a sound management and operational structure through the offices of JBA Consulting.

The following areas are identified as risk areas:

Risk areas

Comments in relation to specific areas highlighted above

Decision-making: -

The percentage of income contributed in respect of the special levy for the year ended 31st March 2017 represents around 86% of total income and is therefore the majority of the board's income.

At the June 2016 meeting, there were 3 appointed and 4 elected members present (43% appointed member percentage), at the November 2016 there were 5 appointed and 6 elected members present (45% appointed member percentage) and at the February 2017 meeting 5 appointed and 5 elected members present (50% appointed member percentage).

The overall makeup of the board is in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and based on the attendance data of the above meetings, decisions are not being taken by an appropriate board make up in line with the percentage of special levy income.

We would recommend that meeting attendance be reviewed with the aim that appointed members at meetings outnumber elected members by at least one.

Other risk areas

Bank mandate/Natwest bankline payment system

During the year, an electronic payment system has been operated (BACS) in respect of making payments to certain creditors.

This system incorporates a two-tier authorisation process of the payments, which involves first stage authorisation from the chairman directly via the bankline system and second stage authorisation via the clerk.

We have assessed the control procedures in place in respect of the bankline system and with the two-tier authorisation system in place the instruction within the bank mandate are being maintained.

Whilst risk in this area cannot be totally eliminated, the system being operated is robust and keeps risk down to an acceptable level.

In addition to the current control procedures in place we have recommended to the clerk to the Board the following in respect of any change of bank account details for existing suppliers and for any new suppliers to the Board: -

1. Insist on written and signed confirmation from the supplier.
2. No electronic communication in respect of the change be accepted.
3. Request that an authorised individual known to the Board and Clerk, personally deliver the signed document to the Clerks offices.

We would recommend to the Board that the above additional procedure be approved at the earliest opportunity.

We have maintained the number of our internal audit checks regarding electronic payments and therefore undertaken extensive walk through testing of the bankline system for the year ended 31st March 2017, no issues have arisen and our sample tests suggest that the current system is working effectively.

System back up Procedures

In line with the above internal control change and the Boards whole reliance on electronic data files (E.g. Sage 200) we have undertaken a renewed review of the data recovery system of the clerks to the board.

Our conclusion is that the system is acceptable and includes an offsite data backup facility. Recognised anti-virus software is being operated to reduce risk in this area.

We have updated our internal control system notes to reflect the current above procedures.

Brodericks GBC
Chartered Certified Accountants and
Registered Auditors
Melbourne House
27 Thorne Road
Doncaster
DN1 2EZ

Dated: 9th June 2017

10. APPENDIX B: Annual Return 2016/17.

A copy of the document can be found over the following pages.

Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities in England

Annual return for the year ended 31 March 2017

Every smaller authority in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an annual return at the end of each financial year in accordance with proper practices summarising its activities. In this annual return the term 'smaller authority'* includes a Parish Meeting, a Parish Council, a Town Council and an Internal Drainage Board.

The annual return on pages 2 to 4 is made up of three sections:

- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the smaller authority. **Smaller authorities must approve Section 1 before Section 2.**
- Section 3 is completed by the external auditor.

In addition, the **internal audit report** is completed by the smaller authority's internal audit provider.

Each smaller authority must approve Section 1 and Section 2 in order and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Completing your annual return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Complete all highlighted sections. Do not leave any highlighted box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional external auditor work and may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2017, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements, **your notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights** and any additional information requested, to your external auditor by the due date.

Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed for their work. Unless requested, do not send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Once the external auditor has completed their work, certified annual returns will be returned to the smaller authority for publication and public display of Sections 1, 2 and 3. You must publish and display the annual return, including the external auditor's report, by 30 September 2017.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return is available in the Practitioners' Guide that can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.slcc.co.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 1 – Annual governance statement 2016/17

We acknowledge as the members of:

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

SOW AND PENK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2017, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this smaller authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with proper practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	NA
			has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

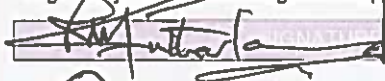
This annual governance statement is approved by this smaller authority on:

21/06/2017

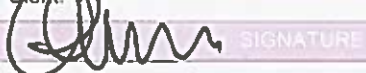
and recorded as minute reference:

2017-43

Signed by Chair at meeting where approval is given:



Clerk:



*Note: Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how this smaller authority will address the weaknesses identified.

Section 2 – Accounting statements 2016/17 for

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

SOW AND PENK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2016 £	31 March 2017 £	
1. Balances brought forward	147930	154958	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	109882	112004	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs, rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	11853	6378	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the smaller authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	114707	110141	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	154958	163199	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	181483	185568	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	0	0	This cell shows the value of all the property the authority owns. It is made up of its fixed assets and long-term investments.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2017 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of this smaller authority and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

SIGNATURE

Date

25/05/2017

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by this smaller authority on:

21/06/2017

and recorded as minute reference:

2017.45

Signed by Chair at meeting where approval is given:

SIGNATURE

Section 3 – External auditor report and certificate

In respect of:

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

SOW & PENK IDB

1. Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This smaller authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The smaller authority prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2017; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review the annual return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2. 2016/17 External auditor report (HU0224)

On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the smaller authority:

We note that the smaller authority does not hold copies of annual declarations of interests for all of its members. Maintaining such information would ensure improved accountability to the public by the smaller authority.

3. 2016/17 External auditor certificate

We certify that we have completed our review of the annual return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2017.

External auditor signature PKF Littlejohn LLP

External auditor name PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date 15/8/17

Note: The NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on 2016/17 accounts in Auditor Guidance Note AGN02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Annual internal audit report 2016/17 to

Enter name of
smaller authority here:

SOW AND PENK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

This smaller authority's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2017.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with this smaller authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this smaller authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose only one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.	✓		
B. This smaller authority met its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This smaller authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			NOT COVERED (NONE)
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this smaller authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.			NOT COVERED (NONE)
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		

K. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this smaller authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed)

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

MR ANDREW CANE - FCCA - CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE **A. Cane**

Date

09/06/2017

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Guidance notes on completing the 2016/17 annual return

1. You must apply proper practices for preparing this annual return. Proper practices are found in the Practitioners' Guide* which is updated from time to time and contains everything you should need to prepare successfully for your financial year-end and the subsequent work by the auditor. NALC, SLCC and ADA have helplines if you want to talk through any problem you encounter.
2. Make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty highlighted boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed return. Any amendments must be approved by the smaller authority, properly initialled and explanation provided. Annual returns containing unexplained or unapproved amendments may be returned and incur additional costs.
3. **Smaller authorities must approve Section 1 on page 2 before approving Section 2 on page 3.**
4. Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a Councillor or Board Member, to review the annual return for completeness and accuracy before sending it to the external auditor.
5. Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must tell the external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer or Chair.
6. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send to your external auditor with the annual return covers all your bank accounts. If your smaller authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2 on page 3). You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the Practitioners' Guide*.
7. Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 3. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete numerical and narrative analysis to support your explanation. There are a number of examples provided in the Practitioners' Guide* to assist you.
8. If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which the auditor will make a charge.
9. **You must inform the external auditor of the date set for the commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights.**
10. Make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2016) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2017).
11. Do not complete Section 3 which is reserved for the external auditor.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓
	All additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, has been provided for the external auditor?	✓
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation is provided?	✓
Section 2	Smaller authority approval of the accounting statements is confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	✓
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2017 agreed to Box 8?	✓
	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	✓
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – all disclosures made if a Council is a sole managing trustee? NB: Do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓
Internal Audit report	All highlighted boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	✓

*Note: The Practitioners' Guide is available from your local NALC, SLCC or ADA representatives or from www.nalc.gov.uk or www.slcc.co.uk or www.ada.org.uk.

11. APPENDIX C: BAP Monitoring Results

A copy of the report can be found over the following pages.

Outline methodology

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) carried out surveys of watercourses within the Sow and Penk IDB BAP area in August 2017 to monitor the population of Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). The surveys set out to contribute toward the current baseline to provide an update and re-visit areas where there is already data to monitor change. The area of focus in 2017 was the water courses and ditches through the centre of Stafford.

In total, 14.9km of watercourse was surveyed in 2017 throughout the IDB area, all via terrestrial bankside surveys where surveyors walked along the banks of the watercourse and visually scanned for signs of *A. amphibius* and *B. umbellatus*. No in-channel surveys on canoes were carried out this year due to limited access to canoes in the remaining ditches and watercourses to be surveyed (See map 1). Particularly through the centre of Stafford parts of the IDB watercourses were inaccessible due to being culverted however where this is the case the conditions are considered unsuitable for either of the target species and will be discounted from future surveys.

Survey

Surveys were carried out in August 2017, both *B. umbellatus* and *A. amphibius* would both still be present and visible at this time.

The surveys this year primarily focused on the presence of *B. umbellatus* which flowers between July and September and is easily spotted during August. The ditches were also scanned for signs of *A. amphibious* which would also be present at this time of year however it is anticipated that spring surveys would also be beneficial before the growing season when vegetation is less dense.

Survey results

No evidence of *A. amphibius* was seen throughout survey despite conditions being suitable on all days. The habitat found along much of the ditches in the centre of Stafford is considered to be unsuitable *A. amphibious* habitat. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) carried out by URS in 2014 around a portion of the Doxey drain and the River Sow to the west of the centre of Stafford produced low habitat suitability scores and follow up on the ground surveys did not find evidence of *A. amphibious* (URS 2014), however it is hoped that further surveys along targeted areas where the habitat looks more suitable in the spring will be revealing in the status of *A. amphibious*.

B. umbellatus was recorded in some of the ditches within Doxey and Tillington Marshes SSSI covering 0.7km in length but was not observed in any of the other ditches that were surveyed throughout Stafford town.

The vegetation across the Stafford ditches was variable; as expected along with the *B. umbellatus* records the most diversity was observed in the ditches and watercourses crossing the Doxey and Tillington Marshes SSSI. The drains in this area included part of Doxey Drain, Broad Meadow Drain, The Darling Drain and the ditch managed by the IDB which is parallel with the Tillington Drain. Species typical of the ditches within the SSSI included Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Floating Water-plantain (*Plantago alisma-aquatica*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpiodes*), Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*), Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Fool's Water-cress (*Apium nodiflorum*) and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*). A water-fern (*Azolla* sp.) which is invasive was found in the drain to the south of Tillington Pool at the grid reference SJ91005 24182. None of these ditches had been recently managed at the time of the survey but were for the most part open with only a few areas when the vegetation obscured the ditch.

Other drain networks investigated included Deepmore Drain, Forebridge Drain, Hough Drain, Lammascote Drain, Doxey Drain, Pen Pleck Drain, Rickerscote Lakes Drain, Rickerscote Drain and the River Sow.

Deepmore Drain, bordered by pasture on onside and scrub along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal along the other side, supports species such as *P. arundinacea*, *G. Maxima* and Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) as well as Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) scrub in parts. The fields alongside the drains were grazed and the drains had not been recently managed but were not clogged by vegetation. In the north the drain has several stands of the invasive species; Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Forebridge Drain is situated in the west through built up areas of Stafford town centre and also in the east surrounded by pasture. The pasture was not being grazed at the time of the survey. Much of the drain was wooded at least along one side and typical species included Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), *U. dioica*, Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and where it was more open to the east *G. maxima*, *U. dioica* and *P. arundinacea*. The drains did not appear to be recently managed but were flowing freely.

Hough Drain runs through open pasture and the Hough Drains Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which supports swamp community. The area surrounding the drain was not grazed at the time of survey. The ditch supported *G. maxima*, *U. dioica*, *P. arundinacea* and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). The ditches did not appear to be recently managed at the time of the survey and in some places there was no open water.

Lammascote Drain flows through the built up area of Stafford town centre running alongside the walkway next to the River Sow and also through the North Walls Marsh Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and LWS. The drain has species such as *U. dioica*, *R.*

fruticosus, *T. latifolia*, *S. caprea*, *G. maxima*, Purple Loosetrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) Flag Iris (*Iris pseudocorus*) and Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*). The invasive species *I. glandulifera* was along most of this drain network to the east of Riverway, additionally Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was found at grid reference SJ92800 23050. The drains in this section has recently been cut and managed except in areas between infrastructure where it is likely more difficult to access and west across North Wall Marsh LNR where the only open water was in the more shaded areas beneath willow scrub.

The eastern portion of Doxey Drain flowed through the built up area in the west of the town centre. Much of this length of drain was culverted through the centre of town and under the railway but in areas that were open the drain was often wooded on at least one side. Species included *A. pseudoplatanus*, *F. excelsior*, *R. fruticosus*, *G. Maxima*, *E. hirsutum*, *U. dioica* and Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamaenerian angustifolium*). The invasive species *F. japonica* was found at grid reference SJ92040 22830.

Pen Pleck Drain, Rickerscote Lakes Drain and Rickerscote Drain are situated within the area known as Rickerscote Marsh which supports a mixture of swamp and wet grassland community and also south of the marsh where the land is cattle-grazed pasture. Species within the drains include *G. maxima*, *U. dioica*, *P. arundinacea*, *S. Erectum*, Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Water-pepper (*Persicaria hydropiper*). Within the Rickerscote Marsh area the drains had not been recently managed and in parts open water was obscured by vegetation but Rickerscote drain appeared to be managed recently along the side bordering pasture land. The Rickerscote Marsh area will likely meet the requirements for designation as a LWS and will be put forward as a potential site at the next LWS grading committee.

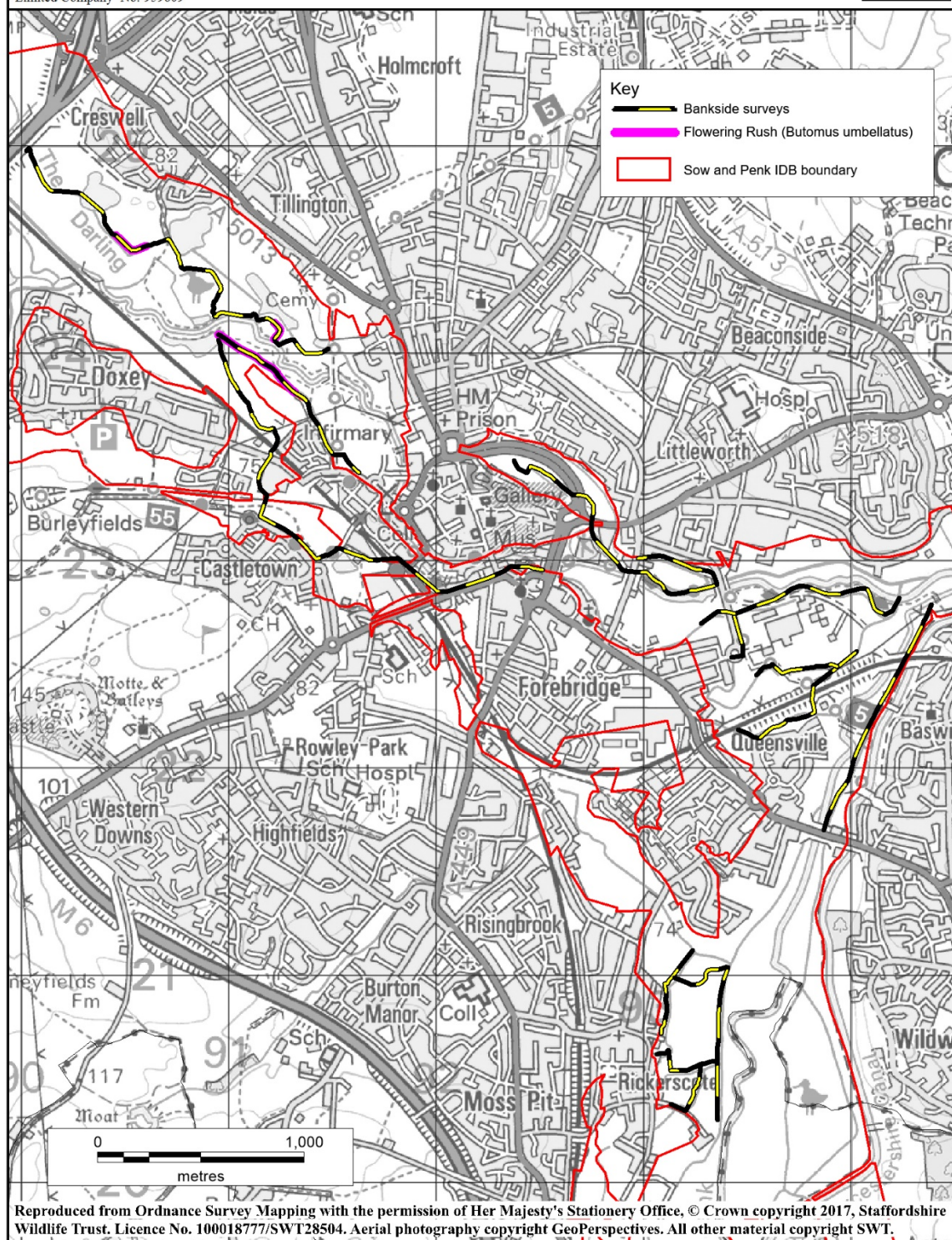
The River Sow itself supported a variety of species in its banksides including *G. maxima*, *L. salicaria*, *R. fruticosus*, *E. hirsutum*, *U. dioica* and in the watercourse itself Strapweed (*Sparganium emersum*). The invasive species *I. glandulifera* was frequently found along its length.

Next steps

So far the total area of surveyed water course within the IDB managed network between 2016 and 2017 is 44.5 km of a total of 63 km. Some of the un-surveyed areas will be looked at in future years of the project however some are inaccessible due to infrastructure such as culverting or where the vegetation is too dense to allow access. Certain target areas which support habitat suitable for *A. amphibious* will be revisited during the spring which will enable a clearer view of the banksides.

References

URS (2014). **Otter and Water Vole Survey Report**. Stafford Western Access Route Environmental Statement. Volume 3: Technical Appendices.



Map 1: Sections of watercourse surveyed as part of Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board (IDB) 2017

**Shire Group of IDBs
Epsom House
Malton Way
Adwick le Street
Doncaster DN6 7FE**

**T: 01302 337798
info@shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk
www.shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk**

JBA Consulting has offices at

**Coleshill
Cork
Doncaster
Dublin
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
Haywards Heath
Isle of Man
Leeds
Limerick
Newcastle upon Tyne
Newport
Peterborough
Saltaire
Skipton (Belle Vue Mills)
Skipton
Tadcaster
Thirsk
Wallingford
Warrington**