

1. Governance

1.1 Apologies

1.2 Declaration of Interest

1.3 Public Forum

1.4 Minutes of Meeting 29 January 2025

Present

MEMBER	15.11. 22	1.2. 23	30.5. 23	15.11 23	31.1. 24	28.5. 24	19.11 .24	29.1. 25
Frances Beatty FB	√	√	A	A	√	A	A	√
Graham Bower GB	√	√	x	x	√	√	A	√
Neil Brown NB	√	A	√	√	A	√	√	A
Paul Edwards PE	A	√	√	A	√	A	√	√
Victor Kelly VK				A	√	√	√	√
Angela Loughran AL	√	√	A	√	√	√	A	√
Brendon McKeown BMK				√	√	√	A	√
Anthony Parrott AP	√	A	A	A	√	A	√	√
Jeff Sim JS	√	A	√	A	√	A	√	√
Scott Spencer SS				A	-	A	-	-
Ray Sutherland - Chair	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Tim Williams TW	A	x	A	A	√	A	A	√
Mark Winnington MW – Vice Chair	√	√	√	A	√	√	A	-
Ralph Cooke RC	√	√	√	Replaced				
Len Bates LB	√	√	A	Replaced				
Other Attendees								
Phil Bates (Stafford BC Officer) PB	A	√	A	A	√	√	√	√
Member of the Public								
Attended √	Apologies A		No Apologies x					

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

Craig Benson
Paul Jones
David Blake

Clerk
Engineer
Senior Finance Officer

Apologies for Absence

2025.1 Apologies were received from Neil Brown.

Declaration of Interest

2025.2 There were no specific declarations.

Public Forum

2025.3 No members of the public were present.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

2025.4 Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 November 2024 were considered, proposed as a true record by VK, seconded JS and approved by the Board with minor changes.

Matters Arising

2025.5 There were none.

Complaints and Freedom of Information Requests

2025.6 There were none.

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk advised information was for note with the following added.

2025.7 Policy – Clerk advised members of the Bufferstrip study being undertaken in the Fens. He added that the report with the findings should be out later in the year with the intention, if it is a success, to roll out across the Country.

2025.8 Storm Recovery Fund – Clerk advised as at the last meeting the Schemes submitted on behalf of the Board had been unsuccessful. However, ADA announced at their meeting in November that funds had been made available for further applications under Tranche 2b. The Clerk confirmed that, after discussions with DEFRA, the original bids for this Board would be resubmitted. The submission date for new applications was Friday 31st January with decisions expected in March 2025 and the requirement to complete works by March 2026.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2025.9 Rating Report – FO advised current outstanding balance of £1,264 which equated to 91% collected.

2025.10 Rate Removal – FO and Clerk advised of the reasons for the debt and the problems experienced by the Bailiff as reported at previous meetings. **Discussions took place with removal proposed by FB, seconded by AL and all in favour.**

2025.11 VK asked regarding the different Councils noted in the report if the Board were going to look at what happened in the case of devolution. FO confirmed if that happened then they would revert to the name of the new Council.

2025.12 Schedule of Payments – **Approval proposed by FB and seconded by VK.**

2025.13 Internal Audit – Information noted.

2025.14 Risk Register – **FO took Members through with approval proposed by ?? and seconded by PB.**

2025.15 Estimates, Rates & Special Levies for the Year Ending 31 March 2026 – FO took Members through the report advising that a surplus of £5,697 was expected at year end due to increased bank interest received. This would result in a favourable out-turn of £71,000 to be carried forward. With regards to the new budget he advised that a further £8,000 would be received following the recent transfer between agricultural land and special levy. This would mean a balance carried forward of £75,807, as a result of which, he was not recommending a rate increase. AL asked why bank charges were not included in the forecast. FO stated they had been included within administration costs. **Discussions took place with VK proposing the rate stay the same at 7.5p, seconded by PE and all in favour.**

The Board considered an Estimate of Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2026, copies of which had been previously circulated to members.

In accordance with Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act, the Board determined that aggregate annual value of chargeable properties in the district on the aggregate value of all other land in the district as at 31st December 2024 for the financial year beginning 1st April 2025 as follows:-

a) Aggregate annual value of chargeable properties	£ 1,794,778
b) Aggregate value of all other land	£ 164,705

It was agreed that for the purpose of defraying costs, charges and expenses etc. incurred by the Board under the Land Drainage Act 1991 for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, and in pursuance of the Internal Drainage Board (Finance) Regulations 1992, that the Board make a drainage rate for their district in respect of agricultural land and agricultural buildings and a Special Levy as follows:-

The amount of the Board's expenses to be met by drainage rates was £12,353 by way of an Occupier's rate of 7.5p in the £ on the basis of the annual value of agricultural land and agricultural buildings in the district.

The amount of the Board's expenses to be met by Special Levies was:-

Stafford Borough Council	£ 130,240
South Staffordshire District Council	£ 4,368

The Chairman and Clerk were authorised to seal the rate and the Special Levy on the Local Authority in accordance with the Act and the Finance Regulations.

The Clerk, or their representatives, were authorised to negotiate and carry out proceedings for the recovery of any rates unpaid.

Members agreed that if additional expenditure is required above the agreed budget, it is taken from balances.

2025.16 Five Year Budget Estimate – Information noted.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Eng advised his report was for information with the following added.

2025.17 Hydraulic Modelling – Eng. advised the EA had to reschedule the planned Trent RFCC meeting and would keep Members informed moving forwards.

2025.18 IDB Fund – Eng confirmed bids would be submitted on Friday 31st January for works on Ordinary watercourses and Main River in the Slindon area, on Silkmore Drain and Teddesley Road.

2025.19 District Tour – Eng asked if the Board wished to reschedule the tour to June reminding Members that it had been planned for March based on the pending decision from the IDB Fund. Discussions took place with the decision taken to move to early June. Clerk suggested moving the Board meeting to June and have both at the same time. Members agreed to the suggestion.

2025.20 Ordinary Watercourse Maintenance – Eng confirmed all works had been completed last week.

2025.21 Section 19 – Eng advised Members he was working with Lead Local Flood Authorities for work on Herbert Road with one of the actions from the report to review the modelling and investigate the Network Rail structure. He also added that works were currently planned for downstream of Newcastle Road, again working with LLFA but that the wider catchment was the main flood risk area with the amount of water running into the road system.

2025.22 TW raised an issue with the road drain from Acton Gate to Acton Trussell stating that it was constantly blocked and emptied into Pothooks Brook. He added that the Board had previously maintained this but had not done so in recent years, Highways claimed they had undertaken jetting works but he said that unless the ditch was cleared it would not alleviate the problem. He then mentioned a similar situation at Teddesley Road towards Cambridge. The Eng confirmed that an application was to be submitted to the IDB fund for works at Teddesley Road as it was currently riparian responsibility. He added he would look into the other issue.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

2025.23 There had been no incidents, accidents or near misses reported since the last meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

2025.24 Legislation – Information noted.

2025.25 Biodiversity Action Plan – Clerk asked JS to contact Rebekah Beaumont to share BAP information and data.

2025.26 Clerk proposed that Rebekah join the Board on its tour of the district so she is aware of the area and suggested JS could show her the work being undertaken at Doxey Marshes.

2025.27 Stafford Brooks Project – JS confirmed that ponds were being put in during February. He added that a plan of works for Doxey Marshes was currently underway with input received from both the Environment Agency and Natural England but decisions were yet to be confirmed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2025.28 VK advised that a number of solar farms were proposed for the area and that Community Based funds of £20,000 would be available via Parish Councils and suggested that should there be a flooding issue then this could help towards the cost of any works and the Board should contact the Parish Councils to request a contribution. He added that the proposed farms in Slindon were due to be connected in 2026 and that three farms in Penkridge were to be connected in 2027 so this would generate £60,000 per year every year for the next 40 years.

2025.29 TW referred to the recent works at Radford Bridge stating that Littlehales had undertaken works to either side but not to the culvert under the bridge. He asked if the Environment Agency or Highways could be contacted to clean this out. Eng. said the issue had been raised with Highways several years ago and they had accepted responsibility and agreed to add it to their jetting programme. Chair asked for pressure to be applied for the works to be completed.

2025.30 TW advised that on 8th July 2024 the River Penk had been polluted which he had reported to the Environment Agency, the Board and Stafford BC. He had received a letter from the EA and they had been out to test on two occasions stating they believed it was run off from the M6. He added that not sure this was the cause as the water was black. Discussions took place and VK believed it could be from the construction of the motorway interchange and TW said he would raise it again with Stafford BC and the Eng. would raise it with the EA.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

2025.31 18 June 2025 – revised from 27 May 2025 as now to include District Tour
18 November 2025

Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

Update – the District Tour has been moved to September 2025 when the watercourse maintenance will be underway.

1.5 Matters Arising Therefrom Not Elsewhere on the Agenda

1.6 Complaints and FOI

There have been no complaints or FOI requests since the last meeting.