Internal Drainage Boards Overview

Iain Sturdy

Chief Executive Officer &

Clerk to the Boards

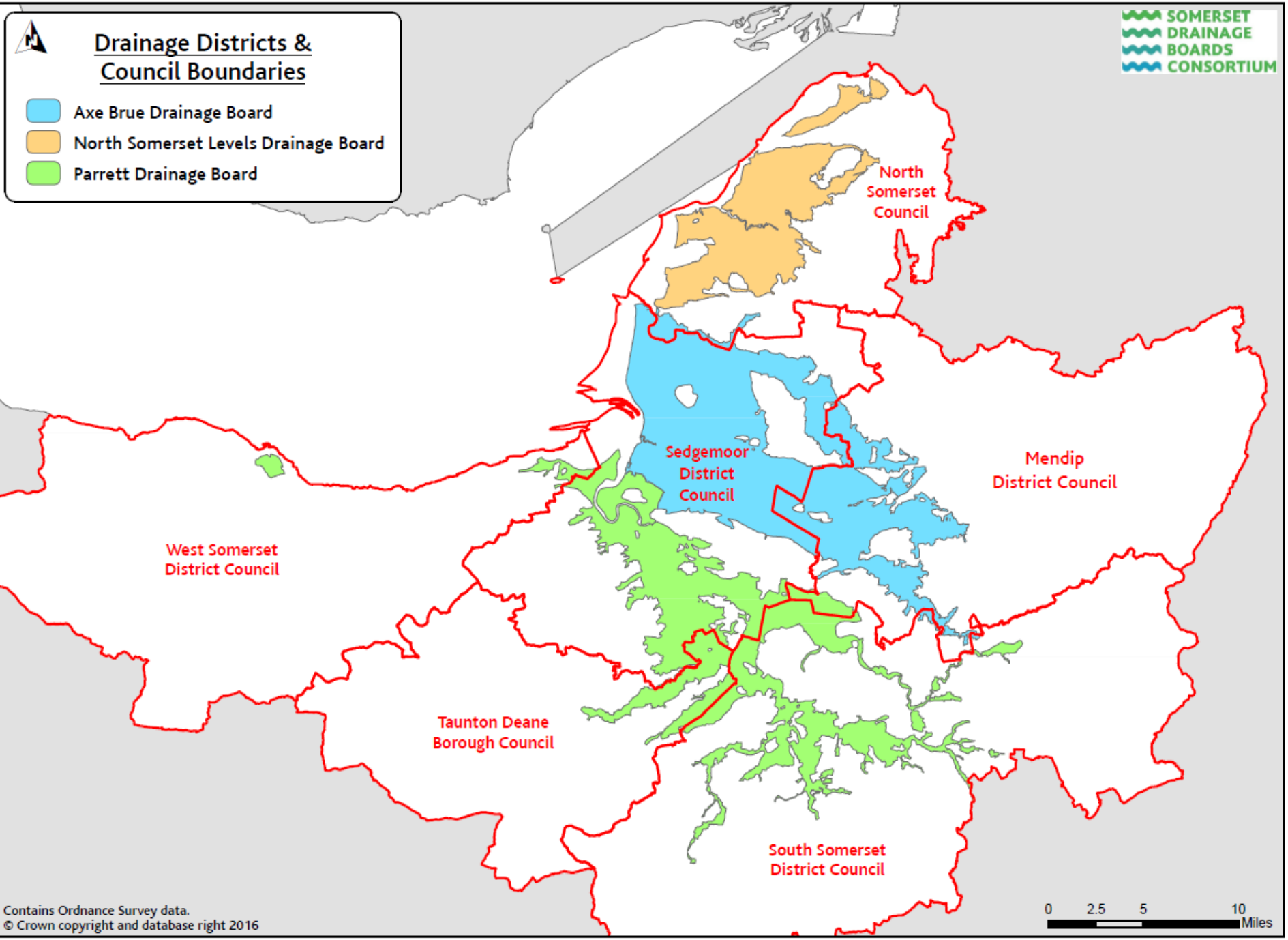
SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

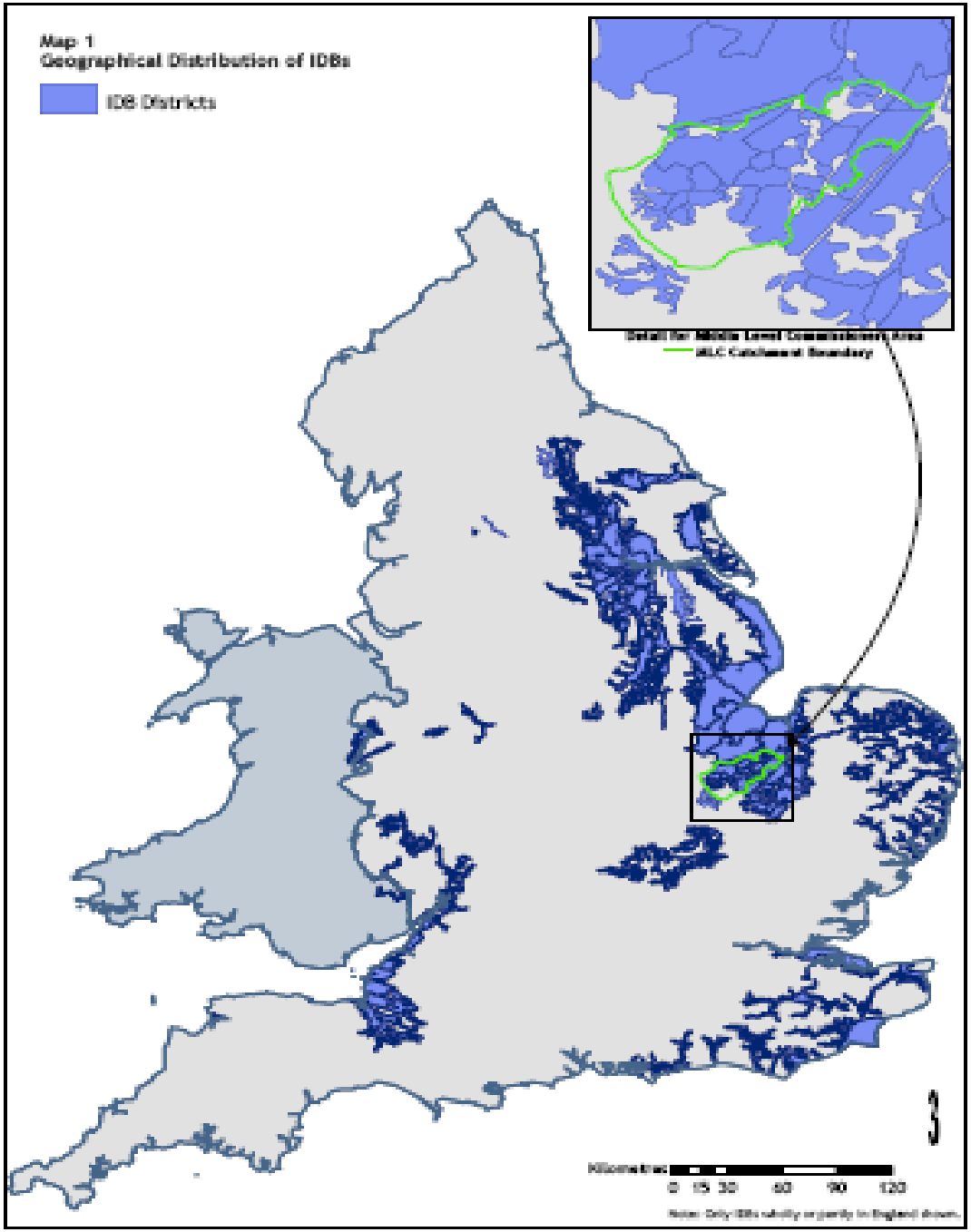
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Where do we fit in

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS





Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) manage water levels in areas of special drainage need

Managing water levels on mainly reclaimed land that is within the floodplain

Who are we ?

- Boards originally set up between 1830 to 1877
- Their boundaries were set out at 8ft. above highest know flood level now similar to Flood Zone 2
- Single function organisation

SOMERSET
DRAINAGE
BOARDS
CONSORTIUM
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Board and catchment areas

- Parrett IDB
  - IDB District area = 246 sq km
  - Upstream catchment area (inc. Dorset) = 1490 sq km
  - Total area = 1736 sq km
- Axe Brue IDB
  - IDB District = 303 sq km
  - Upstream catchment area (inc. N Somerset) = 480 sq k
  - Total area = 783 sq km
- North Somerset Levels IDB
  - IDB District = 118 sq km
  - Upstream catchment area = 125 sq k
  - Total area = 243 sq km

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board
Constituted April 2012
28 elected members across 16 catchments
up to 29 appointed members

Parrett Drainage Board
Constituted April 2005
23 elected members across 13 catchments
currently 22 appointed members

North Somerset Levels Drainage Board
Constituted April 2011
14 elected members
currently 15 appointed members

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board

Re-constituted Jul 18:

12 Elected Members across 3 catchments

13 Appointed Members

Parrett Drainage Board

Re-constituted Jul 18:

12 Elected Members across 12 catchments

13 Appointed Members

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Vital statistics

	Axe Brue	Parrett	North Somerset
Size	30,398 ha	24,607 ha	11,817 ha
Length of watercourse maintained	601 km	584 km	194 km
No. and area of SSSIs	11 / 3,422 ha	11 / 5,052 ha	7 / 469 ha
Income	£885,539	£782,448	£654,757
Precept paid to Environment agency	£243,294	£197,066	£114,824
No. of water control structures	216	279	83
No. of homes and businesses in IDB area	18,720	16,985	39,897

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Why do we exist

- Areas of special drainage need
- Reclaimed land that is tide-locked at high tide
- Rhynes or watercourses have little or no fall
- Channels need to be maintained to allow flow
- Land use is dependent control of water levels
- Land use includes houses, businesses, agriculture, roads and services
- 45% of Sedgemoor at or below 6.5m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) (high spring tide level)

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

What do we do

Flood risk and water level management

- Water level management – the day to day management of water levels. 95% of the year.
- Flood Risk Management – actions in response to heavy rainfall

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Where do we fit in ?

- All watercourse in an IDB area (except Main Rivers) are **administered** by the IDB
- IDB **maintain** certain important watercourses (Viewed Rhynes)
- Landowners or occupiers **should** maintain the others when required
- Catchment Management

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Powers of Drainage Board

- Working under the Land Drainage Acts 1991,1994. Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and older drainage legislation.
- Ordinary watercourses
- Permissive powers to undertake works inside or outside its area
- Powers to require works by others
- Duty to exercise a general drainage supervision in its area
- Can make Byelaws

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Why manage water levels

- Drainage and irrigation enabling land use
- Watercourse and ditch habitats
- Wet-fencing
- Stock watering
- Keeping peat soils wet to avoid shrinkage and CO_2 loss

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Principle activities

- Water level management
- Flood risk management
- Maintenance and improvement of watercourses and culverts
- Maintenance and improvement of structures and sluices
- Watercourse related environmental improvements
- Issue of Land Drainage Consents
- Development control advice to planning authorities

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Why is maintenance important

- Conveyance
- Flat gradients on channels in Somerset
- Natural rivers and streams can be self maintaining
- Most lowland channels are man made or heavily modified

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Control of development and works

- All water courses in the Boards area except main rivers (EA)
- Land Drainage Act 1991 – Section 23 (Obstructions)
- Boards Byelaws (Access and limitations)
- Highways Act 1980 – Section 339
- What is a watercourse?

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

What is a watercourse

Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 72

“Watercourse" includes all rivers and streams and all ditches, drains, cuts, culverts, dikes, sluices, sewers (other than public sewers within the meaning of the Water Industry Act 1991) and passages, through which water flows.

Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 10(3)

“An ordinary watercourse includes a reference to a lake, pond or other area of water which flows into an ordinary watercourse.”

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

However drainage can have unintended consequences too. Including

- Peat and soil loss and
- Environmental Damage.

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

SOMERSET
DRAINAGE
BOARDS
CONSORTIUM
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Holme Fen Post, Cambs

The original Holme Post was sunk into the clay substrate with the top flush with the peatland surface in 1851; now 4 metres are exposed following drainage and wastage of the peat. The reclaimed farmland was abandoned to birch woodland a century ago.

Water Level Management in Somerset

- Historically Drainage in Somerset was slower to progress than some other parts of the Country.
- Fortunately much of our Wet Grassland and Peat Soils remain
- The majority of Farm Systems in the IDB areas are still grass and livestock based.

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Somerset Levels and Moors SSSIs

The largest remaining area of lowland wet grassland in the UK

The Levels and Moors include:

- 23 SSSIs
- 2 SPA and Ramsar sites

- 60,000 ha of potential habitat
- 8,000 ha in protected areas

National wet grassland resource:
Historical – 1,200,000 ha
Remaining – 220,000 ha
High conservation value – 20,000 ha

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM
INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

How We Manage Water Levels Today.

"Severe flooding is to be avoided as it benefits no one"

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Summer water levels are kept relatively high mainly for wet fence and watering of livestock.

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Winter water levels are generally kept lower to reduce the risk of flooding and to extend the growing and grazing season.

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

In the environmentally designated sites where farmers are signed up to Agri-Environment Agreements Water Levels are managed to balance the needs of farming and nature

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

Boards' Income Sources

- Agricultural Levy
- Special Levy
- Defra Grant Aid
- Other Grant Aid
  - eg Environment Agency and EU
- Developers
- Undertake SRA work (not income)

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

INCORPORATING THE AXE BRUE AND PARRETT DRAINAGE BOARDS

About Us | Contact Us | Site Map

HOME | BOARDS & MEMBERSHIP » | DEVELOPMENT CONTROL & BYELAWS » | OPERATIONS » | NOTICE BOARD » | ENVIRONMENT » | FINANCE & RATES »

Essential Maintenance Programme

During the summer, Autumn and Winter months the Boards are carrying out (or have authorised) essential maintenance of their Viewed Rhyne network. Please visit out maintenance page or call the office to establish when we will be carrying out works in your area. The Parrett Board in particular are still in the process of catching up due to extensive and prolonged flooding during Nov/Dec 2012. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

BOARDS & MEMBERSHIP

- Board Areas
- Membership & Elections
- Meetings Calendar
- Minutes

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL & BYELAWS

- Planning
- Land Drainage Consents
- Byelaws
- Policies

OPERATIONS

- Flooding
- Water Levels and Watercourses
- Maintenance
- Improvement Works
- Telemetry

NOTICE BOARD

- News
- Quick Links
- Newsletters
- Forms

ENVIRONMENT

- Water Level Management Plans
- Projects
- Biodiversity Action Plans
- Somerset Levels Wetlands Blog

FINANCE & RATES

- Drainage Rates
- Finance & Funding

www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk