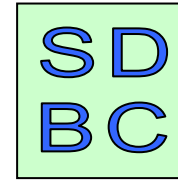


Drainage Authorities (the Environment Agency, District Councils and Drainage Boards) carry out the continuing battle to protect land from flooding from the sea and rivers. In Somerset, the Environment Agency looks after the main rivers (in south and mid Somerset the rivers Axe, Brue, Cary, Isle, Parrett, Tone, Yeo), sections of main drains and all sea defences. The Drainage Boards operate in the lower lying land generally below the 7m (25') contour. Above this contour line the drainage authorities are usually but not always District Councils. There are a total of 7 Drainage Boards in Somerset. Most drainage authorities are members of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

The Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium was formed in April 2004 from the Parrett Consortium of Drainage Boards and the Mid Somerset Drainage Boards Group. Each Drainage Board remains an independent entity but is provided with administrative and technical support from the Consortium offices at:

1 Church Street,
Highbridge, TA9 3AE
Tel: 01278 789906 Fax: 01278 793443
email: drainage.boards@btconnect.com



SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM

1 Church Street, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 3AE
Tel: 01278 789906 Fax: 01278 793443
Email: drainage.boards@btconnect.com
Website: www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

The objective of the Consortium is to rationalise and improve the efficiency of Drainage Board operations. All Drainage Board members are volunteers and their time and input is given without any remuneration. There are eleven members of staff at the Somerset Consortium office including the ecologist who works for all the Somerset Drainage Boards. In addition the Parrett Drainage Board employs Expenditors to supervise the operation and maintenance of the drainage system. The Consortium meets twice a year and there is a management committee of eight members that meets as needed.

Somerset Consortium Drainage Boards cover an area of 40,967 hectares (158 square miles) of Somerset, they maintain 786 kilometres (489 miles) of drain and are responsible for 207 water control structures. The other Drainage Boards in south and mid Somerset are the Upper Brue and the Upper Axe that comprise the Central Somerset Consortium. The Consortium Drainage Boards supervise and consent works and activities on **all** watercourses in their areas that are not main rivers.



Every landowner in a drainage district pays a rate to the Drainage Board depending on the value of the land in each area. In addition, District Councils pay a special levy to each Board covering domestic and commercial properties. The total income of the Somerset Consortium Boards in 2009/10 was around £1.37M, of which 27% was paid to the Environment Agency as an annual precept.

In the past few years the emphasis has moved away from improvement of the drainage system solely for the protection of property and increased food production. Boards now have a duty to further the interests of conservation and have responded to this in their approach to maintenance and improvement works. They are now contributing significantly to maintaining the biodiversity of the Somerset levels and moors.

Drainage Boards also have to deal with the effects of the rapid urban and industrial development within their areas. Where development takes place large impermeable areas are created increasing both the rate and volume of surface water run off. Improvements to the drainage system and storm water management are often needed as a result.

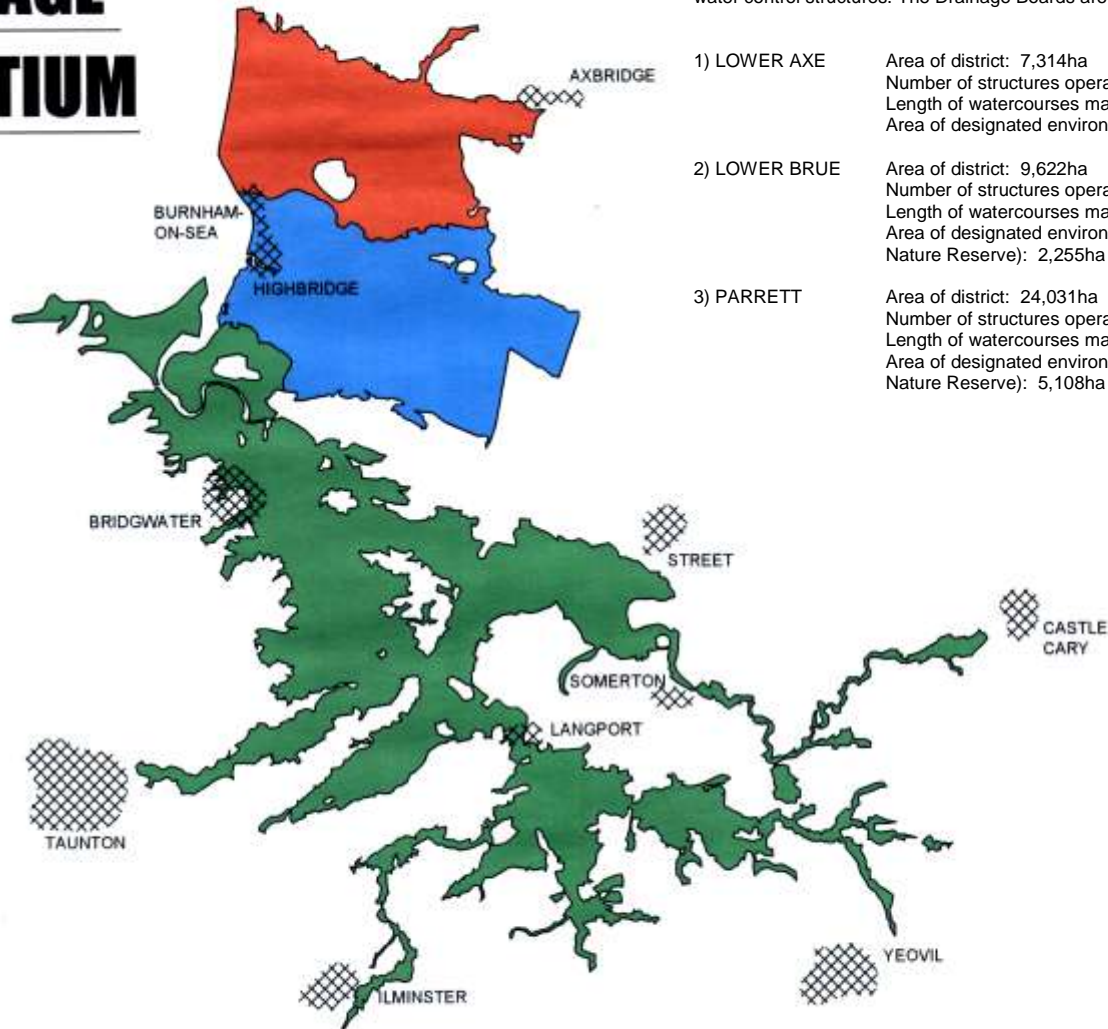
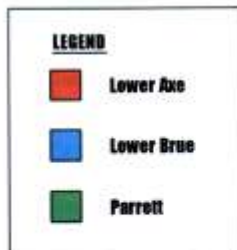
Land drainage and flood protection continues to remain a vital necessity for Somerset and other lowland areas of England and Wales. Successive governments have recognised that Internal Drainage Boards continue to be an effective way of meeting the local need. Drainage Boards look forward to continuing their work for many years to come and to meeting the challenges of the future.



protecting property, land and the environment



SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM



The Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium consists of three Drainage Boards. The Parrett Board has thirteen separate catchments, twelve of which are on the renowned Somerset levels & moors. All Drainage Boards are responsible for the general supervision of land drainage within their district and regular maintenance of designated watercourses ('viewed rhynes') and associated water control structures. The Drainage Boards are:

- 1) LOWER AXE
 - Area of district: 7,314ha
 - Number of structures operated and maintained: 12
 - Length of watercourses maintained: 116km (73 miles)
 - Area of designated environmental interest (SSSI): 197ha
- 2) LOWER BRUE
 - Area of district: 9,622ha
 - Number of structures operated and maintained: 55
 - Length of watercourses maintained: 163km (102 miles)
 - Area of designated environmental interest (SSSI & Nature Reserve): 2,255ha
- 3) PARRETT
 - Area of district: 24,031ha
 - Number of structures operated and maintained: 140
 - Length of watercourses maintained: 507km (317 miles)
 - Area of designated environmental interest (SSSI & Nature Reserve): 5,108ha