

Minutes of 62nd UK Bridges Board meeting held on 20 May 2020 via Microsoft Teams

Liz Kirkham	(Chair) ADEPT/Gloucestershire County Council
Hazel McDonald	Transport Scotland
Alistair Dore	Wakefield representing ADEPT
Richard Fish	Bridge Owners Forum
Peter Simpson	Canal & River Trust
Jason Hibbert	Welsh Government
Neil Loudon	Highways England
Keith Harwood	Hertfordshire County Council, BOF
Nicola Head	Transport for London
Bob Humphreys	CSS Wales, Gwynedd Council
Satbir Gill	Hounslow Highways representing TAG
Nick Burgess	London Underground
Colin Ferris	Network Rail
Andrew Strang	SCOTS/Perth and Kinross Council
Stuart Molyneux	Metropolitan Councils
Hugh Brooman	Representation LoBEG
Kevin Dentith	ADEPT/Devon County Council
Justin Ward	CIHT (Secretariat)

In attendance: Matthew Gilbert, University of Sheffield

1. Introduction

Liz Kirkham welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. EPSRC Project & CIRIA Guidance on the Assessment of Masonry Arch Bridges - Presentation by Matthew Gilbert

Matthew Gilbert gave a presentation on the Guidance on the Assessment of Masonry Arch Bridges and research on 3D modelling this was followed by a number of questions.

3. COVID 19 response/impact on bridge management/maintenance (round table discussion)

Alistair Dore provided feedback from the viewpoint of ADEPT Bridges Groups members. Alistair said most councils are able to conduct emergency works but for planned works this was more difficult (due to staff furloughing). General inspections are carrying on more as normal, but for principled inspections this is less likely.

Neil Loudon said that new construction is going on by Highways England, for example the completion of the A14 was ahead of schedule. Maintenance and inspections are also going ahead. However, due to some aspects of supply chain and social distancing some works are going a little slower than normal.

Hazel McDonald provided an update on Transport Scotland saying that the position is quite different in Scotland. Only safety related responses and general inspections were carrying on. PIs are now being carried out where safe distancing can be enacted. Scenario planning for next steps is underway.

Jason Hibbert then provided an update from Wales saying that they were taking advantage of lower traffic levels to carry out works. Colin Ferris provided an update from Network Rail saying that inspections are happening similar to pre-covid levels. Peter Simpson gave an update from the Canal & River Trust saying that the biggest issue has been getting access to bridges as towpaths are being more heavily used. Nicola Head then provided an update on behalf of Transport for London saying that Covid-19 had resulted in a significant financial impact on TfL and this is impacting budgets for major schemes. Andrew Strang said that some bridges team members had been redeployed into other areas as part of the response to Covid-19 and said that safety critical responses was going on, but only emergency works on-site were taking place. Kevin Dentith asked members for the impact on the bridges budget.

4. Resilience

Liz Kirkham reminded the group that prior to Covid-19 there had been a couple of serious winter storms, Storm Ciara and Storm Denis. In Gloucestershire, Liz said that there had been a more coordinated response between the structures team and the highways operations team, with bridge inspectors at every key site prior to re-opening and that the overall response was had been very robust.

Liz added that she had the opportunity to beta test a Transport Resilience Diploma course that is being developed by the IHE, adding that this was very useful. Kevin Dentith said that there were four significant landslips due to the storms and that one bridge was badly damaged. Kevin said that works have been carried out and that fortunately Devon County Council had been able to address this damage.

5. Updates all the research projects

Liz Kirkham said that the SAVI toolkit had been finalised. Keith Harwood reported that this had been approved by CIPFA and UKRLG and it has been published on the UKRLG website. Keith added that he was uncertain how much this had been used but that there had been interest from this from Australia. Richard Fish added that he had received interest in this from New Zealand.

Action: Justin Ward to provide Google Analytics figures on page access to SAVI to Keith Harwood

Andrew Strang said that Scotland was looking to utilise SAVI and the feedback from the SCOTS bridges group looked at it favourably, particularly for investment planning.

Hazel said that nothing has progressed with overloaded vehicles by PIARC and was uncertain about UKRLG research proposals going forward. Liz said that the financial support for future research would need to be confirmed by the Department for Transport in due course, but that due to the current situation it would be quite challenging to obtain funds for research..

6. Parapet protocol – sign off

Colin Ferris said that he had received good comments from Andrew Strang, Jason Hibbert, and Hazel McDonald. Colin said that the final review was now being undertaken. It is hoped to take the final document to UKRLG for approval in July.

Action: Colin Ferris to discuss revisions on parapet protocol with Rob Dean prior to finalising

Action: Liz Kirkham to take the Parapet Protocol to UKRLG for final approval

7. Grand Challenges – present to next UKRLG

Richard Fish said that he had presented on the Grand Challenges at the Bridges Conference earlier this year.

Action: UKRLG July meeting – Liz Kirkham to work with Richard Fish to present on BOF Grand Challenges and note that the framework considered in this can assist with a filter for research projects

Hazel McDonald asked about the feedback from the Bridges Conference and Richard Fish said that there had not been a great deal. The impact of COVID 19 was just starting to take effect when the conference happened, it was one of the last events before lockdown and attendance was lower as a result.

Action: Liz Kirkham and Justin Ward to consider coverage of BOF Grand Challenges in Transportation Professional

Action: Keith Harwood to send BOF Grand Challenges to Justin Ward for inclusion with UKRLG papers

8. BICS updates – survey

Justin Ward noted that the BICS survey had been drafted and was nearly ready to be circulated to bridge owners

Action: Justin Ward to share survey with Kevin Dentith and Andrew Strang prior to release [as there are alternative options]

There was discussion about who the survey should be circulated to. Hazel McDonald confirmed that the survey is more targeted for bridge owners.

Action: Once finalised – survey to be circulated through UKBB members for bridge owners

9. AOB

Heavy and High Load Grid Group presentation - Neil Loudon noted this could be shared.

Action: Justin Ward to circulate the Heavy and High Load Grid Group Presentation to UKBB members

Boundary guidance – Neil Loudon said this guidance is currently with Highways England and is going through editorial changes.

Access planning working group – Neil said a meeting is due to take place shortly and that good progress had been made with Network Rail

DMRB – the Structures documents have all been published. There are two documents that have not yet appeared (these included, 1) Structural Safety Reporting – more an internal document, and 2) SCOUR management document (formerly BD97) has also not been issued yet as it requires the incorporation of the latest climate research)

Alastair Dore mentioned the Challenge Fund and asked about an announcement on this. Liz Kirkham reported that Gloucestershire had received a letter and funding last week.

Matthew Gilbert said that EPSRC funding, if supported by industry, is well received and added that the BOF Grand Challenges could provide a useful stimulus for both ideas and also more favourable response from funding bodies. Liz Kirkham responded saying that this was certainly the view from DfT on funding, that, wider sector support is well regarded.

Peter Simpson said that lessons are being learnt from Peter said that Fred would take over as the future representative on the Board from the Canal & River Trust.

Action: Justin Ward/Kevin Dentith to check if information had been shared on the spend on unrecoverable accident damage can be capitalised (as agreed by CIPFA guidance)

Action: Liz Kirkham to speak with Justin Ward about getting in touch with software suppliers and contacting them to make them aware of the release of SAVI (formerly accreditation board)

Richard Fish said that he had been discussing the investigation of bridge collapses with Mark Hansford, Director of Knowledge at ICE.

10. Date of next meeting

16 September 2020