

BRIDGE OWNERS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING BOF32: TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2010 AT KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

PRESENT

Campbell Middleton	CHAIRMAN Cambridge University Engineering Dept. (CUED)
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Graeme Brown	DoRD(NI)
Peter Brown	ADEPT and Oxfordshire County Council
Graham Cole	ADEPT and Surrey County Council
Martin Dils	BRB (Residuary) Ltd.
Richard Fish	TECHNICAL SECRETARY
John Cooper	Large Bridges Group and Humber Bridge Board
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Paul Foskett	DfT
Neil Loudon	Highways Agency (HA)
Graeme Muir	Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS)
Andy Phillips	Welsh Assembly Government
Stephen Pottle	Transport for London
Bill Valentine	Transport Scotland
Paul Williams	LoBEG
Mike Winter	ADEPT and UKBB
Paul Fidler	CUED

INTRODUCTION

The CHAIRMAN welcomed BOF members to the meeting and gave an overview of the agenda and highlighted the anticipated decisions to be made on the future of BOF and other groups in respect of the government's spending review.

He also welcomed Mike Winter who was a guest at this meeting and the present chairman of both the ADEPT (formerly CSS) Bridges Group and UK Bridges Board (the latter having been recently ratified by UKRLG)

The CHAIRMAN also paid tribute to Greg Perks who had recently retired from Northumberland CC and who had been the last chair of UKBB and also the Vice Chair of the CSS Bridges Group. The SECRETARY agreed to send Greg an email from BOF to thank him for his work in the bridges arena over many years

ACTION: Richard Fish

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Graham Bessant	LUL
John Clarke	BRB (Martin Dils substitute)
Albert Daly	NRA (Ireland)
Peter Hill	Humber/Larger Bridges Group (John Cooper substitute)
Robert Humphreys	ADEPT/CSS (Wales)

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES – BOF31 11 MAY 2010

The minutes of BOF31 were accepted subject to the following corrections:

Page 5 Item 8c(ii)

Paul Foskett had concerns over the statement in the minute. After discussion, it was agreed that the simplest solution was to strike the first sentence from the record.

Brian Bell gave some background to this minute which had been first aired at BOF28 and related to the need for a formal agreement between Network Rail and the Highways Agency to determine a cost sharing arrangement. It was noted that similar projects and joint working agreements had been achieved through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Page 7 Item 4g

Paul Foskett had concerns about the phrase “...and no report was available.” After discussion it was agreed that it should be changed to “...and a report had been received from Andrew Oldland.”

Page 8 Item 6

All references to “assessment” should be deemed to read “risk assessment”. Third Q: replace “16” with “6”. Eighth Q: replace “tears” with “years”.

Page 13 Item 8d

Steve Pottle asked for the following to be added between “on” and “the” in the first line: “obtaining funding for the additional work requested on”.

The chairman noted that all of the revised minutes of BOF31 could be considered as being in the public domain via the BOF website. Paul Williams asked for feedback on the number of hits received by the BOF website and Paul Fidler agreed to provide this information at the next meeting.

ACTION: Paul Fidler

3. BOF Research Projects Update

a. Status of projects submitted to Bridges Board in October 2009

The Chairman cited the process that had led to the projects favoured by BOF being submitted to UKBB in October 2008 and then on to UKRLG and DfT, only to be asked for a resubmission in October 2009.

Paul Foskett noted that the four projects had been resubmitted but, in the meantime, UKRLG was in the process of reconsidering its research role to become more of a dissemination mechanism. He stated that an invitation had been issued this month under the DfT framework for a consultant to undertake the disseminating role. This statement led to some puzzlement among some BOF members especially as it seemed to contradict other DfT commitments made at other meetings. Mike Winter noted that his discussions with John Dowie at DfT had only indicated that there was to be less funding via UKRLG and that the current priorities were to be winter maintenance and, possibly, asset management.

After discussion, during which the meeting agreed that using a consultant to disseminate research outcomes seemed an unlikely solution and that this was a role that BOF might be better suited to carry out, Paul Foskett agreed to check the accuracy of his statement and report back.

ACTION: Paul Foskett

4. Future of UKRLG, UK Bridges Board & BOF

The Chairman introduced this item by posing three questions:

- How should DfT decide on priorities?
- How should DfT procure research?
- How should DfT plan to disseminate information?

He then invited observations from key people attending the meeting:

a. Paul Foskett

Paul outlined the present reviews underway as part of the Coalition Government's spending review and predicted an outcome which would see a much reduced programme of work. He could say nothing about the future of UKRLG and its Boards, or any other group, but repeated his earlier point that UKRLG was likely to change its role to one of dissemination. As far as BOF was concerned, the DfT held the view that it should be considered as a sub-group of UKBB.

In terms of the DfT contribution to the spending review, several scenarios had been prepared but there would be little in the way of detail for UKRLG etc. as

only a high level strategic view was being taken as yet. He agreed that UKRLG and Boards had proved to be very helpful and useful to DfT but it was impossible to make any guarantees for their future.

The chairman asked about the need to use DfT frameworks for procuring research work and questioned whether there were other government departments which BOF should engage with. In response to the former point, Paul explained that occasional single tender actions were used in the right circumstances and, to the latter, he felt that DfT was the appropriate government department.

b. Mike Winter

Acknowledging that he had only recently taken on UKBB chairmanship, Mike identified the benefits of strong governance in bridge matters, a good balance between being proactive and reactive and the fact that UKBB covered many owners. He also recognised the role that BOF had with UKBB in terms of research prioritisation and suggested that other Boards should consider similar arrangements.

Mike referred to the review of UKRLG and Boards undertaken by DfT (led by Charlotte Dixon) which had taken place in 07/08 and which had confirmed its present role. He considered that there was no appetite for change as UKRLG performed a key task for DfT: engaging with local authorities and other UK highway authorities.

Mike referred again to his meeting with John Dowie where he had received a strong hint that BOF funding was likely to be reduced, although DfT could still make a contribution. In the round, John Dowie is anticipating a more reactive approach to research demands to cover incidents such as the Cumbria floods and the problems with winter maintenance in the last two winters.

As for BOF, Mike noted that there was evidence of the benefits that had arisen through BOF outcomes but questioned the profile and visibility. He also had concerns that it could be alleged that there was too much overlap across UKBB, ADEPT Bridges Group and BOF and the fact that it occasionally seemed to be the same people talking about the same things at different meetings. Mike also thought that BOF should remain non-commercial but could consider means of income generation and possible closer affiliation to a professional body such as ICE.

c. Richard Fish

Richard returned to the days before UKRLG when he had been secretary of the CSS Bridges Group and the problems that had been encountered in terms of engaging with DfT. He cited the vision of Ian Holmes at DfT who had created the UKRLG structure and the benefits that had flowed from that decision.

Referring to points made about perceived duplication in bridge activities by the various bodies, he recalled addressing this issue in past presentations by considering a diagram with three overlapping circles. The questions to be answered were how big the overlap was and did this add value or reduce effectiveness. Richard reiterated some of the points already made about sharing information and used the phrase “knowledge transfer”, recognising that in a time of financial pressures it was even more important to keep bridge owners informed and aware of potential problems.

d. Peter Brown/Graham Cole

Peter Brown pointed out that the main difference between BOF and the ADEPT Bridges Group lay in the former being a technical forum whereas the latter was concerned more with bridge policy. He felt that the whole issue of dissemination could be improved, especially in terms of the cascading principle (a strong point in support of ADEPT), which enabled technical or policy matters to reach smaller bridge owners. Peter thought that the main weakness of BOF was the fact that the use of the website could be improved.

Graham Cole pointed out that the cascading in ADEPT was work which started life in BOF but did not necessarily carry the BOF brand.

5. Future Funding of BOF

The chairman opened this debate by noting that, unless alternative streams of funding could be identified, there was a risk of BOF being unable to continue.

Brian Bell began by recalling the origins of BOF which had started as a voluntary meeting of like minded people. It had only been aligned with UKBB and UKRLG to help secure funding from DfT. He felt that were ways in which costs could be reduced: could the website be abandoned?; could meetings be hosted by different members?; could lunch costs be reduced? etc. Brian was unsure as to whether Network Rail could make a commitment to BOF funding but he was sure that he could host a meeting.

Bill Valentine suggested that the focus of BOF should be associated with bridge safety and reliability, which should be of importance to national governments.

Stephen Pottle suggested that BOF should look at ways of both cutting costs and raising funds. The latter could be achieved through sponsorship, hosting conferences, advertising on the web or by promoting user guides. The last of these could be seen as a better output than research projects.

Neil Loudon felt that DfT funding may not be lost in its entirety. Mike Winter agreed: a reduced level of DfT contribution was a possible outcome. Mike also felt that a BOF prospectus would be very helpful in promoting the work BOF had

undertaken and pointing out the wider benefits to the bridge community and the travelling public.

The Chairman felt that the most important elements of the BOF budget were the website and the Technical Secretary. He agreed to issue members with a breakdown of costs

ACTION: Chairman

The Chairman also floated the idea of member organisations paying a subscription of, say, £2,000 per annum and asked for members' reactions to this idea:

Mike Winter: This could only work through ADEPT rather than individual Authorities and the only source of possible funding was the ADEPT research committee. He agreed to submit a bid for £6,000 for a 3 year period. *Post meeting note: the bid was submitted and rejected in November 2010.*

Graeme Brown: Agreed that BOF was a worthy cause but Northern Ireland Roads Service was struggling to cover staff costs at present. Graeme agreed, however, to try to find a small contribution.

Graeme Muir: Pointed out that SCOTS represented 32 councils but typical meeting attendance was about 20. He felt that it would be very difficult to secure widespread support.

Martin Dils: Agreed to present a strong case for funding from BRB, as BOF enhanced his role as an intelligent client.

Stephen Pottle: Agreed to try to obtain support from TfL. He felt that all public sector clients who dealt with private sector specialists needed help as provided by BOF.

Rod Howe: Felt that BWB got more from BOF than they put in but, although he would put forward a strong case, was not confident of securing funding.

John Cooper: Big bridge owners all had different funding and management arrangements so it was hard to speak for all. Each would have to be approached on an individual basis.

Brian Bell: Agreed to try to secure funding but was not confident.

Paul Williams: Pointed out that his members already paid a subscription to LoBEG but he felt that LoBEG itself might be able to contribute up to £1,000 per annum.

Neil Loudon: Agreed to try to secure a contribution but was not optimistic.

ACTION: Graeme Brown, Martin Dils, Stephen Pottle, Rod Howe, Brian Bell, Paul Williams, Neil Loudon

Summing up, the Chairman agreed to aim for a subscription of £950 from each member, and to take the discussion a step further at BOF33. He also proposed to meet John Dowie at DfT after the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review, perhaps with Mike Winter and Richard Fish.

ACTION: Chairman

6. Technical Session – Corrosion Prevention and Concrete Repairs

Two presentations were given: Ali Sharafi of Amey, technical chairman of the Corrosion Prevention Association spoke on recent developments in electro-chemical repairs, with particular reference to the Midland Links motorway viaducts, and John Drewett of the Concrete Repair Association presented on the new European Standard EN1504. Both speakers agreed that their presentations could be posted in the public area of the BOF website.

ACTION: Paul Fidler

The Chairman invited questions:

Stephen Pottle asked about Cathodic Protection, using depressed current, in post tensioned bridges: Ali Sharafi noted the importance of linking such repairs to structural behaviour and the need to closely monitor current levels to reduce the risk of hydrogen embrittlement. The technique was not widely used in the UK but was employed in Japan.

Brian Bell referred to ongoing work at BRE (it had been hoped that Stuart Matthews could have attended BOF32) and questioned whether additional research was needed to further refine concrete repair intervention. Although both speakers felt that the present level of knowledge was adequate, Neil Loudon thought that more could be done in terms of timescales, in other words *when* was intervention necessary, and the need to accurately predict deterioration over time.

Stephen Pottle referred to a proprietary product and recent disappointing results on site. It was agreed that there was a need to close the gap between product performance and the needs or expectations of bridge owners. The speakers agreed that there had been examples of poor performance and cited the problems of site

work having more variables than laboratory conditions and occasional difficulties in interpreting results.

Stephen also raised the issue of examples of Whole Life Costing that had been prepared by the industry for the Highways Agency. Neil Loudon confirmed that these were under consideration.

Other points raised by the meeting reflected on the need to install monitoring with cathodic protection systems and the options for de-icing agents on vulnerable bridges.

On conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman thanked the presenters for attending and updating BOF on this subject.

7. BOF Research Projects Update – II

Details of each of the following were given in the document: Current Research Projects – Sep2010.odt, issued with the BOF32 agenda. The following points were aired at the meeting:

a. Revision of BS6779 Part 4 (Masonry Bridge Parapets)

Brian Bell confirmed that this project was between 9 and 12 months behind schedule but felt that the responsibility lay with DfT as named project manager. Brian agreed to draft a letter which the Chairman would send. Mike Winter agreed to raise this at UKBB. It was agreed that the Surveyor Conference paper should be put on the BOF website.

ACTION: Brian Bell, Chairman, Mike Winter, Paul Fidler
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b. Bridge deck slabs with non-metallic reinforcement

Graeme Brown confirmed that the report was on the BOF website. It was agreed that Su Taylor should be invited to BOF33 to give a presentation.

ACTION: Chairman

c. Carbon composites for strengthening steel structures

Brian Bell noted that there had been some additional delays, also attributable to DfT, in that the first review meeting was still to be arranged. He was sure, however, that the project would move forward satisfactorily.

d. Automatic bridge inspections

Stephen Pottle had little to report from TRL other than he had seen a trial of a French system and that TRL had developed their own technique but this had yet to be tested.

e. Scanning of HA research reports

Neil Loudon reported no progress.

f. Bridge Inspector qualification (Part II)

Stephen Pottle reported that all necessary paperwork and sufficient funding was now in place to make a start, although DfT had reservations as to whether they could enter into a contract when they were not funding the project. Stephen was in discussions with Andrew Oldland at DfT and Mike Winter agreed to raise this at UKBB.

ACTION: Stephen Pottle, Mike Winter

8. Other Bridge Research Update

a. TfL – Modern Built Environment Knowledge Transfer Network

Stephen Pottle gave a short presentation. There was a call for expressions of interest in projects to tap into a £10m fund being promoted by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB). It was agreed that all outstanding BOF projects should be put forward and the Chairman agreed to contact Philip Charles at CIRIA. Knowledge Transfer projects are aimed at taking academic ideas into industry and plan to use existing technical fora where appropriate.

ACTION: Chairman

b. Network Rail

Brian Bell described the Network Rail research programme which includes a project on advanced composite truss nodes in collaboration with a number of funders including the TSB (as above), CIRIA and EU. He was also working with the Concrete Society on a revision of TR55 (FRP strengthening of concrete structures). Other projects, including those with EU funding, were in the development stage. Brian also pointed out that the report into the failure of the Malahide Viaduct was now available and that EPSRC have recently published a review of civil engineering research.

c. Highways Agency

Neil Loudon reported that HA were part of the ERANET project, which Albert Daly was attending in Vienna, and that a follow up to the Maunsell report, to be called the State of Bridge Infrastructure (SOBI), was also planned.

d. Other

Paul Williams reported that LoBEG had just published a report on some 900 structures looking at deterioration trends over a 6 year period. He agreed to send this so that it could be placed on the BOF website.

ACTION: Paul Williams

9. Actions from BOF31 minutes

Not taken.

10. Any Other Business

Stephen Pottle issued a list of the Atkins bridge research projects, as previously actioned.

11. Proposed dates for other 2011 meetings

January	(BOF33)	Tuesday 11 th January 2011 – venue to be decided*
May	(BOF34)	Tuesday 10 th May 2011

*The chairman explained that facilities at the University were booked at this time and suggested two options: Scotland (probably Edinburgh) or Worksop (the latter he could access via the work he was now undertaking as part of his role with the Laing O'Rourke research fund. He agreed to take soundings via email.

ACTION: Chairman
