

BRIDGE OWNERS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING BOF35: TUESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2011 AT ROBINSON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Note: This was an impromptu BOF meeting with those BOF members who had attended the FIF1 meeting and who were still present after the end of the last FIF1 session.

PRESENT

Campbell Middleton	Chairman & Cambridge University Engineering Department (CUED)
Graham Bessant	London Underground
Albert Daly	NRA (Ireland)
Richard Fish	Technical Secretary
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Neil Loudon	Highways Agency (HA)
Graeme Muir	Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS)
Tudor Roberts	Welsh Government
Andrew Scullion	Large Bridges Group and Humber Bridge Board
Paul Fidler	CUED

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reiterated the impromptu nature of this meeting and apologised for not being able to confirm that the meeting was going ahead until late in the afternoon. He also thanked all BOF members who had been able to attend the FIF1 and hoped that it had been a useful update on academic research across the UK.

There was no formal agenda for this BOF35 meeting but the following issues were discussed:

1. BRIDGE DECK SLABS WITH NON-METALLIC REINFORCEMENT

The Final Report for this project had just been issued to the Chairman and Albert Daly, as head of the steering group, by Su Taylor of Queens University, Belfast. It had also been emailed to all BOF members. Whilst the report covered the general aspects of the trial and the outcome of the load testing,

there was nothing on whole life costing which was thought to have been part of the original specification. There were also concerns regarding the value of the load test which seemed to have been carried out simply to reassure the client. There could be no useful conclusions until some of the longer term effects such as bond, creep and chemical reactions could be determined

It was agreed that a formal review process was needed for this and other projects, including an appraisal of the contractor's performance and the opportunity to feed back comments. Neil Loudon offered to make available the Highways Agency's standard contractor evaluation form which could be modified for BOF use by following the headings that the Agency used.

ACTION: Neil Loudon

It was also noted that Su Taylor had asked for an extension of time but the wider issues of project management were unknown due to the recent changes within DfT who were responsible for contractual matters.

2. FUTURE OF BOF

The Chairman explained that the proposed meeting with Steve Berry (DfT) and Mike Winter (ADEPT and UKBB) had been fixed but had then been cancelled at the last moment due to pressures on Steve Berry's diary. The Chairman had tried to rearrange but to date had not been successful. He would continue to press for a meeting (which might hopefully include Richard Fish) at the earliest opportunity, so that the future of BOF could be established.

ACTION: Chairman

Whilst the Chairman noted that some organisations would be prepared to offer subscription payments to BOF, he felt that it was important that a degree of equity and transparency was part of any such system. At the present time, funds were available for another two BOF meetings – probably late November/early December 2011 and spring 2012.

Neil Loudon noted that, in order to justify expenditure on subscriptions, it was necessary to identify the benefits. It was agreed that a standard sheet should be prepared listing BOF achievements and benefits which could be used by any organisation attempting to secure funding.

ACTION: Chairman/Richard Fish

3. CHANGES TO BOF MEMBERSHIP

Albert Daly announced that he would no longer be the NRA attendee from Ireland but this role would be passing to Liam Duffy who was the national structures manager within the NRA. Albert will keep in touch with BOF issues

in his role looking after the NRA research programme as part of Liam's team. Albert proposed that Liam should attend the next BOF meeting and also give a presentation on the NRA bridge assessment programme. The Chairman suggested that this might be combined with a review of the Parsons Brinckerhoff audit of the UK assessment programme.

ACTION: Chairman

The Chairman thanked Albert for his contributions to BOF over the years that he had been a member.

4. FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM – FEEDBACK

BOF members had been invited to attend the first Forum (FIF1) meeting, especially as the date clashed with that originally set for a full BOF meeting.

Feedback was mixed, with a strong desire to see practical outcomes from research projects which should be driven by, and of use to, practitioners within the industry. A number of non-bridge projects were highlighted, such as polymer strengthening of rail ballast and the mapping of the underworld (utilities etc).

On the latter, discussion extended into the absence of as-built drawings which were often never produced: the consultant preferring to forfeit retention monies rather than produce record drawings. It was noted that the absence or poor quality of as built drawings appeared to be a frequent problem.

5. INSTRUMENTATION OF BIG BRIDGES

The Chairman and Andrew Scullion reported on recent developments in structural health/performance monitoring on Humber Bridge. The Chairman also noted that he was also in discussions with Barry Colford of Forth Bridge and that he was also installing monitoring on the new Walton bridge being built by Surrey County Council. His ultimate aim was to have a completely "smart" bridge.

Neil Loudon noted that the Highways Agency had had problems with faulty sensors which were giving incorrect readings. Tudor Roberts also expressed some concern with over-reliance on new technology to provide all the answers on bridge performance.

The discussion also extended into the benefits of instrumenting piles in order to assess their actual loading, as exemplified in some work being undertaken on London building foundations.

6. BRIDGE INSPECTOR TRAINING

In Steve Pottle's absence, uncertainty was expressed by a number of members on the exact position with respect to the contract and the workshop sessions that were being planned. The Chairman offered to contact Steve Berry at DfT on the former matter.

ACTION: Chairman

7. NEXT MEETING

As noted above, a full BOF meeting will be arranged for late November or early December. The Chairman will propose some dates in the near future.

Richard Fish
October 2011