

**ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

A meeting of the Board was held at Brenzett Village Hall, on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 2.00 pm.

**PRESENT.**

Elected Members:

A Clifton-Holt Esq., F Cooke Esq., L Cooke Esq. C Ramus Esq. and M Wrouth Esq.,

Appointed Members:

Cllr R Bird, Cllr P Coe, Cllr C Goddard, Cllr C Hill, Cllr A Hills, D Lovejoy Esq., R Nickerson Esq., Cllr P Osbourne, R Patten Esq., and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

N. Botting Esq., Clerk/Engineer to the Board, Mrs D Chalcraft, Financial Officer and R Monje Esq., Assistant Clerk/Engineer to the Board.

**625. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting; he then asked for members to stand for a minute's silence in respect of ex-Walland Marsh Board members Jim Pilcher and John Wreathall, who had recently passed away.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Elected Members;

D Cole Esq., Mrs H Langrish, J Langrish Esq., E Lovejoy Esq., D Thompson Esq., D Wheeler Esq. and A Wellsted Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr M Burgess, Cllr A Cragg, R Langrish Esq., Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr Mrs C Solly and Cllr N Waters.

**626. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2018.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, having previously been circulated to members prior to the meeting, were taken as read. The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the previous meeting and signed by the Chairman.

**627. MATTERS ARISING.**

The Clerk explained that the subject of gravel extraction and gravel pit expansion as mentioned in Minute 624 would be covered in Any Other Business.

**628. APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.**

The Vice-Chairman summarised the approved minutes from the F and GP Committee meetings held since the last Board meeting. He informed the members of an upcoming meeting with Amber Rudd MP regarding the ongoing issues with surface water management at Winchelsea Beach, and a leak identified in the Pannel Petty Sewer feed pipe at Pett Level. The latter was an EA asset that served Board watercourses and helped sustain water levels in the SSSI, he stated that the EA were designing a solution both to the pipe and associated stop structure.

**629. ENGINEER'S REPORT.**

The Clerk/Engineer read out his report and commented on the need for two pumping stations to run in May which caused issues with underwater blocking the screens. He also made comment on the very wet Easter period which had necessitated the swift removal of stopboards in certain locations. There were no issues raised by members.



### **630. CONSENTS.**

The Engineer gave a description of three consents issued since the last meeting; 18/RT/273, a culvert re-line at Robertsbridge, 18/RM/274, a scour protection slab on a KCC structure at St Mary in the Marsh and 18/RM/275, brickwork repairs and a temporary dam on the Abbatridge Lesser Sewer at Snargate.

### **631. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS.**

A list of accounts paid since the last meeting had been circulated to members prior to this meeting. The Vice-Chairman explained that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had scrutinised the accounts paid and asked if members had any questions; with no issues raised, the list was subsequently approved.

### **632. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.**

The Financial Officer gave a breakdown on income and expenditure for the year 2017/18 and the first two months of the current financial year; both the Financial Officer and the Vice-Chairman were praised for their good work and effort.

### **633. RATES TO BE WRITTEN OFF.**

Details of rates to be written off, which had previously been circulated, were discussed by the Financial Officer. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P Osbourne, SECONDED by M Wrouth Esq and voted unanimously that rates amounting to £243.80 be written off, bringing the total for the year 2017/18 to £319.20.

### **634. FINAL ACCOUNTS.**

The Final Accounts, having been previously circulated and examined and confirmed by the Internal Auditor, were presented to the Board by the Financial Officer. After acknowledging the excellent work of the Financial Officer, it was PROPOSED by Cllr C Goddard, SECONDED by P Coe Esq. and carried unanimously, that the Final Accounts be approved, which were then duly signed by the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Clerk/Engineer.

The Financial Officer asked the Board if it would consider transferring a proportion of the surplus of the income for the year into the Capital Reserve Fund. After deliberation it was PROPOSED by L Cooke Esq., SECONDED by A Clifton-Holt Esq. and carried with one abstention from a new member, that £20,000 be transferred from the Revenue Account to Capital Reserve.

### **635. ANNUAL RETURN & INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT.**

The Financial Officer discussed the Internal Audit and drew attention to the previously circulated Internal Audit Report. She advised that there were no problems identified and that the Internal Auditor was satisfied with the way the Board operated. The Annual Governance Statement on the Annual Return was then presented to the Board by the Clerk/Engineer. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P Osbourne, SECONDED by A Clifton-Holt Esq. and voted unanimously that the statement should be signed and dated by the Chairman and Clerk. The Financial Officer then presented the Accounting Statements 2017/18. It was PROPOSED by Cllr C Goddard, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and voted unanimously that the statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

### **636. PROPOSED ADOPTION OF WATERCOURSE AT BRENZETT.**

The Chairman asked if there were any declarations of interest before proceeding on the agenda item. Cllr C Goddard stated that he sat on the Planning Committee for Folkestone and Hythe District Council, and as such would abstain from any vote, as he understood the adoption of the watercourse was set by the Planning Authority as one of the conditions for a nearby development. The Clerk/Engineer referred the members to the distributed report he had written and gave the background to the current situation. He explained that in 2006 the Environment Agency had granted permission for a proposed housing development to discharge treated effluent into the watercourse, and Board staff had suggested, after inspection, that remedial work to the watercourse was required to improve flow. In addition to this it was stated that the Board may consider



adoption of the same under Section 14 LDA 1991, as it would bring a general improvement to drainage in the area and ensure the treated effluent could flow away. The C/E also stated that surface water from the development would be included with the flow, attenuated to a maximum discharge rate of 5 litres per second combined.

The Clerk/Engineer informed the Board that he had received a formal complaint regarding the proposed adoption from both the landlord and tenant of land adjacent to the watercourse, who had objected to the watercourse being cleared for Board appraisal. Furthermore, they stated that the watercourse was in the sole ownership of the landlord whose predecessors had excavated it some years ago. The C/E stated that he was preparing a response explaining that the works were carried out by the developer, that under Section 14 Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board could adopt any watercourse in its district to maintain its efficiency (other than Main River), and any adoption by the Board did not absolve any riparian rights and responsibilities wherever they may lay.

After some debate the members agreed that the adoption should not in any way be viewed as facilitating the development but purely as a means to ensure drainage from the area was preserved. It was subsequently PROPOSED by A Clifton-Holt Esq., SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and voted in favour with one abstention, that the watercourse be adopted for maintenance purposes only, under the Board's permissive powers.

### **637. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018, venue to be confirmed.

### **638. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

Cllr ARJ Hills informed the Board that he had attended a meeting between the EA and KCC regarding overall aggregate strategy in Kent. He said that the possibility of revisiting the EA's use of the Borrow Pit at Dungeness had been discussed, as current restrictions on its use had proven too expensive. This meant that the Agency was still purchasing stone from Brett Aggregates for beach re-charge without the option of reclaiming back the material at Dungeness. F Cooke Esq. stated that the current method was a waste of a land-based resource; this comment received broad agreement by other members. Cllr ARJ Hills stated that he was unsatisfied with the Board's response to the consultation on the proposed expansion of the gravel pits at Lydd as he believed it could be read as the Board's support for the works. The Clerk/Engineer explained that staff had neither supported or opposed such works, but had advised KCC on the possible effects the works would have on water level management in the area, both short and long term. The Assistant Engineer suggested that the EA's water transfer licensing would possibly allow certain restrictions to be placed on dewatering methods during excavation of material. Cllr ARJ Hills argued that it would be too late in the process, and the proposed new pits would already then be regarded as official aggregate reserves to be exploited. After further debate, Cllr ARJ Hills repeated his dissatisfaction with the Board's response and asked that this be recorded; the Clerk/Engineer assured him that it would be stated in the minutes.

Cllr D Wimble asked if water levels in Romney Marsh could be raised as the dry weather had caused problems; the Clerk/Engineer replied that he would speak to the EA to check that feeds from the Royal Military Canal were operating.

Lastly, the Clerk/Engineer reported on efforts made by staff to ensure compliance with the recently-introduced General Data Protection Act. It was acknowledged that advice on the legislation was somewhat muddled, but it was imperative that the Board be seen to address the issue.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1606 hrs.