

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Brenzett Village Hall, on Wednesday 21st November 2018 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

P Boulden Esq., L Cooke Esq., E Langrish Esq., Mrs H Langrish, D Thompson Esq., D Wheeler Esq., A Wellsted Esq., S Wright Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members:

Cllr R Bird, Cllr M Burgess, Cllr P Coe, Cllr C Hill, Cllr A Hills, D Lovejoy Esq., R Patten Esq., Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr N Waters, Cllr R Wilkins 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.

639. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and asked the Clerk to read out any apologies for absence;

Apologies for absence were received from:

Elected Members;

C Apps Esq., A Clifton Esq., J Langrish Esq. and E Lovejoy Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr G Allison, Cllr A Cragg, Cllr C Goddard, Cllr J Johnson, R Langrish Esq. and Cllr Mrs C Solly.

640. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk took the meeting and asked for nominees for Chairman. After brief deliberation it was PROPOSED by Cllr P Coe, SECONDED by D Thompson Esq. and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that D Lovejoy Esq. be re-appointed as Chairman to the Board for the year.

641. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman took the meeting and asked for nominees for Vice-Chairman. After deliberation it was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that L Cooke Esq. be re-appointed as Vice-Chairman to the Board for the year.

642. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 27th JUNE 2018.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 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.

643. MATTERS ARISING.

Item 638. Cllr A Hills reported that the proposed M2 gravel pit sites at Lydd had been removed from the Kent County Council minerals plan due to concerns raised by Natural England.

644. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer gave an overview of the previously-distributed report. He stated he was pleased to inform the Board that the failing structure on the Brook Petty Sewer at Snailham had now been replaced; he added that the feed pipe and structure repairs on the Pannel Petty Sewer had also been completed by the EA. The Vice-Chairman explained events at White Sand Estate at Camber, where an Ordinary Watercourse had become polluted by effluent which had begun to flow into the SSSI. After much effort by Board staff and Environmental Health at Rother District Council, the problem was identified as a severely blocked Southern Water foul main sewer which had back-flowed through a redundant lateral pipe. Concluding, he informed the Board that Southern Water had removed a dozen tanker loads of affected silt and water before arriving rain had flushed the watercourse through. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the Vice-Chairman who had worked tirelessly through the event to ensure a successful outcome.

645. APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

The Vice-Chairman reported on the approved minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. He focused on the Agency's tentative investigation on the future of the RADIS scheme and how it might be operated and maintained. Cllr Mrs S Prochak asked for clarification on the purpose of the scheme; the Clerk/Engineer replied it had been constructed after floods experienced in the early 1960s, its primary purpose was to protect the town of Rye but it had also received much funding from Government to drain land, in order to make it suitable for arable farming in the interests of food security. This, he continued, had been achieved by embanking parts of the River Rother and the construction of numerous Agency pumping stations, many of which pumped IDB maintained watercourses. Cllr M Burgess asked if the embankments were in good condition; the Clerk/Engineer replied that the EA still maintained the embankments but erosion to the toe of the river bank was becoming an issue in certain locations.

646. 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.

647. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

The Financial Officer gave a breakdown on income and expenditure for the year to date. There were no issues raised.

648. EXTERNAL AUDITORS CERTIFICATE AND OPINION.

The Financial Officer informed the Board that the Audit had been completed. The External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had raised no issues with the Audit Return.

649. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 23rd January 2019, venue to be confirmed.

650. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Cllr R Wilkins left the meeting at 1450 hrs.

The Clerk/Engineer thanked those members who had returned their Declaration of Interests and stated he would chase remaining forms.

The Vice-Chairman reported that he, the Chairman and staff had held a meeting with the EA regarding the precept paid to the Agency. He informed the Board that EA funding was diminishing, meaning that the precept would increase to ensure watercourses classified by the EA as "low risk" would continue to be maintained, and for the following year the increase would be 1.9%. He added that in the longer term there was a likelihood that the EA would view these low-risk watercourses as candidates for de-maining; and this would put pressure on the Board to consider their adoption. He questioned the capacity of the Board's staff and contractors to absorb more maintenance works and associated costs, and stated that he would argue against any de-maining

programme or any Public Sector Co-operation agreements, as he was firmly of the belief that the EA had the necessary staff to continue the maintenance of such watercourses.

Lastly, Cllr A Hills reported that the Agency had secured full funding for the Green Wall sea defence improvements between Jurys Gap to Dengemarsh; he also informed the Board of the upcoming Met Office climate change report that was due out in December.

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the staff for their efforts and declared the meeting closed at 1510hrs.