

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held online on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

A Clifton-Holt Esq., L Cooke Esq., E Langrish Esq.

Appointed Members:

Cllr M Burgess, Cllr P Coe, Cllr K Gandy, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, D Lovejoy Esq., Cllr A Mier, Cllr Ms W Nevard, R Nickerson Esq., Cllr Rev H Norton, Cllr P Osbourne, Cllr S Prochak 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.

746. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and requested the Clerk chair the meeting. The Clerk explained that Defra had requested Boards to update their Byelaws to allow the continued use of virtual meetings as the 7th of May deadline set last year had passed. The Board's byelaws now stated that it could hold meetings virtually or as an actual attended meeting or a combination of both. He added that due to the timing of the Board meeting, Defra had allowed the Board to update the byelaws after permission had been granted by the Chairman.

The Clerk welcomed Cllr Ms Wendy Nevard to the meeting, who was a new Board member appointed by New Romney Town Council.

The Clerk then read out apologies from those who were unable to attend.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

S Body Esq., P Boulden Esq., F Cooke Esq., A Wellsted Esq., D Wheeler Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr A Cragg, Cllr C Goddard and Mrs C Solly.

747. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 27th JANUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2021, 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 would be signed by the Chairman after the meeting.

748. MATTERS ARISING

737. Engineer's Report – Cllr Mrs S Prochak stated that the works by Highways to alleviate surface water run-off that had caused flooding at Robertsbridge in late December had begun but were yet to be completed.

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

The approved minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee recent meetings were taken as read.

750. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the previously distributed report and made comment on the poor elver run witnessed by the Assistant Engineer, who believed the very dry early Spring had had a detrimental effect. Cllr ARJ Hills stated that prolonged low sea temperatures may also have contributed.

751. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS

A list of accounts paid since the last meeting had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Financial Officer explained that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had scrutinised the accounts paid and asked if members had any question; there were no issues raised.

752. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

The Financial Officer gave a comprehensive breakdown of the Income and Expenditure for the last financial year and the current year to date. No questions were raised.

753. FINAL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2021.

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 ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and carried unanimously that the Final Accounts be approved and be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Engineer.

754. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2020/21

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 ARJ Hills, SECONDED by L Cooke 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 2020/21. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P Coe, SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and voted unanimously that the statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

755. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 17th November 2021, whether virtual or actual to be confirmed.

756. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk/Engineer stated that ADA had informed all Boards that it was looking increasingly unlikely that Board activities using diesel would be exempt from tax meaning that from April 2022 maintenance costs would increase significantly for that year. The Clerk stated that the drainage rate for that financial year would almost certainly rise by more than 2%. After further debate, members asked that the Clerk write to local MPs to highlight the problem. The Clerk replied that many MPs across the country had been lobbied to little effect, but he would endeavour to emphasise the issue. It was acknowledged that in the long term, the use of diesel would be gradually phased out as biofuel technology improved and became a viable alternative.

There being no other business, the Clerk closed the meeting at 1440hrs.