

**ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

A meeting of the Board was held at Brookland Village Hall on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 2.00 pm.

**PRESENT.**

Elected Members:

S Body Esq., Frank Cooke Esq., L Cooke Esq., J Langrish Esq., E Lovejoy Esq., C Ramus Esq. and S Wright Esq.

Appointed Members:

C Body Esq., Cllr M Burgess, Cllr P Coe, Cllr ARJ Hills, D Lovejoy Esq., Cllr A Mier, Cllr Ms W Nevard, R Nickerson Esq., Cllr Rev H Norton, Cllr Mrs S Prochak Cllr Mrs K Rye, Mrs C Solly 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.

**757. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and asked the Clerk/Engineer to read out the apologies from those unable to attend.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

A Clifton Esq., A Clifton-Holt Esq., Mrs H V Langrish, T Piper Esq., A Wellsted Esq., D Wheeler Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr A Cragg, Cllr C Goddard, Cllr C Hoggart and Cllr P Osborne.

**758. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 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 were duly signed by the Chairman.

**759. MATTERS ARISING**

748. Matters Arising – Cllr Mrs S Prochak updated members on the works to alleviate surface water flooding in Robertsbridge which had occurred in December 2020. She explained that whilst some progress had been made, certain properties were still requiring sandbag protection in heavy rainfall and further work was therefore required.

**760. ENGINEER'S REPORT**

The Clerk/Engineer read through the previously distributed report and provided updates on weedcutting progress and refurbishment works by the EA on the Denge Main outfall, which had been brought forward as an emergency response after storms had rendered it unstable. He stated that the electrical motor at Kitsbridge Pumping Station had failed since the report was written and would need rewinding at a cost of £3750.00 including VAT; the work was due to be complete within a week. He added that with the current weather no pumping was necessary and any flows were being dealt with by gravity discharge near Ruckinge using the 2nd Sedbrook Lesser Sewer outfall. The Chairman asked that the efforts made out of hours by the Water

Bailiff to ensure the Board's Landrover had sufficient fuel to operate as normal during the recent fuel shortages be recorded.

#### **761. UPDATE ON IDB RED DIESEL USAGE**

The Clerk/Engineer stated that since the last meeting staff had written to local MPs asking for their support to postpone the proposed removal of red diesel usage by IDBs when carrying out maintenance on watercourses. He explained that if the Board was required by law to use unrebated white diesel from next April as currently planned, then costs to the Board for fuel alone would all but double, and if changes to equipment were required to avoid cross-contamination issues, then another similar one-off increase for the following financial year may occur. He stated that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and staff were due to meet Damian Collins MP to make further representations in December. Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr ARJ Hills and Cllr P Coe asked that the original letter be sent to them to allow further lobbying. It was acknowledged that whilst the Government's attempts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels were laudable and necessary, there were currently no viable alternatives available to power the heavy plant used in the Board's annual maintenance activities. Cllr ARJ Hills informed the Board that KCC Highways were facing the same issues.

#### **762. CONSENTS ISSUED**

The Clerk/Engineer gave a summary of the consents granted over the previous months; there were no issues raised.

#### **763. 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.

#### **764. 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.

#### **765. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

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

#### **766. EXTERNAL AUDITORS CERTIFICATE & OPINION**

The Financial Officer reported that External Auditor's report had been received with no matters required for attention. The Chairman thanked the officer for her proficient work.

#### **767. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022, venue to be confirmed.

#### **768. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr Mrs K Rye asked for clarification on the discharge of raw sewage to sea by sewerage undertakers. The Clerk/Engineer explained that occasionally older, combined foul and rainwater sewers surcharged from heavy rainfall and permissions were in place for the sewage companies to discharge such systems straight to sea to avoid flooding on land. Cllr ARJ Hills stated that this was unfortunate but with extreme rainfall events becoming more common it was currently unavoidable until new infrastructure could be built.

The Assistant Clerk/Engineer reported that he had finalised a response to Defra regarding the reintroduction of beavers to England consultation. He explained that the response expressed concerns over the location of reintroduction schemes, their security, and the long term costs of ensuring any beaver activity did not interfere with flood risk management in internal drainage districts. The Clerk/Engineer stated that ADA had also responded to the consultation.



Lastly, the Vice-Chairman expressed frustration with the recent EA Flood Alerts for coastal flooding which caused unnecessary alarm as the risk of flooding was low due to the wind direction. He added that he called the EA to ask why such alerts are issued when there is little chance of an event occurring, and suggested that people at risk may ignore a serious threat if too many alerts were issued that were not strictly necessary. He stated that he was still in contact with staff at the Agency regarding the matter.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 1505hrs.