ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MAIN BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall at 0930 on Thursday 5th February 2026.

PRESENT.
Elected Members:
Mr M Baker Esq., Mr S Body Esq., Mr A Clifton Esq., Mr A Clifton Holt Esq., Mr E Langrish Esq., Mrs H Langrish., Mr E Lovejoy Esq., Mr T Piper Esq., Mr A Wellsted Esq., and Mr M Wrout Esq.

Appointed members:
Mr C Body Esq., Cllr P Carey, Cllr P Coe, Mr A Cragg Esq. (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr L Finch, Cllr Mrs A Hicks, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, Mr D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), Cllr A Mier, Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr Mrs K Rye, and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:
Mrs D Chalcroft (Finance Officer) and Mr R Monje (Clerk/Engineer).

940. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
The Chairman welcomed the attending Board members and thanked them for the good turnout, before inviting all to stand for a minute's silence in memory of former Board contractor, the late Ivan Pilcher. Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.
Mr D Cole Esq., Mr J Langrish Esq., Mr D Thompson Esq., Mr D Wheeler Esq., and Mr S Wright Esq.,

Appointed Members.
Mr ID Oliver, Mrs C Solly and Cllr S Scoffham.

941. MINUTES OF THE MAIN BOARD MEETING HELD 20th NOVEMBER 2025
The minutes of the meeting having been circulated to members prior to the meeting, were taken as read. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs C Creaser, SECONDED by Cllr C Hoggart and agreed unanimously that the minutes be signed as a correct record of the previous meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

942. MATTERS ARISING
The Clerk/Engineer updated the Board on the following minutes:
927- Depot rent for 2026/27 has been agreed and will be covered under agenda item 10.
927- T&J Fencing handcutting metre rate has been agreed.
930- Cllr P Coe provided a Personnel Committee update, the salient points being that the Acting Clerk/Engineer had been appointed as Clerk/Engineer and the interview shortlist for the Technical Officers position had been confirmed with interview dates to be confirmed after the meeting. Cllr P Coe stated that to avoid a repetition of recent events that a strategy for succession would be discussed by the Personnel Committee in due course.
931- Potential expansion of the field team had been discussed at F&GP and estimates produced accordingly.
935- EA Romney team weedcut would be covered in the Engineers Report.
936- The matters for further consideration by F&GP are Agenda Items 12, 13 & 14.
938- Walland Elected Member vacancy is Agenda Item 15.

943. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
The Vice Chairman provided an overview of the previous meetings and reported that the F&GP was now paperless. The approved minutes of the October and December F&GP meetings having been previously circulated to members were taken as read.

944. ENGINEERS REPORT
In addition to the report previously circulated the Clerk/Engineer confirmed that the 2025/26 desilting contract had been awarded to Ostridge Contractors and would be delivered in full this season. The January rainfall and pumping hours were provided with special note being made of the pumping hours at Indraft which were the highest since 2013. The Clerk/Engineer reported that Tim Williams M&E had provided a quote for condition inspection of the Boards pumping stations. Cllr ARJ Hills was called upon to provide an update on the Lydd Ranges frontage having been in close communication with the EA's Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management team since Storm Goretti in early January. Mr T Piper Esq. expressed frustration at the delay to repairs of the EA's Shirley Moor pump that has been out of service since June 2025. Cllr Mrs S Prochak enquired about the Board's Beaver position statement and the Clerk/Engineer reported that it could not be accommodated as an agenda item but would be at the next meeting. Mr A Clifton Holt Esq. reiterated his comment from the previous meeting regarding the Board's lack of contingency plan in the event of the EA reducing their level of service at short notice. The Clerk/Engineer stated that this was a legitimate concern and would be an agenda item for March F&GP ahead of broader discussion at the June Main Board. ACTION Clerk/Engineer to draft strategy paper ahead of March F&GP.

945. ACCOUNTS AND VOUCHERS
A list of accounts paid since the last meeting having been circulated to members prior to the meeting, the Vice Chairman asked the members if there were any queries but there were not. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak, SECONDED by Cllr C Hoggart and UNAMINOUSLY AGREED to accept the vouchers as written.

946. RATES TO BE WRITTEN OFF
The Finance Officer provided details of the three accounts. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the rates be written off.

947. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
The Finance Officer covered the period from November to December; no queries were raised.

948. INTERNAL CONTROL REVIEW
The Finance Officer presented the report. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and UNAMINOUSLY AGREED that the Chairman and Clerk/Engineer sign the document.

949. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2026-27
The papers containing the revised estimates for 2025-26, and the proposed annual estimates for 2026-27 had been circulated to members prior to this meeting. The Clerk/Engineer read through and offered further comment on the current year and following financial year's estimates. He concluded that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had recommended that the Board consider a rate rise of 4.5% for 2026-27. After further, detailed discussion it was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak SECONDED by Cllr A Hicks and RESOLVED UNAMINOUSLY:

(i) that the financial estimates for the year ending 31st March 2027 be approved and adopted;
(ii) (a) the Special Levy on Ashford Borough Council shall be £14,639
(b) the Special Levy on Folkestone & Hythe District Council shall be £610,216
(c) the Special Levy on Rother District Council shall be £166,208
(iii) the Board do hereby make a drainage rate of 7.17p in the pound in respect of Agricultural Land and Buildings for the year commencing 1st April 2026;

(iv) the purposes for which the said Special Levies and Drainage Rate are made and the amount in the £ for each of those purposes are as hereunder set out: -

	p	p
Expenses of Administration	1.928	
Works of Maintenance	2.835	
New and Improvement Works	-	
Environment Agency Precept	2.855	7.618
Less:		
Government Grants	-	
Environment Agency Contribution	0.371	
Other Income	0.135	0.506
		7.112
Add for Adjustment to Balance		0.058
		7.170

(v) the said rate shall be paid at Suite 7, Old Barn Offices, Salts Farm, East Guldeford, Rye, East Sussex giving the Ratepayers the option of paying by two equal instalments; the first on demand and the second on 1st October 2026, providing the total of any instalment exceeds five pounds.

(v) notice of said rate shall be given by affixing the notice in one or more public places in the district.
ACTION Adopt the approved rate and Special Levies for the 2026/27 financial year.

950. CAPITAL RESERVE
The Finance Officer stated that the F&GP had agreed to transfer £25,000 from the 2024/25 surplus to the Capital Reserve account. It was PROPOSED by Mr A Clifton Holt Esq., SECONDED by Cllr C Hoggart and unanimously agreed to support this.

951. WATERCOURSE CONSENTING APPLICATION FEE REVIEW
With the proposed new fee structure that was supported by the F&GP having been circulated prior to the meeting, the Clerk/Engineer provided a summary for the Main Board Members. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak and agreed unanimously that the new tariff be adopted and reviewed annually. The document was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk/Engineer.
ACTION Clerk/Engineer to include consenting fees as an agenda item for February 2027 Main Board meeting.

952. ADOPTION OF SURFACE WATER DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION
With the proposed adoption of SWDC representing a significant step change for the Board the Clerk/Engineer provided an overview of the previously circulated document and the matter was discussed in depth. The Clerk/Engineer stated that adoption of SWDC was initially being proposed solely within the Internal Drainage District unlike other IDBs that had applied it catchment-wide. Cllr Mrs S Prochak enquired as to why and the Clerk/Engineer explained that once the proposed system was established its expansion could be discussed in due course. Mr A Clifton Esq stated that accounting for the potential revenue and its use should be discussed at F&GP. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs Sue Prochak and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to adopt the levy and to review in due course. The document was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk/Engineer.
ACTION Clerk/Engineer to provide SWDC review at the February 2027 Main Board to inform discussion on potential expansion of the levy, accounting and use of SWDC to be discussed at F&GP Committee.

953. NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS UPDATE
In response to the Vice Chairman's request, interests were declared by Mr A Clifton Esq., Mr A Clifton Holt Esq., and Mr D Furnival Esq. With the NSIPs paper having been previously circulated the topic was discussed with multiple queries being made by Board members. The Clerk/Engineer reported that in the absence of guidance from ADA, Ouse & Humber IDB had provided valuable insight. It was proposed by Cllr A Mier, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs C Creaser and UNAMINOUSLY AGREED to send a token of the Board's appreciation to Ouse & Humber IDB. Mr A Clifton Esq., raised concerns over the disapplication of the Board's permissive powers and the Clerk/Engineer stated that the Board can refuse disapplication and that provision had been made to cover legal advice on the matter with all legal costs being recoverable from the developers in due course. Cllr C Hoggart suggested keeping a log of Board time expended on each project and the Clerk/Engineer stated that this was in-hand. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs C Creaser and UNAMINOUSLY AGREED to adopt the Standing Advice document and revise as required. The document was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk/Engineer.
ACTION Clerk/Engineer to send Ouse & Humber a modest token of the Board's appreciation.
ACTION Clerk/Engineer to revise Standing Advice as required.

954. CO-OPTION OF ELECTED MEMBER FOR WALLAND DISTRICT
The Chairman reported that Mr Mathew Cooke Esq had politely declined to join the Board. It was therefore PROPOSED by Mr D Lovejoy, SECONDED by Mr A Clifton Holt Esq., and UNAMINOUSLY AGREED to co-opt Mr T Pierce Esq. onto the Board.
ACTION co-opt Mr T Pierce Esq. on to the Board.

955. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
The Chairman read aloud a letter from former Clerk/Engineer and Rother DC Appointed Board member Mr I D Oliver Esq., regarding the EA's progressive withdrawal of maintenance of Main River and how this negates the operational efforts of IDBs whilst the EA precept continues to increase. The Vice Chairman stated that our MPs needed to question DEFRA as to why the EA was no longer fit for purpose. Mr A Clifton Holt Esq commented that if the Board was requesting change it needed to provide alternatives adding that previous suggestions of the Board undertaking work in Main River had been met with internal opposition. The Chairman expressed a preference for meeting the MPs to discuss the matter with the Clerk/Engineer adding that the Board had previously demonstrated effective communication with Westminster through the Appointed Members regarding IDB red diesel exemptions. The Vice Chairman instructed the Clerk/Engineer to compile a briefing paper summarising the EAs challenges and failings that impacted the Board's effective delivery of function.
Mr A Wellsted Esq., expressed concerns that the proposed new road between Hammonds Corner and Mountfield Industrial Estate (New Romney) would enable infill development. The Clerk/Engineer reported that there had been no communications regarding the proposed new junction for four years.
The Vice Chairman stated that the Board should revisit paperless meetings when the supporting infrastructure was in place.
The Chairman announced that he would not be standing in the autumn elections and suggested the Board start considering a successor.
ACTION Clerk Engineer to produce a briefing paper summarising EA challenges and failings for June Main Board.

956. DATE OF NEXT GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD
The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 09.30am Thursday 25th June 2026 with the venue to be announced in due course. With there being no other business to discuss the meeting was closed at 11.20.