

## **ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

### **EXTRAORDINARY MAIN BOARD MEETING**

An extraordinary meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 at 9.30 am.

#### **PRESENT.**

Elected Members:

Mr A Clifton Esq., Mr F Cooke Esq., Mr E Langrish Esq., Mrs H Langrish., Mr J Langrish Esq., Mr E Lovejoy Esq., Mr C Ramus Esq., Mr A Wellsted Esq., Mr D Wheeler Esq., Mr S Wright Esq., and Mr M Wrout Esq.

Appointed members:

Mr C Body Esq., Cllr P Coe, Mr A Cragg Esq., Cllr Mrs A Hicks, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, Mr D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), Cllr A Mier, Mr I D Oliver Esq., Cllr Mrs K Rye, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

Mrs D Chalcraft (Financial Officer), Mr R Monje (Acting Clerk/Engineer).

#### **913. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed the attending Board members and thanked them for the strong turnout. The Acting Clerk/Engineer then read out the list of apologies. Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

Mr S Body Esq., and Mr D Cole Esq.,

Appointed Members.

Cllr G Allinson, Cllr P Carey, Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr P Osbourne, Cllr Mrs S Prochak and Cllr S Scoffham.

#### **914. CHAIRMANS UPDATE**

The Chairman announced the sudden passing of Environment Agency Operations Manager and supporter of the IDB, Mr Ian Nunn on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025 before attendees stood for a minutes silence in his honour. The Chairman then proceeded to read out the letter of former Vice Chairman Mr L M Cooke Esq. in which he announced his retirement on health grounds with immediate effect as of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The Chairman then explained how Mr Cooke's departure after 40 years of dedicated and highly valued service to both the Board and the district had necessitated expedient actions to ensure the organisations continued function.

#### **915. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN / F&GP CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman asked if anybody had any nominations for the role of Vice Chairman. With there being none, the Chairman PROPOSED that Mr A Cragg Esq be elected. This was SECONDED by Mrs H Langrish and unanimously agreed. Mr A Cragg accepted the role and was met with applause.

#### **916. MINUTES OF THE MAIN BOARD MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 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.

#### **917. MATTERS ARISING**

No matters were raised.

## **918. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the F&GP meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and the Extraordinary F&GP meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were covered by the Chairman and taken as read.

## **919. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Personnel Committee Chairman Cllr P Coe provided a summary of the two meetings held since the new committee was ratified at the July Main Board meeting.

## **920. HR UPDATE**

The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported that since the June Main Board meeting when a seed fund of £3,000 was agreed for external HR support, that of the five providers approached, only three had engaged. The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported that the Financial Officer had managed to negotiate a one-year contract with Omny, which had now commenced. Staff contracts and the 48hr Working Time Regulations opt out for the Water Bailiff were currently being worked on as a matter of urgency.

## **921. REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY SUPPORT STAFF**

The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that the current staffing situation is unsustainable and that the level of service had declined in some areas which had prompted him to approach Timeless Recruitment Ltd for a temporary technical assistant. The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported that following discussions with Timeless it was put to the F&GP (14<sup>th</sup> August 2025) that £10,000 be allocated, but that the committee instead proposed extending the contract of part-time WLMA Planning & Enforcement Officer Mr G Oliver who had exceeded expectations. The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported to the Board that there was facility in the contract to enable this and requested that the £10,000 instead be made available to retain Mr G Oliver on the same part time basis until the end of the financial year. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hills, SECONDED Mr E Lovejoy Esq and agreed unanimously that the arrangement and funding was approved.

## **922. BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr D Wimble, SECONDED by Mr E Lovejoy Esq. and unanimously agreed that Mr J Langrish Esq be co-opted as Pett elected member and consenting signatory. The Acting Clerk/Engineer confirmed that he would be approaching Romney ratepayers to backfill the vacancy created by Mr J Langrish Esq. Additionally, the Acting Clerk/Engineer reported that Folkestone & Hythe District Council had been asked to provide a replacement for Cllr A Goode following his resignation from Newchurch Parish Council.

## **923. WEEDCUTTING CONTRACTS 2026/27**

The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported that the internal auditor advised the 2026/27 season should be the last year of the rolling annual maintenance contracts, the previous contracts having expired in 2021. It was PROPOSED by Mr E Lovejoy Esq. and SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and voted unanimously that the Board would put the mechanical weedcutting contract out for tender in spring 2026. The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that the handcutting contract may need to go out to tender ahead of the estimates should T & J Fencing decide to retire this year and that in such an event, the Board should anticipate a significant increase in cost.

## **924. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr S Wright Esq. enquired as to whether the Board's maintenance depot would remain at Moneypenny Farm. The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that this would be discussed with the landlord in due course. Ahead of setting the date of the next meeting the Chairman then asked the attendees whether the earlier meeting time was preferable and with the general consensus being positive the date was agreed for 9.30 am 20<sup>th</sup> November at the Maude Pavillion, New Romney.

With no further business to discuss Chairman ended the meeting at 10.15 a.m.