

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MAIN BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the Board was held at the Maude Community Centre on Thursday 20th November 2025 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

Mr M Baker Esq., Mr A Clifton Esq., Mr A Clifton Holt Esq., Mrs H Langrish., Mr J Langrish 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 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 Mrs S Prochak, Cllr Mrs K Rye, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Members of public:

Cllr C Woollard (Chairman of Newchurch PC) and Mrs Kim Gowing (Hands Off Our Marsh).

Staff:

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

925. 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 the late Mr F Cooke Esq. Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

Mr E Lovejoy Esq., Mr T Piper Esq., Mr D Thompson Esq., and Mr S Body Esq.

Appointed Members.

Cllr G Allinson, Cllr A Mier, Mr D Oliver and Cllr S Scoffham.

926. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD 21st AUGUST 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st August 2025, having been circulated to members prior to the meeting, were taken as read. It was PROPOSED by Cllr C Hoggart, SECONDED by Mr A Cragg Esq. and agreed unanimously that the minutes be signed as a correct record of the previous meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

927. MATTERS ARISING

The Acting Clerk/Engineer confirmed that Mr L Cooke Esq. was happy for the IDB depot to continue being based at Moneypenny Farm and that a rent more in line with current market value would be proposed. The Acting Clerk/Engineer then confirmed that T&J Fencing would complete the 2026/27 hand-cutting programme subject to a review of the metre rate which would be discussed at December F&GP.

928. CO-OPTION AND APPOINTMENT OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed Folkestone & Hythe District Council Appointed Member Cllr Liam Finch for Romney Marsh district before introducing Mr Mark Baker Esq. of Lords Farm. It was PROPOSED by Cllr C Hoggart, SECONDED by Mr A Cragg Esq., and agreed unanimously that Mr M Baker be co-opted onto the Board as an Elected Member for Romney Marsh district.

929. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The approved minutes of the Extraordinary F&GP meeting held 14th August 2025 having been previously circulated to members were taken as read.

930. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Cllr P Coe stated that the previous F&GP had ratified three decisions made by the Personnel Committee; that the Clerk/Engineer would receive all outstanding monies as a single payment, that the salary of the Financial Officer would be increased from Grade 8 to Grade 9 and that the position of Clerk/Engineer would be advertised externally with the appointment made by the interview panel. The Chairman of the Board thanked the staff for their efforts during a challenging year and Mrs H Langrish also commended the Chairman for his unprecedented input.

931. STAFF

The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that the Finance Officers salary increase was in recognition of the extra duties undertaken as de facto Assistant Clerk and office manager since April 2025. It was PROPOSED by Mr D Lovejoy Esq., SECONDED by Cllr P Coe. and agreed unanimously that the Board ratified the increase. The Acting Clerk/Engineer then reported that he was preparing a paper ahead of the December F&GP regarding the employment of an assistant to the Water Bailiff, the internal auditor having previously agreed that there was a clear safety case for justifying the cost. The Chairman then informed the Board that Clerk/Engineer Nick Botting had retired on 16th October 2025.

932. ACCOUNTS AND VOUCHERS

A list of accounts paid since the last meeting had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Finance Officer answered queries regarding the DRS rating system subscription, no other questions were raised.

933. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Finance Officer covered the Income and Expenditure from June to October and responded to a query on the DRS system.

934. EXTERNAL AUDITORS CERTIFICATE & OPINION

The Finance Officer reported that the external auditor had been received with no matters required for attention.

935. ENGINEERS REPORT

The Acting Clerk/Engineer provided an update on events since October F&GP and spoke at length on the EA's ongoing incident investigation, the 40km of Romney Main River that remained uncut and the implications thereof. Concern was raised by Cllr ARJ Hills of the potential impacts on Lydd residents if Jury's Gut remained uncut and stated the IDB should cut the critical 4km if necessary. The Acting Clerk/Engineer explained that such an intervention would be unfunded as the IDB could not easily meet the EA's contractor compliance requirements and a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) would take too long to set up but that events such as this do pose the question of what the IDB would do in the event of the EA failing to deliver their maintenance programme in high-risk areas. Mr A Clifton Holt Esq. stated that the IDB needed to have a contingency plan in place in case the EA withdrew maintenance as they had in Somerset during summer 2025.

936. MATTERS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AT F&GP

The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that he would be preparing papers for discussion at the next F&GP covering increasing the statutory fee for consent applications, Surface Water Development Contribution, draft policy for dealing with Development Consent Orders (solar farms) and PSCAs. A brief explanation of each was given.

937. CONSENTS ISSUED

The Acting Clerk/Engineer reported a higher volume of consent applications had been received during 2025 and that the Board's Permissive regulatory powers had been exercised with discretion owing to lack of resource. Some applications had been waived with others receiving consent by default. The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that a Byelaw 16 application had been received to undertake desilting on the Littlestone Eastern Arm Lesser Sewer (Victoria Road West site) and a Section 23 application for a culvert within the SSSI at Lydd. With regards to the latter, the Acting Clerk/Engineer expressed concern about the new Natural England charging tariff for providing advice as the IDB is a Section 28G authority which means Natural England will have to be consulted on the matter.

938. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr ARJ Hills presented his understanding of the ongoing Unitary Councils debate with contributions from Cllr C Hoggart, Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr P Coe, Cllr Mrs K Rye and Cllr Mrs A Hicks. The consensus was that with current uncertainty, the implications for IDBs were unknown but that the matter would be reported on in due course.

The Board were advised of a vacant position on the Finance & General Purposes Committee, due to the death of Mr F Cooke. It was PROPOSED by Mr D Lovejoy Esq. and SECONDED by Cllr Mrs C Creaser with all voting in favour that Mr A Wellsted Esq. fill the F&GP vacancy.

939. DATE OF NEXT GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 09.30am 5th February 2026 at Appledore Village Hall. With there being no other business to discuss the meeting was closed at 10.55am.