

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

A Clifton Esq., A Clifton-Holt Esq., L Cooke Esq., (Vice-Chairman), E Langrish Esq., Mrs H Langrish, J Langrish Esq., E Lovejoy Esq., A Wellsted Esq., S Wright Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members:

C Body Esq., Cllr M Burgess, Cllr P Coe, A Cragg Esq., D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), D Oliver Esq., Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr Mrs K Rye, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

N. Botting Esq., Clerk/Engineer to the Board and Mrs D Chalcraft, Financial Officer.

803. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and asked the Clerk for any apologies.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

S Body Esq., D Furnival Esq. D Thompson Esq. and D Wheeler Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, Cllr A Mier, Cllr H Norton and Cllr P Osborne.

804. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2022, 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.

805. MATTERS ARISING

802. Any Other Business - The Clerk/ Engineer stated that he had spoken to the EA regarding the operation of surface water infrastructure during elevated river levels at Robertsbridge. He explained that the EA deploy mobile pumps in the area to discharge surface water when gravity discharge was not achievable.

806. 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.

807. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the previously distributed report and commented on recent flooding at Cliff End, Brede Bridge on the A28 and at Marley Lane, Battle on the A21. D Oliver Esq. stated that it was his belief that the EA's lack of weedcutting downstream of Brede Bridge had exacerbated the flooding experienced there. The Clerk/Engineer agreed that this was likely and the reason given by the EA was, that due to health and safety protocols, there was insufficient room for heavy plant to operate safely on that stretch of the River Brede. A Clifton-Holt expressed concern over the future of water level management at the EA as experienced staff neared retirement, and asked if the Board was prepared for any issues that may occur. The Clerk/Engineer replied that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and staff were awaiting a meeting date with the EA's Operations Manager to discuss working practices moving forward. He continued that he was acutely

aware of the need for new EA staff to understand how the district functioned and to maintain strong, on the ground, presence.

808. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS

A list of accounts paid since the last meeting had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Vice-Chairman 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.

809. RATES TO BE WRITTEN OFF

Rates totalling £58.04, having been recommended to be written off by the F&GP Committee, were presented for Board approval; it was subsequently PROPOSED by S Wright Esq., SECONDED by L Cooke Esq. and agreed unanimously that the rates be written off.

810. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Financial Officer gave a comprehensive breakdown of the Income and Expenditure for the year to date. Cllr Mrs S Prochak asked if the small amount of uncollected rates were repeat issues with the same ratepayers. The Financial Officer replied this was generally the case and court action may be necessary.

811. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2023-24.

The papers containing the revised estimates for 2022-23, and the proposed annual estimates for 2023-24 had been circulated to members prior to this meeting. The Clerk 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 asked that the Board consider rate rises of 6%, 6.5% or 7% for 2023-24. After further, detailed discussion it was **PROPOSED** by A Clifton-Holt Esq., **SECONDED** by A Clifton Esq., and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

- (i) that the financial estimates for the year ending 31st March 2024 be approved and adopted;
- (ii)
 - (a) the Special Levy on Ashford Borough Council shall be £12,925
 - (b) the Special Levy on Folkestone & Hythe District Council shall be £540,801
 - (c) the Special Levy on Rother District Council shall be £147,574
- (iii) the Board do hereby make a drainage rate of 6.37p in the pound in respect of Agricultural Land and Buildings for the year commencing 1st April 2023;
- (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	1.826	
Works of Maintenance	2.106	
New and Improvement Works	-	
Environment Agency Precept	<u>2.612</u>	6.544
<u>Less:</u>		
Government Grants	-	
Environment Agency Contribution	0.322	
Other Income	<u>0.021</u>	0.343
		6.201
<u>Add for Adjustment to Balance</u>		<u>0.169</u>
		6.370

(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 2023, providing the total of any instalment exceeds five pounds.

(vi) notice of said rate shall be given by affixing the notice in one or more public places in the district.

812. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on Wednesday 28th June 2023, venue to be confirmed.

813. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the Board of a public meeting to be held at Winchelsea Village Hall the following day by the National Trust, regarding its plan to change farming practices in the part of the Brede Valley at Winchelsea; their wish being to move towards more regenerative methods. The Clerk/Engineer stated that staff and certain Board members had attended a preliminary meeting with the Trust to understand their intentions, and to ensure no other parties would be adversely affected, regarding drainage, by any changes to land use. He concluded that further detailed discussions would be taking place with regard to any Land Drainage Consent applications.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 1515 hrs.