

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 2.50 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

Mr C Body Esq., Mr S Body Esq., Mr A Clifton Esq., Mr D Cole Esq., Mr F Cooke Esq., Mr L Cooke Esq. (Vice-Chairman), Mr D Thompson Esq., Mr A Wellsted Esq., and representing Mr A Clifton Holt Esq in a non-voting capacity, Mr R Holt Esq.

Appointed members:

Cllr P Carey, 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 S Prochak, Cllr S Scoffham, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

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

900. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed those attending and thanked Board Members for attending two meetings in an afternoon. The Acting Clerk/Engineer then read out the list of apologies.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

Mr A Clifton-Holt Esq., Mr E Lovejoy Esq., Mr T Piper Esq., Mr S Wright Esq. and Mr M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members.

Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr C Goddard and Cllr P Osbourne.

901. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 29th JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 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.

902. MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

903. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The approved minutes of the F&GP meetings held 14th January 2025 and 19th March 2025 were taken as read.

904. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Acting Clerk/Engineer expanded on some of the meetings attended since March 2025 and provided a general overview of the Boards operations and drought protocols over the preceding dry spring. He then gave an update on the Board's successful participation in the regional mink eradication scheme before covering Environment Agency matters.

905. CONSENTS

The Acting Clerk/Engineer briefly summarised the unusually high volume of consents granted since October 2024 (11 no.) and the 11no. applications that were pending. He commented that despite the consenting process costing the IDB disproportionately more than it generated in statutory fees, it was a key part of the Board's delivery of its Flood Risk Management function. He advised that the possibility of increasing the Statutory fee of £50.00 for Section 23 applications would be discussed at the next Southeast IDB Officers meeting.

906. PLANNED BEAVER RELEASES & AGREED BOARD POLICY

The Acting Clerk/Engineer stated that his concerns over Natural England's refusal to directly engage IDBs at the earliest stage of the wild-release licensing process were shared by several other Boards including the Water Level Management Alliance. Numerous questions were answered on the wider topic by the Acting Clerk/Engineer. Cllr Mrs A Hicks reported that beavers had caused significant expense for River Stour IDB. It was PROPOSED by Mr A Cragg that the IDB should draft a beaver policy that opposed beaver releases within the catchment, and this was SECONDED by Cllr Mrs A Hicks and unanimously agreed. Cllr S Scoffham agreed to work with the Acting Clerk/Engineer to draft the document which will likely be aligned with that of Pevensey & Cuckmere IDB which is currently being drafted.

907. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS

The Chairman stated that the list of vouchers had been rigorously studied by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and asked if any members had queries on the list of payments, there were no questions raised.

908. FINAL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2025

The Financial Officer gave a full breakdown on the Final Accounts, which had previously been circulated and examined and confirmed by the Internal Auditor. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Mr A Clifton Esq. and unanimously agreed that they be signed off by the Chairman and Acting Clerk/Engineer.

909. INTERIM AUDIT REPORTS & ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2024/25

The Financial Officer discussed the interim and final audit reports which had previously been circulated. She advised that the Internal Auditor was satisfied with the way that the Board operated and he had not raised any concerns. The Annual Governance Statement on the Annual Return was then presented to the Board by the Acting Clerk/Engineer. It was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and voted unanimously that the Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Chairman and Acting Clerk/Engineer. Mr A Clifton Esq. then left the meeting. The Financial Officer presented the Accounting Statements for 2024/25. No questions were raised and it was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr P Coe and voted unanimously that the Accounting Statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

910. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

The Financial Officer gave a breakdown of the Income and Expenditure for 2024/25 and for April and May 2025. No questions were raised.

911. DATE OF NEXT GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held on 19th November 2025. Board Members were advised that due to the rapidly changing situation regarding staffing, that it may be necessary to call another Extraordinary General Meeting in the interim.

912. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the Chairman ended the meeting at 3.40 p.m.