

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held online, on Wednesday 22nd July 2020 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

A Clifton-Holt Esq., D Cole Esq., F Cooke Esq., L Cooke Esq., E Langrish Esq., Mrs H Langrish, J Langrish Esq. and S Wright Esq.

Appointed Members:

Cllr G Allison, Cllr M Burgess, Cllr P Coe, Cllr a Cragg, Cllr K Gandy, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, D Lovejoy Esq., Cllr A Mier, R Nickerson Esq., Cllr Rev H Norton, Cllr P Osbourne, Cllr S Prochak, Cllr C Solly.

Staff:

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

704. APPROVAL OF UPDATED STANDING ORDERS.

The Clerk/Engineer asked those present to consider the changes made to the Board's Standing Orders that had already been approved by the Secretary of State and the Chairman, which contained new wording that allowed Board meetings to be held virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic. It was PROPOSED by S Wright Esq., SECONDED by Cllr C Hoggart and agreed unanimously that the changes be approved and the revised Standing Orders be adopted.

705. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to chair the meeting as he was acting as host via online software. The Clerk asked for a minute's silence in memory of Board members, Robert Langrish and Colin Hill, who had recently passed away. He informed the Board that Robin Patten had resigned from the Board after 21 years' service, the Chairman stated that he had sent a thank you letter to Mr Patten, who had replied wishing his very best for the Board for the future. The Clerk then welcomed Cllr Howard Norton to the Board, who had recently been appointed by Rother District Council, and hoped he would find his membership both interesting and enjoyable.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members;

P Boulden Esq., A Clifton Esq., D Furnival Esq., E Lovejoy Esq., C Ramus Esq., D Wheeler Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Co-opted Member; S Body Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr C Goddard.

706. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 29th JANUARY 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2020, 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 would be signed by the Chairman after the meeting.

707. MATTERS ARISING.

There were no matters arising.

708. APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

The Clerk gave an overview of the approved minutes from the F&GP Committee; there were no issues raised.

709. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the report and gave further detail on the Board's maintenance activities since the last meeting. Cllr ARJ Hills commented that the Dungeness Aquifer supplying mains water to Lydd and the surrounding area was unfit for use for 3 months due to saline inundation following February's storms, and this had meant re-distribution of mains water from Folkestone. The Clerk explained the steps taken by staff in reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic in order to allow continuous working; he also stated that a comprehensive risk assessment was in place.

710. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS.

A list of accounts paid since January had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Financial Officer explained that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had scrutinised the accounts paid and asked if members had any questions; with no issues raised, the list was subsequently approved.

711. RATES TO BE WRITTEN OFF

Rates totalling £8.23, having been recommended to be written off by the F&GP Committee, were presented for Board approval; it was subsequently PROPOSED by D Lovejoy Esq., SECONDED by L Cooke Esq. and agreed unanimously that the rates be written off.

712. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

The Financial Officer gave a comprehensive breakdown of the Income and Expenditure Report for the previous financial year and the current year to date. A Clifton-Holt asked if staff had applied for the Government Grant on offer to cover expenses created by the Covid-19 pandemic; the Financial Officer replied that the matter had been discussed with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who reasoned that the costs involved were not substantial enough for the matter to be pursued.

713. FINAL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020.

The Final Accounts, having been previously circulated and examined and confirmed by the Internal Auditor, were presented to the Board by the Financial Officer. After acknowledging the excellent work of the Financial Officer, it was PROPOSED by Cllr C Hoggart, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs S Prochak and carried unanimously that the Final Accounts be approved and signed off by the Chairman and Clerk after the meeting.

714. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2019/20

The Financial Officer discussed the Internal Audit and drew attention to the previously circulated Internal Audit Report. She advised that there were no problems identified and that the Internal Auditor was satisfied with the way the Board operated. The Annual Governance Statement on the Annual Return was then presented to the Board by the Clerk/Engineer. It was PROPOSED by S Wright Esq., SECONDED by A Clifton-Holt Esq. and voted unanimously that the statement should be signed and dated by the Chairman and Clerk. The Financial Officer then presented the Accounting Statements 2019/20. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P Coe, SECONDED by D Cole Esq. and voted unanimously that the statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

715. ELECTION 2020

The Clerk explained that the first notice of the election procedure regarding the Register of Electors, had been published on the Board's website. With no enquiries made during the 14 working day period he asked that the Board approve the Register; it was PROPOSED by D Lovejoy Esq., SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and voted unanimously that the Register be approved and the second notice published.

716. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 25th November 2020, venue to be confirmed.

717. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

A Clifton-Holt asked if the two vacancies on the Finance and General Purposes Committee had been considered. The Clerk replied that both vacancies would be addressed in due course and as this was an election year, the composition of the Committee would be put before the Board in November; he also stated that both vacancies were for Appointed members.

Cllr C Hoggart asked if the working arrangements for staff due to the Covid-19 pandemic had proved beneficial in any way; the Clerk replied that home-working had worked well for some and would be an option for the future where suitable.

The Clerk reported that the Upper and Lower Medway Boards had appointed an Acting Clerk, Oliver Pantrey, due to their Chief Executive Officer, Michael Watson, leaving the organisations after 24 years.

Lastly, the Chairman of the Board thanked all those attending the meeting.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 1450hrs.