

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Wednesday 26th June 2024 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

A Clifton Esq., A Clifton-Holt Esq., F Cooke Esq., Mrs H Langrish, A Wellsted Esq. and M Wrouth Esq.

Appointed Members:

C Body Esq., Cllr P Coe, A Cragg Esq., Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr A Goode, Cllr Mrs A Hicks, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), Cllr A Mier, D Oliver Esq., Cllr P Osborne, Cllr Mrs K Rye, Mrs C Solly and Cllr S Scoffham.

Staff:

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

858. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman reminded the Board that the country was in a pre-election period and members were to respect this, he then introduced new member Cllr A Goode to the Board and welcomed all those attending. The Clerk then read out the list of apologies.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

L Cooke Esq., J Langrish Esq. and S Wright Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr G Allison, H Bates Esq. and Cllr D Wimble.

859. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 31st JANUARY 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2024, 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.

860. MATTERS ARISING

857- Any Other Business – Cllr ARJ Hills informed the Board that the flood event last winter experienced by some residents at Uden Road, Dymchurch was to be investigated by KCC under Section 19 of the Flood & Water Management Act.

861. 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.

862. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the previously distributed report and highlighted the increased electricity costs for the Board's pumping stations compared to the previous year. There were no questions raised.

863. MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

The Clerk/Engineer referred the Board to the report for agenda item 6 which gave an explanation on the current state of the Board's weedcutting contracts. He explained that the Finance and General Purposes Committee recommended to the Board that it keep its annual rolling contract with its current contractors as going out to formal tender would likely incur a significant increase in costs compared to the existing arrangement. He added that the contractors had agreed to another rolling year, with rates to be discussed before financial estimates were prepared in the winter. After due discussion it was PROPOSED by A Clifton Esq, SECONDED by Mrs H V Langrish and agreed unanimously, that the current contract arrangement be continued and then reviewed on an annual basis.

864. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS

A list of accounts paid since the last meeting had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk drew attention to a payment made to WM Cooke & Son for depot rental, he stated that the Vice-Chairman of the Board, L Cooke Esq., was a director of that company and disclosure of such should be recorded. There were no other issues raised.

865. RATES TO BE WRITTEN OFF

The Finance Officer asked the Board to consider a list of rates recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to be written off. She explained the case for each account and asked for any questions. With no questions raised it was PROPOSED by Mrs C Solly, SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and unanimously agreed that rates to the total value of £235.61 be written off.

866. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024

The Financial Officer gave a substantive breakdown on the Final Accounts, which had been previously circulated and examined and confirmed by the Internal Auditor. After acknowledging the excellent work of the Financial Officer, it was PROPOSED by Cllr ARJ Hills, SECONDED by Cllr C Hoggart and carried unanimously that the Final Accounts be approved and be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Engineer. The Clerk/Engineer then asked that the Board consider moving £20,000.00 from the revenue account to the Board's Capital Reserve. It was subsequently PROPOSED by Mrs C Solly, SECONDED by Cllr Mrs K Rye and unanimously agreed that the amount be transferred accordingly.

867. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT & ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2023/24

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 Cllr P Coe, SECONDED by Cllr P Osborne. and voted unanimously that the statement should be signed and dated by the Chairman and Clerk. The Financial Officer then presented the Accounting Statements 2023/24. It was PROPOSED by Cllr C Hoggart, SECONDED by Cllr K Rye and voted unanimously that the accounting statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

868. INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT

The Financial Officer gave a comprehensive breakdown of the Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending March 31st 2024. No questions were raised.

869. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 230pm on Wednesday 20th November 2024, venue to be confirmed.

870. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk/Engineer informed the Board that the EA would be hosting an opening ceremony for the Lydd Ranges Sea Defence Scheme for interested parties. He stated that he would email the invite to all members and asked that those interested in attending to let him know. The Clerk/Engineer told members that he had

been asked by the Vice-Chairman to renew and revise the original Member's Handbook which gave members an overview of the Board's work, watercourse location, and maps showing the district. He explained that copies of the new handbook were available to be collected after the meeting.

The Assistant Clerk/ Engineer drew members' attention to the EA's stated new policy of tracking through standing crops where necessary to speed up their weedcut which had stalled badly the previous year in the Romney, Walland and Denge Marshes. He explained that Board staff were due to hold meetings with the EA to try to ensure that this would be an absolute last measure and to encourage the EA to engage with landowners and occupiers before any such action occurred.

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