

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Wednesday 28th June 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

S Body Esq., F Cooke Esq., L Cooke Esq., (Vice-Chairman), Mrs H Langrish, J Langrish Esq., D Wheeler Esq. and M Wrout Esq.

Appointed Members:

Cllr P Coe, Cllr Mrs C Creaser, C Hoggart Esq., Cllr Mrs A Hicks, D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), Cllr Mrs K Rye and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

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

In Attendance: Mr ARJ Hills.

814. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and made special welcome to Cllr Mrs C Creaser, as a new member, and Cllr Mrs A Hicks as a returning member.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

A Clifton-Holt Esq., E Lovejoy Esq. and A Wellsted Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr G Allison, C Body Esq., A Cragg Esq., Cllr A Mier, I D Oliver Esq., Cllr Mrs S Prochak and Mrs C Solly.

815. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 25th JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2023, 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.

816. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk/ Engineer explained that any matters arising were on the main agenda for the meeting.

817. 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.

818. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the previously distributed report and commented on the feast or famine nature of the rainfall the district has experienced since the January meeting. Cllr Mrs A Hicks asked if the change of staff at the EA was proving an issue, the Clerk/ Engineer replied that there hadn't been a problem to date but the new regime was yet to be fully tested.

819. FLOODING AT MARSHAM BROOK, CLIFF END

The Clerk/Engineer gave a verbal update on the situation at Cliff End since the flood event in January. He informed the Board that he and his Assistant had held a meeting with the EA and residents primarily about property flood resilience which had been well attended. He stated that he had been asked to attend a further meeting in August with the EA, Southern Water, ESCC, Marsham Brook Residents and Sally-Ann Hart MP to discuss possible further measures to address the problem. The Clerk/ Engineer explained that the matter was complicated as any long-term solution would likely require significant investment and funding streams may be limited.

820. PROPOSED ADOPTION OF ORDINARY WATERCOURSE AT NEW ROMNEY

Cllr P Coe expressed an interest in the matter at hand and temporarily left the meeting. The Clerk/Engineer expanded on the previously-distributed report regarding the adoption of an Ordinary Watercourse adjacent to the New Romney Sports Field at Station Road. He explained that a new housing development wished to discharge surface water into the watercourse and a Commuted Sum had been agreed between the developer and the Clerk to cover future maintenance for a number of years. Lastly the Clerk stated that the watercourse had been brought into adoptable condition by other parties. After brief debate it was PROPOSED by L Cooke Esq., SECONDED by C Hoggart Esq. and agreed unanimously that the watercourse be adopted for maintenance purposes only and that riparian rights and responsibilities remain as present.

821. 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 he was a Director of WM Cooke & Son to which a payment had been made for materials, he continued that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had scrutinised the accounts paid and asked if members had any questions; there were no issues raised.

822. RATE TO BE WRITTEN OFF & WRITE OFFS GENERALLY

A rate of £6.17, having been recommended to be written off by the F&GP Committee, was presented for Board approval, additionally the Finance Officer reported that she had completed an exercise evaluating the economic viability of collection of some of the rate accounts. It was thought that the benefit of collecting any rates below £5.00 a year was negligible, and it was therefore proposed to write off any accounts which fit this criteria and move any land into Special Levies in 2023/24. This proposal had been fully supported by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and it was therefore requested that the Board adopt this approach, subsequently it was PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs K Rye, SECONDED by L Cooke Esq. and agreed unanimously, that the single rate of £6.17 and the additional rates valuing £143.09 be written off.

823. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Financial Officer gave a breakdown of the Board's Income and Expenditure for the last three months of the previous financial year and the first two months of the current year. C Hoggart Esq. questioned the percentage figure for the expenditure on maintenance for the current year, it was acknowledged that a mistake had been made which would be rectified. Cllr Mrs C Creaser questioned the cost of the subscription to ADA; the Clerk explained the role of ADA as representatives for IDBs nationally and at parliamentary level. Debate continued and it was asked that the Clerk contact ADA for comment on the cost of the subscription.

824. FINAL ACCOUNTS

The Financial gave a substantive breakdown on the Final Accounts, which had been previously circulated and examined and confirmed by the Internal Auditor. Cllr Mrs Aline Hicks asked for clarification on funds in the Pett Level Water Management Plan, the Clerk replied that it was the balance left after works were carried out on Pett Marshes some years ago. After acknowledging the excellent work of the Financial Officer, it was PROPOSED by M Wrout Esq., SECONDED by Cllr D Wimble and carried unanimously that the Final Accounts be approved and be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/Engineer.

825. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT & ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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 C Hoggart 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 2022/23. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P Coe, SECONDED by C Hoggart Esq. and voted unanimously that the accounting statements be signed and dated by the Chairman.

826. ELECTION 2023

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 Wheeler Esq., SECONDED by C Hoggart Esq. and voted unanimously that the Register be approved and the second notice published.

827. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on 15th November 2023, venue to be confirmed.

828. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Mrs K Rye asked if staff were aware of the proposal to construct 26 homes at the former Lydd Railway Station. The Clerk/ Engineer replied that he had been contacted by a concerned resident of Lydd the previous day but had not received any details from the planning authority, and added that he and his Assistant would follow the matter up as there may be issues with groundwater levels.

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