

ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A meeting of the Board was held at Camber Village Hall, on Wednesday 29th January 2020 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT.

Elected Members:

D Cole Esq., F Cooke Esq., L Cooke Esq., Mrs H Langrish, E Lovejoy Esq., A Wellsted Esq., M Wrout Esq. and S Wright Esq.

Appointed Members:

Cllr M Burgess, Cllr A Cragg, Cllr K Gandy, Cllr ARJ Hills, Cllr C Hoggart, D Lovejoy Esq., Cllr A Mier, R Nickerson Esq., Cllr P Osbourne, R Patten Esq., Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

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

691. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting and introduced Stephen Body who had been invited to attend the meeting by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, with a view for his co-option onto the Board. He then asked the Clerk to read out any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members;

A Clifton Esq., A Clifton-Holt Esq. C Ramus Esq. and D Thompson Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr G Allison, H Bates Esq., Cllr P Coe, Cllr C Goddard and R Langrish Esq.

692. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2019.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2019, 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 signed by the Chairman.

693. MATTERS ARISING.

There were no matters arising.

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

The Vice-Chairman gave an overview of the approved minutes from the F&GP Committee; Cllr Mrs S Prochak asked if the Salary Committee had reconvened with regards to R Patten's suggestion that the Financial Officer's pay award be backdated. The Clerk/Engineer replied that this had taken place and the award had been backdated to April 2019.

695. ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Clerk/Engineer read through the report and gave further detail on the Board's maintenance activities since the last meeting. He explained that staff had liaised with the EA with regards to a number of restrictions found in Main River which had now been cleared to good effect.

696. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS.

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

697. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

The Financial Officer gave a comprehensive breakdown of the Income and Expenditure Report for the year to date. Mrs H Langrish asked for an explanation for the increased expenditure for establishment in October 2019, the Financial Officer replied that this included the annual insurance premium. There were no further questions.

698. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S INTERIM REPORT AND OPINION.

The Financial Officer discussed the findings of the Interim Audit which looked at the first six months of the financial year. She stated that the auditor had advised the Board should review the list of current rates arrears and take appropriate action; this was now in hand and payment had been received from two accounts on the list.

699. INTERNAL CONTROLS REVIEW.

The annual review of the organisation's internal controls was presented to the Main Board by the Financial Officer which considered financial risks and appropriate insurance review arrangements. She advised that there were small changes in the wording in comparison to last year's document which reflected current payment procedures and external modified processes and asked that the Board consider its adoption. It was subsequently **PROPOSED** by Cllr Mrs S Prochak, **SECONDED** by S Wright Esq. and agreed unanimously that the document be signed.

700. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2020-2021

The papers detailing the revised estimates for 2019-20 and the proposed annual estimates for 2020-21 had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk read through the statement and explained that the F&GP Committee had recommended a 2.5% increase in the penny rate for the following financial year. After discussion, which recognised potential future financial pressure on the Board's resources, it was **PROPOSED** by Cllr ARJ Hills, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs S Prochak and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

- (i) that the financial estimates for the year ending 31st March 2021 be approved and adopted;
- (ii) (a) the Special Levy on Ashford Borough Council shall be £11,321
(b) the Special Levy on Rother District Council shall be £129,245
(c) the Special Levy on Shepway District Council shall be £473,489
- (iii) the Board do hereby make a drainage rate of 5.58p in the pound in respect of Agricultural Land and Buildings for the year commencing 1st April 2020;
- (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	1.476	
Works of Maintenance	1.822	
New and Improvement Works	-	
Environment Agency Precept	<u>2.486</u>	5.784
<u>Less:</u>		
Government Grants	-	
Environment Agency Contribution	0.260	
Other Income	<u>0.023</u>	<u>0.283</u>
		5.501
<u>Add for Adjustment to Balance</u>		<u>0.079</u>
		<u>5.580</u>

701. TRANSFER OF MONIES TO CAPITAL RESERVE.

The Financial Officer made reference to the annual estimates and the request to move £15,000 of revenue income into the Capital Reserve fund; it was therefore PROPOSED by L Cooke Esq., SECONDED by Cllr ARJ Hills and resolved unanimously, that the monies be transferred.

702. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 2 pm on Wednesday 24th June 2020 at Camber Village Hall.

703. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

With reference to the co-option onto the Board of Stephen Body; it was PROPOSED by D Lovejoy Esq., SECONDED by Mrs C Solly and carried unanimously that Mr Body be co-opted as a member of the Board with immediate effect.

Cllr Mrs S Prochak stated that Rother District Councillors had declared a climate emergency and that the Council was aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and asked how the Board were approaching the matter of carbon reduction. The Clerk/Engineer replied that whilst the use of heavy plant for maintenance activities such as weedcutting was fossil fuel dependant, there were currently no alternatives for adequately powering such machinery. He continued that the need for pumping and therefore the use of electricity at pumping stations had been reduced by maintenance of free-flow outfalls and desilting works by both the Board and the EA on their respective watercourses; this he added, demonstrated that ongoing maintenance gave multiple benefits.

Cllr ARJ Hills informed the Board of the erosion of the Green Wall near Jury's Gap by recent storms, and the subsequent accretion of shingle in front of the lifeboat station at Dungeness. It was acknowledged that progress on the EA's Folkestone to Cliff End Scheme was essential for the continuing protection of the Marsh.

The Vice-Chairman asked if members would welcome the opportunity to inspect watercourses and assets in the district in order to develop their understanding of the Board's work. A number of members expressed interest in joining the Vice-Chairman on such site visits. Members were encouraged to share contact details after the meeting.

Lastly the Chairman asked the Clerk/Engineer to write to the office of the newly elected MP for Hastings and Rye, Sally Ann Hart, to organise a meeting with the MP. Cllr ARJ Hills asked that he attend any such meeting when it was arranged.

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