



RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20TH APRIL 2017 AT 10.30AM AT THE 7Y BUSINESS CENTRE, LEOMINSTER

PRESENT:

Board Members:

Mr Charles Pudge – Chairman
Mr John Smith – Vice Chairman
Lord Cawley
Ms Zita Chilman
Mr Richard Corbett
Mr Stephen Dale
Mr Malcolm Davies
Mrs Noorissa Davies
Mr Nick Helme
Major James Hereford
Mr Kenneth Mitcheson
Mr Geoff Sparey
Cllr John Hardwick
Cllr Felicity Norman
Cllr Roger Phillips
Cllr Bruce Baker
Cllr Sebastian Bowen

HOOPLE LTD OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Audrey Harris – Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)
Ms Adrienne Davies – Clerk to the Board (CB)
Mr Les Harrison – Area Engineer
Ms Kerry Lawrence – Minute Taker (KL)

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were noted from Board members; Mr Jim Lawrence, Mr James Makin, Ms Sarah Olney, Cllr Mark Cooper, Cllr Dave Greenow, and Liz Chandler and Duncan Trumper of Hoople Ltd.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 19TH JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

AD reported that a successful appointment had been made to data project and the person is starting on the 3rd May 2017 on a 12 month fixed term contract.

17/001 CONTRACT EXTENSION

Following approval at the last meeting to extend Hoople's contract for a further two years, an appendage was presented for signature.

All Board members were in favour and the contract was subsequently signed by the Chairman.

Action: KL to arrange for Hoople's signature and a copy to be provided back to River Lugg and filed

17/002 REPORT OF THE AREA ENGINEER/ENGINEER TO THE BOARD INCLUDING RAIN FALL DATA

The Area Engineer presented some photographs alongside a verbal update of the maintenance work which had been carried out during the period under review.

The Area Engineer (AE) reported an outturn expenditure as at 31st March 2017 of £141k, against an annual budget of £147k. It was noted that £6k was spent on River Frome on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA).

Public Sector Co-operation Agreements

Removal of the blockages from the River Frome at Dormington was completed at a cost of £2,158.00, and another section, upstream of the A417 at Stretton Grandison, was recently carried out at an outturn cost of £3,816.07.

Leominster Compensating Ditch

Some time after completion of desilting maintenance on Leominster Compensating Ditch, a complaint was received regarding the condition of the footpath, which is designated as a public right of way. As a consequence, arrangements were made to reinstate a 2 metre wide strip along the whole length. Subsequently, the Public Rights of Way Officer served notice that all the deposited material must be removed from the site but, not only would this be costly, the operation would have rendered the site totally impassable. As soon as ground conditions improved, the disturbed area was reinstated to the satisfaction of the area Engineer.

Wormbrook / Allensmore De-maining

The AE reported that he had taken part by telephone in a group meeting to discuss the possible de-maining of Wormbrook/ Allensmore; subsequently it was confirmed in principle that it would proceed and consultation will now take place with all interested parties. This is one of five watercourses selected and will be piloted to enable procedures to be adopted for other de-maining submissions elsewhere.

Ecological Advisor

The AE has reported that the Ecological Advisors contract has been extended for a further 12 months.

Amongst other requirements he is to detail examples of the environmental improvement works undertaken by the Board in the course of carrying out maintenance works.

He will also represent the Board at Wye Catchment Partnership meetings.

The AE requested that the budget for the current year be increase to £2,000 to cover his duties. The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) would update the budget figures to reflect this.

Action: AH

Rainfall Figures

The rainfall figures were shown as an appendix for information.

Land Drainage Consents

The land drainage consent for Leominster Compensating Ditch is on hold.

Planning Applications

The following planning matters were noted:

- PR2017-01 – Claston Farm, Dormington, Hereford
- PR2017-02 – Land adjoining Orchard Farm, Eardisland, Herefordshire. Further information has been requested as it thought this land is within the remit of RLIDB.
- PR2017-03 – Land at the Brouch, Burton Court Land, Eardisland, Leominster

FINANCE REPORTS

17/003 Covering Report

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) reported the final outturn position for 16/17 as £21,306, resulting in an underspend of £2,390.

The RFO reported the outstanding debt position at £7,658, not significantly different to last year however it is expected that this will reduce over the coming months with dedicated resources chasing the debt.

An internal audit is due to be carried by South West Audit Partnership w/c 1st May when it is expected to have a signed set of accounts.

The closing balance is shown as £120,729.

The RFO reported that the deficit budget was set at £24k as agreed at the last meeting.

The interest rate was noted as very low at 0.01%. The RFO reported that there were limited options due to RLIDB's entity, however £50k has been invested in a 95 day liquidity manager account at 0.1% with no risk attached. The RFO will continue to monitor throughout the year.

17/004 Budget Monitoring Report

The RFO stated that the budget had been increased to reflect the budget resource for the administration to review the data by £11,550. Further income has also been identified for the additional rateable value land identified, it is hoped that the data work will identify more income which will offset these costs.

The AE highlighted that the budget for policy and strategic consultation was too small, noting that £1,200 has already been spent and requested that this be increased to £2,000.

Action: AH to make the amendments to the budget and bring back to the next Board meeting

In response to a question, the RFO confirmed the bad debt provision was based on outstanding debt and current provisions being prudent in the level of debt. There have been no write-offs.

The RFO provided an update on the invoice for engineering advice for £4.5k that no conclusion has been reached at this stage.

17/007 Schedule of Bills

The Board unanimously agreed the Chairman signing the schedule of bills.

17/008 Annual Report and Accounts

The RFO presented the annual report and accounts 2016/17 and reported there were no causes for concern.

The Board unanimously agreed for the Chairman to sign the annual governance statement and accounting statement.

Rate book

The Board unanimously agreed for the Chairman and clerk to sign the rate book.

17/009 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Register

The Board reviewed the risk register and AD advised the risk score in relation to health and safety had been updated. The annual health and safety meeting was postponed and are awaiting a response from the contractor to confirm a date.

17/010 HEALTH AND SAFETY

A discussion took place around where responsibility lies in terms of contractor's health and safety should an incident occur. Nick Helme advised that reasonable steps were taken by the Board in ensuring risk assessments are completed, however responsibility lies with the contractor.

Action: AD to follow up with Nicky re date for the annual H&S meeting

It was noted that one H&S return has been received dated January 17. The AE expected another to come through in February and agreed that he would check.

Action: the Area Engineer to confirm if a H&S report for February had been received and to follow-up on the one for March 2017.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that he, James Hereford, Les Harrison and Adrienne Davies had met Innes Thompson, ADA Chief Executive, to discuss the de-maining of Wormbrook/Allensmore watercourses and possible changes in Board representation.

Subsequently, at the request of Defra, another meeting was convened on 13th April 2017, attended by Ian Moody (ADA), Chris Rushbridge of Defra and Hermes Carlyon(EA). At this meeting, Ian Rushbridge explained that the recent Audit Commission report had highlighted the fact that Board membership should reflect the fact that, as the highest rate-payer, council members should hold a majority over elected members. It is a potential issue so far as this Board is concerned because the current composition of the Board comprises 15 elected and 7 nominated councillors, although Herefordshire Council can nominate 16 members if it so wished. After discussion, it was decided that that this was not a matter for the Board but rather HC and Ian Moody would arrange to contact the leader of the council to discuss the issue and set up a meeting with Defra.

It was noted that some members had not attended many, if any, meetings in the past year and if the Board did consist of 31 members there was a high risk that there would not be a quorum to allow meetings to proceed.

Cllr Phillips reported that the Council only have 54 members and are looking to reduce the number attending meetings rather than increase. Members don't get paid for attending this meeting. Various options were discussed including those Council representatives present having block votes, holding extraordinary meetings where Council representatives requested an item needing more Council representatives present, the Council inviting other organisations such as parish council's to have a seat on the Board and the reduction in the size of the Board.

Action: the Chairman to forward correspondence to Cllr Roger Phillips, who would discuss with the Council Leader

May inspection was confirmed for the 18th May. The AE circulated the itinerary and menu and asked for menu choices. It was noted these are currently provisional.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20th July 2017 at 10.30am - 7Y Business Centre, Leominster, HR6 0NX

