



RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2019 AT 10.30AM AT THE 7Y BUSINESS CENTRE, LEOMINSTER HR6 ONX

PRESENT:

Board Members:

Mr Charles Pudge – Chairman
Mr John Smith – Vice Chairman
Lord Cawley
Mr Richard Corbett
Mr Stephen Dale
Mr Malcolm Davies
Mrs Noorissa Davies
Major James Hereford
Mr James Makin
Mr Kenneth Mitcheson
Cllr Sebastian Bowen
Cllr John Hardwick
Cllr Felicity Norman
Cllr Roger Phillips

HOOPLE LTD OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Audrey Clements – Responsible Finance Officer (AC)
Ms Adrienne Davies – Clerk to the Board (CB)
Mr Les Harrison – Area Engineer (AE)
Mrs Liz Chandler – Deputy Clerk to the Board (LC)
Ms Kerry Lawrence – Minutes (KL)

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were noted from Board Members; Ms. Zita Chilman and Cllr. Bruce Baker.

19/001 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr James Makin declared an interest in the report regarding proposed works at Wellington Marsh.

19/002 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked the Board to stand to observe two minutes silence in remembrance of the recent passing of the Board member Mr. Jim Lawrence.

It was noted that there is now no Lower Wye representation on the Board.

The Chairman advised that time was coming to rotate the chair as he had been in office since 2007 and at the ADA governance workshop it was stated that the chair should hold office for a continuous period of longer than 2 terms or up to a maximum of 10 years. Board members were asked to give some thought who might like to be put forward for the role.

19/003 CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 17TH JANUARY 2019

One correction noted on page 3 under '*flood prevention and biodiversity enhancement work*' should read "**approval of the document which summarised....**" subject to this amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate recording of the meeting.

Action: KL

19/004 UPDATE ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Chairman's Newsletter

It was agreed at the last board meeting to include a Chairman's newsletter with the annual rate demands, the newsletter was presented to Board for information.

19/005 AREA ENGINEER REPORTS

Report of the Area Engineer to the Board

The Area Engineer summarised the maintenance that had taken place since the last meeting and reported a small underspend to the annual budget.

Expenditure to 31 March - £149,553.48.

Budget - £150,000.00

Watercourse at Auberrow

The AE advised that the previously discussed watercourse at Auberrow remained in need of restoration work to reduce the risk of flooding to nearby residential housing but this would be of no benefit to Dick (James) Makin's land. However Dick had offered to undertake some improvement work himself and has received a quotation of £1,500 to carry out the work. Members were asked if they would consider making a financial contribution towards the cost, as previously suggested. After some discussion it was agreed that the Board would contribute 50% (£750) and Dick would self-fund the remaining cost. Dick was satisfied with the decision.

The AE followed on and presented his photos with a verbal update.

Biodiversity Action Plan 2019

The Biodiversity Action Plan 2019 was presented to the Board and duly noted. The Board wished to express its thanks to the former Ecological Advisor for a well written document.

The Board will need to implement the actions recommended in the BAP and audit and record details of actions taken.

Ecological Advisor

The Chair advised the Board of the need to appoint a new Ecological Advisor and there were two candidates for consideration. Following discussion and consideration the Board members unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Watson as the Ecological Advisor to the Board.

Maintenance Contract Extension Letter

The contractor has agreed to a two-year extension of the current maintenance contract and a letter was presented for signature to extend the maintenance contract for a further two years, commencing 01 April 2020. The AE explained that the contractor had subsequently requested an overall increase of 5% in rates plus a 13.3% increase in labour cost to take effect from April 2020. After consideration, the Board agreed to accept the proposed increases, to be effective for the two-year extension period.

Action: AD

Rainfall data

Rainfall data was provided for information. The Chair thanked Mr. Richard Corbett and the Environmental Agency for submitting the latest data.

Land Drainage Consents

The following land drainage consents were noted as approved; -

- Consent to discharge SW to Broad Brook from a timber processing development at Mile End Farm, Leominster.
- Consent to discharge SW from a proposed development comprising four dwellings at Shelwick.
- Consent to discharge SW indirectly to Withington Lakes from a proposed housing development at Withington Lakes.

The Area Engineer advised that there was a requirement to employ a hydrologist consultant to carry out independent checks on these submissions.

The Area Engineer also advised that Withington Lakes should read Whitestone and apologised for this error.

The following planning matters were noted;

- PR2019-001 & 002 – land adjacent to Garrison House, ordnance close Moreton-on-Lugg. Herefordshire.
- PR2019-003 – unit 4, Southern Avenue, Leominster. Herefordshire
- PR2019-004 – Ledicot Farm, Ledicot Lane, Shobdon. Leominster. Herefordshire.
- PR2019-005 – Agri Lloyd International, Leominster. Herefordshire.
- PR2019-006 – Unit 5. Southern Avenue. Leominster. Herefordshire.
- PR2019-007 – Church House Farm. Morton on Lugg. Herefordshire.

19/006 FINANCE REPORTS

Covering Report

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) reported the forecast outturn position as an in-year deficit of £15,935, resulting in a surplus of £5k this is mainly due to the reduction in admin costs.

The current outstanding rates falls over 170 account to a total of £4,463.22, an improvement on previous years.

Rating Report

The Chair raised a concern regarding the collection rates. The Clerk reported that the 93% collection rate included the arrears brought forward. The Clerk stated that the next stage for a number of accounts in arrears is to issue summonses to those accounts who have verified their landownership, been reminders and had a follow-up phone call.

Finance Statement

It was noted the finance statement 003d should read land drainage consent fees rather than form.

Action: AC to amend

Schedule of Bills

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

Annual Report

The RFO tabled the annual report and accounts 18/19 for Board's approval. Cllr. Sebastian Bowen commended the RFO on a well laid out and readable document.

Cllr Sebastian Bowen asked in relation to the VAT movements, were the RLDB due any further refunds from HMRC. Audrey will confirm however she thought this was due to a timing issue.

Action AC

It was agreed the Clerk would include a note in relation to the two board members who have passed away as they had served during 18/19.

Action AD

The Area Engineer asked if we review the maintenance contract from Network Rail every three years. The Clerk confirmed this is being done and a letter had been sent.

There were maintenance discrepancies between the annual report and the Area Engineers report. AC will further investigate.

Action AC

The low attendance levels of some of the appointed Board members was noted; the Chair reported that he had written to John Lester regarding the attendance levels and he was advised that following the next election the appointed members will be renewed by HC.

The Board approved the annual report for accounts and the governance statement.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19

The Clerk to the Board advised that audit were onsite Monday, 29th April and there is the requirement to complete and approve the annual governance and accountability return. The Board unanimously agreed.

Rate Book 2019/20

The Board agreed the rate book and approved for the Chair to sign.

19/007 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Register

The Board received and noted the current risks. It was agreed following the meeting RL1B017 in relation to the resignation of the Economic Advisor could be closed.

Action AD

In response to a Board members question, the Clerk confirmed that the EA Advisor could be invited to the Board meeting if required.

19/008 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Minutes of H&S Meeting 3rd April 2019

The Clerk included a copy of the health and safety meeting minutes from 3rd April 2019 for information, and reported that there were no areas of concern.

H&S reports

Audit reports agreed at the health and safety meeting was included for information.

H&S Risk Assessment

The Clerk advised that two risk assessments had been completed.

The Clerk reminded the Board that the current insurance policy only covers Board members up to the age of 85; the Clerk has been looking at alternative options however this has proved difficult. The Clerk confirmed that the NFU do not provide insurance to Internal Drainage Boards. An alternative insurance company, The Risk Company does provide the appropriate insurance cover and are going to provide a quote. The current insurance provider, who provide cover for for approx 80 drainage board has quoted in the region of £1k less this year. When all quotes have been received the Clerk will discuss these with Hoople's in-house insurance team to review the policies and ensure that the cover is the same.

Action: AD

A risk assessment was completed following an incident the Area Engineer was involved in. The Board's H&S Advisor advised that under the health and safety act the board can make a request for details of locations which have been flagged as a site not to be visited unaccompanied. The Clerk will request a list of such locations from the Council and update the H&S risk assessment mitigating actions to include this action.

Action: AD

19/009 INSURANCE 2019/20

Discussed under health and safety item.

19/010 PAYMENT OPTIONS

Following the last meeting the RFO has reviewed a number of payment options that are available to the Board and would like the Board's view on how and if the Board would like any of these investigated further.

There is an option to do nothing, change or upgrade the bank accounts, take credit card payments or look at a third party solution. In relation to third party solutions, the RFO felt the "Gocardless" option was the most effective and reasonable option with little set up costs.

Postage options were also considered and suggested offering rate payers the choice to receive their annual bills via e-mail for an incentive to reduce postage costs.

The Board asked whether the website accepts online payments. The RFO advised that the website doesn't offer online payments due to needing a licence, however there is an option to use a third party provider i.e. GoCardless, World Pay etc. so the link could be displayed on the website.

Following a discussion none of the above options would be explored any further at this moment in time.

It was resolved to include a letter to accompany the annual bills due request ratepayers e-mail addresses, up-to-date contact details in order that their annual bills / reminders / communications can be sent via-email.

Action: AD/ AC

19/011 HOOPLE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Following a request at the last meeting, the Clerk has provided a breakdown of what Hoople provide as part of its management fee since the contract was awarded in 2014.

It was noted that the Board are due to retender for the service from April 2021 and the Clerk suggested that the Board needs to start planning the process for this around January 2020 as the timing needs to include any account management handover, if applicable.

The Board were disappointed by the telephone stats, however the Clerk is expecting to see an improvement in the near future as she now have weekly visibility of the statistics and is closely monitoring the situation as well as working with the relevant team leader to improve. It was noted that there is an answerphone and it automatically diverts if the person is on the phone or unavailable. The Clerk also advised that she had the answerphone message updated to encourage the caller to leave a message, in order that they can be called back.

19/012 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Notes ADA Board meeting 13th February 2019

Notes ADA Board meeting 13th February 2019 were noted.

It was noted that several members had been asked to participate in a survey in relation to how the Board is conducted, how many members etc. it is thought to be conducted by Defra.

May Inspection Day 30th May 2019

The may inspection date was noted.

Board papers

The Board asked that any reports in colour is printed in colour.

Action KL

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18 July 2019 at 10.30am - 7Y Business Centre, Leominster, HR6 ONX