



**RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**  
**HELD ON 16 APRIL 2020 at 10.30AM VIA WEBEX**

**PRESENT:**

**Board Members:**

Mr Charles Pudge  
Ms Zita Chilman  
Mr Richard Corbett  
Mr Kenneth Mitcheson  
Mr Malcolm Davies  
Mrs Noorissa Davies  
Cllr Sebastian Bowen  
Cllr Roger Phillips  
Cllr John Stone  
Cllr John Harrington  
Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst  
Cllr David Summers  
Cllr Christy Bolderson  
Cllr John Stone  
Cllr Toni Fagan  
Mr James Makin  
Lord Cawley  
Major James Hereford

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms Adrienne Davies – Clerk to the Board (AD)  
Ms Audrey Clements – Responsible Finance Officer (AC)  
Mr Les Harrison – Area Engineer (AE)  
Ms Kerry Lawrence – Minutes (KL)

**APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hardwick, Cllr Andrews and Cllr Jinman.

**20/001 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **20/002 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ADA – Covid-19**

The Clerk informed the Board that with the approval of the Chairman the Standing Orders had been updated, and signed by the Minister thus enabling the meeting to take place remotely. A confirmation certificate of the change was expected to be received shortly.

## **20/003 CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2020**

A revised version of the minutes had been circulated with some minor changes, these were agreed as an accurate recording of the meeting held on 16 January 2020.

In response to a Member's question, the AE confirmed Herefordshire Wildlife Trust had been consulted in respect of the Biodiversity Action Plan, however, no response had been received. It was agreed that Cllr Fagan would contact the Wildlife Trust to confirm any input.

**Action: Cllr Fagan**

## **20/004 UPDATE ON MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING UNLESS COVERED BY AN ITEM ON THE AGENDA**

The AE confirmed no further information had been received in relation to the planning consultation at The Farm Moreton Jeffries Court despite his best efforts, but since retrospective approval was being sought, he did not consider it necessary to pursue the matter further.

## **20/005 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Cllr Bolderson proposed Cllr Swinglehurst for the position of Vice Chair, seconded by Cllr Phillips.

Members agreed the appointment and relevant information would be shared with Cllr Swinglehurst.

**Action: AD**

## **20/006 AREA ENGINEER REPORTS**

### **Report of the Area Engineer to the Board**

The AE explained that, despite the worsening weather since the last meeting, it had been possible to continue work involving the management of bankside vegetation. One landowner on Tippetts Brook had expressed particular satisfaction with the work undertaken by the Board during the period.

## **Coronavirus**

The AE reported that watercourse maintenance was classified as an essential service, which had allowed programmed work to continue, albeit in strict accordance with ADA's recommended safe-working guidelines. However, it had been decided at the last Health and Safety Liaison meeting that social distancing recommendations could not be met when carrying out spraying operations and the programme would be suspended pending possible changes in safe-working guidelines.

The AE reported an expenditure as at 31 March 2020 of £129k, against a budget of £150k. The shortfall resulted from curtailment of the mowing programme due to adverse ground conditions.

## **Environmental Works**

The AE reported that, in addition to the 50 Black Poplar year-old cuttings which some Board Members were nurturing for planting out next year, another 20 truncheons and cuttings for planting within the Board's area had been provided.

## **Assent with Conditions - Natural England**

Following the submission of the annual maintenance programme for assent by Natural England, the representative for Herefordshire requested that a Habitat Regulations Assessment must be produced. Such an assessment would be required for each watercourse.

Since the Board had been maintaining its watercourses in much the same way for 40 years without any problems, the Board's Environmental Advisor requested that Natural England review the need for such an onerous requirement. The AE was pleased to report that this had been considered and the requirement was waived to allow assent to be given subject to certain conditions.

## **Winter Flooding**

The AE reported that there had been a number of high peaks during the period culminating in an unprecedented event on the week-end of 15/16 February when main rivers exceeded all previously recorded peak levels. Whilst widespread flooding occurred throughout the catchment, the worst affected area was at Wellington, where 49 dwellings were affected and at nearby Wellington Marsh where another 9 properties flooded.

It was acknowledged Parish Councils had provided information detailing the location of other affected properties within the Board's area.

## **Rainfall Figures**

Rainfall totals for Shobdon and Leominster STW were appended for the information of Members. The AE thanked Richard Corbett and the Environment Agency for providing the figures.

## **Planning Consultants**

The following planning consultant were noted :-

PR2020-001 – Moat Cottage, School Lane, Eardisland, Leominster

PR2020-002 – Coedmore Farm, Allensmore

PR2020-003 – Barn Conversions at Lane Farm Sutton St Nicholas

PR2020-004 – Brook House Farm, Moreton on Lugg

PR2020-005 – Land South of Broxmere, Bodenham

In response to question regarding planning matters, Cllr Swinglehurst advised that no further developments would be approved because of the current phosphate issue with the River Lugg. Cllr Swinglehurst confirmed the legal position remains the same in that no works can progress that would impact upon the phosphate levels unless it can be proven beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would no negative impact. Applications are being assessed on an individual basis.

The Chairman noted a meeting was due to take place with the NFU to discuss the flooding and what the Environmental Agency should be looking for in the long term.

## **20/007 FINANCE REPORTS**

### **Covering Report**

The RFO reported the final outturn position as an underspend of £29k for 19/20 as a result of spending less on maintenance than originally planned due to poor weather.

The RFO reported the current debt position as £4k, an improvement on previous years.

The Clerk confirmed the process of chasing debt includes issuing reminders and follow up phone calls before a summons is issued, all of which is recorded. The Clerk reported 9 accounts have recently been summoned and were taken to court, liability orders were issued for all cases.

### **Schedule of Bills**

The Board unanimously agreed to the Chairman's approval of the schedule of bills. Signing of the schedule of bills would take place when Covid-19 restrictions safely allow.

### **Annual Report and Accounts 19/20**

The RFO presented the draft annual report and accounts 2019/20 for approval. No concerns were envisaged with the upcoming audit.

The Board unanimously agreed to the Chairman signing of the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20.

A discussion took place how contributions to the Environmental Agency should be shown in the annual accounts. It was subsequently agreed that it should remain as is.

## **Rate Book 2020/21 - for signature**

The Board unanimously agreed for the Chairman to sign the rate book for 2020/21.

## **20/008 RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **Risk Register**

The Clerk advised two new risks had been added to the risk register in relation to being unable to carry out routine maintenance due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place (RLIDB020) and the risk of exposure to the virus in relation to those carrying out Board's activities (RLIDB021).

The Clerk confirmed the Board's Health and Safety Advisor was satisfied with the way the maintenance work was being carried out and the procedures being followed. It was suggested to explore if there was a common theme among neighbouring IDB's in terms of how they were responding to the pandemic in addition to ADA's advice and agreed the Clerk would contact Ian Moody.

**Action: AD**

A member suggested clarity is needed in relation to RLIDB019 the use of phosphate chemicals as misleading. The risk should also read 'banned'.

**Action: AD**

## **20/009 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Minutes of H&S Meeting 1st April 2020**

Minutes of the Health and Safety meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 were appended for information. There were no concerns raised, all actions were complete and the position on spraying would be reviewed early May.

### **H&S Reports**

It was acknowledged that site audits had been suspended for the time being due to covid-19 restrictions.

## **20/010 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Clerk presented a further set of policies for approval.

### **Financial Regulations Apr 2020**

The Clerk advised following a query at the last meeting, as part of the recovery procedure it was agreed to report at this meeting the number of accounts with values of under £5 based on

19/20 annual billing. Overall there were 100 bills with a value of less than £5 with a cumulative total of approx £300.

The board approved the financial regulations in addition to the below policies:-

- Billing and Recovery procedure Apr 2020
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Apr 2020
- FOI Publication Scheme and charging Apr 2020
- Data Protection Policy Apr 2020
- IDB Register of Member's Interests April 2020
- Document retention and deletion Policy Apr 2020

## **20/011 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **May Inspection Day 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Due to the current covid-19 pandemic it was agreed the inspection day would be postponed and discussed at the July meeting.

**Action: AD**

### **Moor Brook**

The Chairman asked in relation to a letter received regarding overgrown vegetation at Moor Brook. The AE explained that he had visited Moor Brook frequently over the last 12 months and unaware of any issues, however he noted that it could be difficult to plan work at the location due to pheasants taking priority. The Clerk advised that a response to the complaint had been sent.

### **Management Services to the Board**

It was acknowledged that feedback had been received in terms of the tender document and understood it was being reviewed. The Chair asked that the new Vice-Chair, Cllr Swinglehurst be included on the tender sub-committee. The RFO would share the tender document for the Vice-Chair's comments.

**Action: AC**

The Board thanked the Clerk for organising the meeting in the difficult circumstances.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed for 16 July 2020.