



RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

PRESENT:

Board Members:

Mr Charles Pudge – Chairman
Mr John Smith – Vice Chairman
Lord Cawley
Mr Stephen Dale
Mr Malcolm Davies
Mr Nick Helme
Mr Jim Lawrence
Mr James Makin
Mr Kenneth Mitcheson
Mr Geoff Sparey
Cllr John Hardwick
Cllr Bruce Baker
Cllr Sebastian Bowen

HOOPLE LTD OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Adrienne Davies – Clerk to the Board (CB)
Mr Les Harrison – Area Engineer (AE)
Mrs Liz Chandler – Minute Taker

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were noted from Board members Major James Hereford, Dick Makin, Cllr Roger Phillips, Richard Corbett, Zita Chilman, Felicity Norman, Audrey Harris and Duncan Trumper of Hoople Ltd.

17/011 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

17/012 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

17/013 CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 20TH APRIL 2017

One minor amendment to the minutes, Lord John Cawley should be listed as Lord Cawley. Subject to the minutes being amended they were approved as an accurate record.

17/014 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Area Engineer (AE) reported that there had been no further developments with Leominster Compensating Ditch.

17/015 REPORT OF THE AREA ENGINEER/ENGINEER TO THE BOARD INCLUDING RAIN FALL DATA

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

It was reported that the contractor had achieved 85% of the target spraying total which is considerably more than has been achieved in previous years.

The AE advised that because of the arid conditions and associated fire risk, together with working in proximity to a railway line and busy road, it had been necessary to hire a chipper for brash disposal and a hydraulic platform for pollarding and coppicing. Although costly, for reasons of Health and Safety and the environment, it is inevitable that this will become the normal working practice rather than the exception.

The AE reported an expenditure as at 30th May 2017 of £34k, against an annual budget of £147k.

The AE also reported that, although some work had already been carried out on Cheaton Brook, there remained a lot to be done because of the unusually large number of dead and dying alders, believed to have been caused by phytophthora.

Board Governance

AE reported that, to date, there has been no further developments, but a meeting is expected to take place shortly between Ian Moodie of ADA and the Leader of Herefordshire Council to discuss the matter. Adrienne Davies (AD) is currently reviewing the original composition of the Board and is researching minutes of previous minutes. Cllr J Hardwick advised that Herefordshire Council are reviewing external bodies at a cabinet meeting next week.

Wormbrook/Allensmore Demaining

As one of the conditions of de-maining process, Defra requires amendments are made to the byelaws, which means that three clauses must to be added. These will need to be amended and then advertised, which is likely to be costly and it was suggested that this could be done on the RLIDB website to reduce costs.

A meeting with Defra and the proposed Technical Working Group is arranged for 26 July in London when terms of reference and next steps will be discussed. The AE will take part in the meeting via conference call.

Request for Compensation

Illustrated by photographs, the AE described how a cow had been rescued from the River Lodon at Panks Bridge but, unfortunately, did not survive. Subsequently the owner had requested payment of compensation in the sum of £1000, claiming that the Board had not replaced a bank-side fence when working on the ground the previous year. Although the AE had denied any liability, because there was no existing fence when the work was done, the owner asked that his claim should be considered by the Board. This was discussed but it was decided that there was no justification for the claim and the AE should advise the owner of the Board's decision.

Action: AE

Proposed Management of Curl Brook System

As part of the Annual Inspection itinerary, a visit was made to Moseley Farm where Tony Norman, set out the aims of a five year scheme to improve the riparian ecology of watercourses in the Curl Brook catchment. The proposed scheme has the backing of Natural England and Wye and Usk Foundation but is likely to affect the Board's maintenance operations.

Following the visit, Tony wrote to the Chairman confirming the scheme including the requests detailed below:

1. LDB to stay out of the Curl catchment for 5 years
2. Monitoring of the SSSI
3. £200 per year – Education

The Chairman will respond taking the following into consideration.

1. The Board decided that it could make no commitment to restrict its maintenance responsibilities until all affected ratepayers were consulted and confirmed their agreement in writing. The Board agreed to undertake the consultation process but, whatever the outcome, the Board must reserve the right of entry to carry out any works it considered necessary.
2. It was agreed that the Board has no power to monitor Moseley Common SSSI because this falls within the remit of Natural England.
3. It was questioned whether the Board is able to make the requested contribution and, if so, payment should be made to the school that benefits rather than to an individual. This led to the possibility of a precedent being established in that it would be difficult to deny similar requests for funding. However, the Board's constitution is to be examined to determine the legality of making such payments.

Action: AD

Floodwater Attenuation Schemes

A government grant has been approved to enable the Environment Agency to carry out flood-water attenuation works to reduce the flood risk in certain areas of England. It is hoped that the headwaters of Cheaton Brook and Millcroft Brook will both benefit from such work, which should lead to a reduction of flooding within the Board's operational area.

Rainfall Figures

The rainfall figures were shown as an appendix for information.

Land Drainage Consents

Two applications have been submitted relating to the discharge of storm-water from the Barons Cross Development via an attenuation storage pond. One is a renewal for the headwall structure at the outfall to Ebnall Ditch, which was first approved in 2007 and the second is for the actual discharge, which is subject to a separate consent. Both were approved subject to the agreed channel improvement work on Ebnall Ditch being completed within 12 months from the date of issue.

Planning Applications

The following planning matters were noted:

- PR2017-0004 – Barons Cross Camp, Leominster

17/016 FINANCE REPORTS

Covering Report

AD reported that according to current projections an overspend is likely to be higher than that budgeted for by approximately £2.9k but based on previous years which showed that the actual expenditure was less than that budgeted for at this moment in time, this was not anticipated to be the final outturn.

The annual bills have been issued and this years collection rate is 53% compared to 56% last year. Future board reports will include a collection rate graph.

Reminder notices are due out in September, a Board Member asked whether reminders could be sent out before September and AD agreed to follow up the request.

It was also asked if email addresses/phone numbers of rate payers were held on the system and whether e-billing and setting up direct debits would be more beneficial and cost efficient.

Action: AD to investigate

Audit report

It was reported that the final annual return has been submitted and we are waiting feedback and will be reported to the Board in October.

Schedule of Bills

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

17/017 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 following the positive meeting held last week.

The AE thanked Adrienne for her help ensuring systems and procedures are kept up to date and in place.

17/018 HEALTH AND SAFETY

AD advised the Board that a positive meeting took place last week and another will take place in October prior to the Board meeting.

The recommendations from the H&S Audit was discussed at the June H&S meeting with the Boards contractor and actions were agreed. The notes from this meeting were current being circulated to the relevant parties for sign off.

Action: AD

17/019 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AD provided an update on the data quality project.

17/020 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19th October 2017 at 10.30am - 7Y Business Centre, Leominster, HR6 0NX

2018 Dates were also agreed.

