

RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD

Held on Thursday 17th April 2014 at 10.30 a.m. at 7Y Business Centre, Leominster

PRESENT:

Board Members:

Mr C Pudge – Chairman
Mr J Smith – Vice Chairman
Mr N Helme
Major J Hereford
Mr K Mitcheson
Mr G Sparey
Cllr S Bowen
Cllr M Cooper
Cllr J Hardwick
Cllr J Millar
Cllr F Norman

Hoople Ltd Officers in Attendance:

Minutes taken by:

Mr G Evans – Responsible Finance Officer
Mr D Trumper – GIS Engineer
Mr L Harrison – Area Engineer
Ms J Hemingway – Contract Handover Support
Miss K Allen – Secretary to the Board

Miss F Biffen (Hoople Ltd)

Caldicot & Wentlooge Representative in Attendance:

Mr R Penn – part of meeting

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies had been received from Mr M Davies, Mr J Makin, Cllr C Pritchard and Mr R Corbett.

14/001 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

14/002 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was agreed that agenda item 10 would be moved forward to enable Mr Penn to leave the meeting thereafter.

The Chairman requested that six logo designs be provided by Hoople for review at the next meeting. **Action: Hoople**

14/003 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16th JANUARY 2014

The spelling of Lord Cawley's and Cllr Millar's names would be corrected on page 1.

Under 13/067 this year's penny rate would be corrected to show the agreed rate of 7.75p.

Subject to the amendments noted above, the Board resolved that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 16th January 2014 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

14/004 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2014

A request was made for a glossary to be included in future board packs to deal with acronyms. **Action: Hoople**

Minute 13/071 – ADA

ADA is reducing its executive committee and will become an incorporated body; there will be nine branches with one member per branch. It was explained that board members will no longer be representing their branch – they will have a duty under company law to act in the best interests of ADA.

Following changes in Wales and the decision of the Lower Severn IDB to join the South West branch, RLIDB will be the sole member of the Severn & Wales branch. ADA may wish RLIDB to join the South West branch - this may not be to RLIDB's advantage but it is a matter for ADA. There is also the option to join the Welsh branch.

It was agreed to ask ADA about their plans for the branch and to invite their Chief Executive to attend a board meeting. The Clerk was asked to draft a letter for approval. **Action: Hoople**

RLIDB might also consider continuing membership of ADA.

Mr Penn then outlined plans for the Welsh IDBs – there will be a Welsh branch for a period of a year before the transfer of IDB functions to Natural Resources Wales in April 2015.

He then updated the Board on the legal action by JBA and the approach was endorsed.

14/005 POTENTIAL IMPLICATION FOR THE RLIDB OF THE TRANSFER OF IDBs IN WALES TO NRW (RL/14/0000/05)

Mr Penn had provided a report as part of the Board papers and now circulated a map of the Lower Wye IDB area. LWIDB has a defined work programme, concentrated on two weeks in the summer, and its penny rate is very much lower than RLIDB's. It has a

much smaller geographical area, low maintenance total annual budget of £11,000 and substantial reserves.

A Board Member commented that DEFRA is trying to reduce the number of boards by amalgamation as well as anticipated pressure to amalgamate from ADA.

Under the Drainage Act, it would not be permissible to amalgamate the boards and charge different rates – rateable value could perhaps be adjusted to achieve the same penny rate. LWIDB currently raise £31,000 pa.

Of the farmers, only one elected board member lives in Wales and is happy for RLIDB to take on these watercourses.

Charges associated with transfer of responsibilities would be funded by the Welsh Government.

It was proposed by Cllr. Bowen and seconded by Cllr. Millar that further talks be pursued regarding Option iv in Mr Penn's paper: "that part of the current IDD that is in England could be created as a new IDD but managed by an existing English IDD". Some changes to Board membership would be required – perhaps one representative - and the Area Engineer should be included in the discussions. Mr Penn will feed back accordingly.

It was felt that there could be an opportunity to press for demaining as part of this exercise.

Alongside these discussions, ideas for amalgamating the boards would also be considered.

The Area Engineer thanked Mr Penn for the surveying equipment which C&W had kindly donated to the Board, and the Board Members expressed their thanks to C&W. *R Penn then left the meeting.*

14/006 FINANCE REPORT

(RL/14/0000/01-1d)

Actual Outturn v Amended Budget 2013-2014

The Responsible Finance Officer presented this report showing a deficit of £23,102.

With regard to an outstanding debtor, the Responsible Finance Officer will check whether obtaining a court order would result in preferred creditor status. **Action:**

Hoople

The Finance Statement, Schedule of Bills and Rating Report were also presented.

14/007 – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2013/2014

(RL/14/0000/02)

Statement of Accounts & Annual Governance Statement.

The Statement of Accounts was presented by the Responsible Finance Officer and the variances to previous year were highlighted for the Board.

Cllr. Millar queried the transfer of funds out of the capital reserve account as set out in the balance sheet. Since the accounts statements had been drafted by the previous support services provider (Caldicot & Wentlooge Levels IDB), it was not possible to provide an immediate answer; the Responsible Finance Officer stated he would investigate and report back to the Board.

Further discussion around the reserve balances took place and the Board was satisfied that the balances were correct and the reduction in the capital reserve account was a matter of presentation.

The annual accounting & governance statement was circulated for Board Members to review and Board Members were satisfied with the statement and resolved that the Chairman should sign the return.

*Subsequent investigation revealed that at the Board meeting on 18th April 2013 the Board voted to amalgamate the two revenue & capital reserves into a single revenue reserve.

14/008 REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER (RL/14/0000/03)

The contents of the report were noted.

The incorrect spelling of Littleton in item 2 was noted.

**14/009 REPORT OF THE AREA ENGINEER/ENGINEER TO THE BOARD
(INCLUDING RAINFALL DATA)**

(RL/14/0000/04)

The Area Engineer presented his report on works carried out during the period, which included removal of several major blockages from the River Frome. In view of the number of ratepayers affected by the Environmental Agency's failure to carry out maintenance, it was proposed that consideration be given to submitting a request to the EA for demaignment with subsequent adoption by the Board.

It was felt that political support from local MPs would assist the case.

It was agreed to invite Bill Wiggin to the annual inspection, include a list of members, and urge him to attend as an opportunity to see the issues. **Action: Chairman**

Planning Matters

The planning matters were noted.

The Area Engineer reported that all actions are now recorded on a spreadsheet, which provides the facility to go back and review at any time.

A Board Member questioned whether approved applications were monitored. The Area Engineer stated that he would ensure compliance in the specific case raised to ensure the Board's interests are safeguarded. **Action: Area Engineer**

The rainfall data was also noted.

14/010 CORRESPONDENCE AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members should meet at 9:30 a.m. on 8th May at 7Y Business Centre, Leominster for Annual Inspection. The itinerary is to be confirmed by Area Engineer.

The Area Engineer highlighted that the Chairman is celebrating his 25 year anniversary with the Board this year.

Balfour Beatty has signed a 10 year contract for maintaining infrastructure/ditches. A draft leaflet regarding landowner responsibilities for roadside ditches was circulated. It contains several errors, which will be addressed.

A Board Member had recently met Balfour Beatty's MD and asked if RLIDB had been consulted on the leaflet. It was agreed to invite BB to meet the Chairman and Area Engineer and perhaps attend a Board meeting. **Action: JM to pass contact details to Chairman/Area Engineer**

Dates of Board Meetings

The following dates were agreed:

- Full Board meeting – 10th July 2014 at 10.30 a.m.
- Full Board meeting – 9th October 2014 at 10.30 a.m.
- Full Board meeting – 15th January 2015 at 10.30 a.m.
- Full Board meeting – 9th April 2015 at 10.30 a.m.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12:38 p.m.

Chairman



10/7/14 .

Clerk



