



RIVER LUGG INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2019 AT 10.30AM AT THE 7Y BUSINESS CENTRE, LEOMINSTER

PRESENT:

Board members

Mr Charles Pudge – Chairman
Mr John Smith – Vice Chairman
Ms Zita Chilman
Mr Stephen Dale
Mr James Makin
Mr Kenneth Mitcheson
Mrs Noorissa Davies
Cllr Sebastian Bowen
Cllr Toni Fagan
Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst
Cllr David Summers
Cllr Christy Bolderson
Cllr John Stone
Mr Malcolm Davies
Lord Cawley

HOOPLE OFFICERS SUPPORTING THE BOARD:

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)

Visitors

Mrs Jarrett

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Richard Corbett, Mr Nick Helme, Major James Hereford, Cllr John Hardwick, Cllr Roger Phillips and Cllr Paul Andrews.

19/023 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declaration of interests.

19/024 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed new Board members; Cllr Christy Bolderson, Cllr John Stone and Cllr Summers.

19/025 CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 19

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

19/026 UPDATE ON MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING, IF NOT AN AGENDA ITEM

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

19/027 AREA ENGINEER REPORTS

Report of the Area Engineer to the Board Including trees at Wellington

The AE explained that work had been concentrated solely on mowing bank-side vegetation during the period, although the weather had been favourable throughout and excellent progress had been made in completing a total of 74% of the programmed work up to the end of September. However, it was likely that, with the onset of periods of heavy rainfall, final completion would be delayed.

Arising from this work, the landowner of Broom Ditch, Pembridge advised that a crop of lawn grass seed had been damaged. Mistakenly it had appeared that the cropping had been completed. After discussion the landowner agreed to a settlement of £500 for the damage caused. Although this was an error by the Board's contractor, the AE asked the Board to consider making a contribution of 50% as there were mitigating circumstances and the Chairman had confirmed that it was a reasonable settlement of the matter. All members were in favour of contributing £250 towards the cost, however lessons should be learnt from this.

Expenditure to 30 September 2019: £86,189.39

Planting of Black Poplars at Wellington

The AE displayed photographs showing the location of the black poplars that had recently been planted on the bank of Wellington Brook at Wellington. Since it was in contravention of the Board's Byelaws, the AE has raised an objection because they would obstruct the operation of maintenance machinery. The AE had suggested that the trees might be relocated near the ford but this was deemed to be impracticable.

Mrs Jarrett from the Wellington Community Parish was in attendance at the meeting and explained that the trees had been planted in memory of the late Jenny Gill, the former village Tree Warden. Mrs Jarrett further explained that they had not been aware of the Board's Byelaws when the landowner gave consent to plant the trees in their current location. She explained that there is an active volunteer working group which would undertake channel maintenance in the vicinity of the trees but it was pointed out that this could not be guaranteed for the lifetime of the trees.

A member asked whether there would be any objection to relocating the tree within the field, Mrs Jarrett stated that the advice from the landowner was that this would not be possible as the field is used for livestock grazing. Mr Makin, the tenant, indicated that if the trees were fenced then this would not be an issue. Mrs Jarrett would not be opposed to moving the trees but the groups preference is for them to remain close to the path so walkers could see the memorial plaque.

After some discussion, the Board agreed that the black poplars current location is too close to the watercourse and would create long-term problems and they must be relocated. It was agreed that Mr Makin would approach the landowner to discuss the relocation of the trees to a more suitable location and an update would be provided at the January meeting.

Action: JM

The AE advised that Tony Norman had enquired whether the Board would be prepared to play an active part in increasing the number of Black Poplars in Herefordshire by planting 50 trees p/a within its operational area. The AE had agreed and this was supported by members.

Mr Jarrett thanked the Board for their time and support with this matter and left the meeting.

Wellington Marsh

The AE explained that Mr Makin had completed a piece of work to relieve flooding at Wellington Marsh to which the Board had previously agreed to contribute half of the cost in the sum of £750.00. The Board unanimously approved the payment of the invoice.

Action: AD

Members wished to congratulate and thank Mr Makin for the splendid work that had been carried out.

Land Drainage Consents

No applications have been received for Land Drainage Consents for the period under review.

Rainfall data

The rainfall figures were appended for information, provided by Richard Corbett and the Environment Agency.

Planning Applications

The following planning applications were noted:-

- PR2019-011 – land opposite Bridge House, Shelwick, Herefordshire
- PR2019-012 – Eastfields, Bodenham, Herefordshire
- PR2019-013 – Land to the West of Mill Cottage, Monkland
- PR2019-014 – Land at Bull Orchard, Shelwick
- PR2019-015 – Unit 1, Brierley Way, Leominster
- PR2019-016 – Lane Orchard, Land to the south of Woodville Grove, Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford

19/028 FINANCE REPORTS

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) reported that the financial position remains stable with no significant changes since the last report in June.

The RFO explained that there had been technical issues with the DRS system used to record ratepayer's information and generates invoices for ratepayers, this resulted in a delay with first reminders being issued. However, reminders were sent on 27th September and the RFO was pleased to report the collection rate had increased to 82% to date and is more on track to previous years.

A member stated that when he went to pay his bill there were no method of payment details included on the reminder letter. The Clerk will arrange for payment details, including bank details to be included on all reminders.

Action: AD

Annual Return

The RO explained that the external audit had been completed by PKF Littlejohn LLP, and other than agreeing with the internal audit recommendation to ensure expenses are authorised, there were no other recommendations.

Schedule of Bills

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

Write-offs

The Clerk advised the Board of an unpaid account in relation to a previous ratepayer who was liable for rates up until October 2016. They had been sent a number of letters and reminders, but these are being returned due to the ratepayer relocating. It was acknowledged that the Clerk had made every effort in tracing the ratepayer from resources available to her, however this was to no avail. The Board unanimously agreed to write off the debt of £143.21.

Account recovery

The Clerk explained that as a direct result of the recent data quality project the Board are in a much stronger position to commence court proceedings for non-payment of rates.

First reminders were sent out in September and the proposal is to send second reminders in early November followed by a summons to those rate payers who will have received a first and second reminder and still not paid their levy to the Board.

It was noted when a summons is issued, it advises the account holder, that there will be an additional administration charge of £82.50 applied to their account; the RFO explained that this is for time and resources taken to collate information for court and associated court costs.

The Board agreed with the proposed timetable to issue summons to ratepayers, whom following a second reminder has been issued.

The Board agreed for the Chairman to sign the letter of authorisation for the named Hoople officers to represent RLIDB at both the Magistrates Court and the County Court for pursuance of monies owed or any other relevant matter.

18/029 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Register

The Clerk presented the risk register to the Board and advised that there were no substantial changes from the last meeting.

A member asked as one of the objectives of the Board is to promote the ecological environmental well-being for the district how that is represented within the risk register. AD to advise.

Action: AD

A member advised an issue of high levels phosphate within the River Lugg catchment area had been shared by the council. The Board had not been made aware of this issue, the AE advised that the objective of the Board is to reduce the risk of flooding and improve water flow. However a possible ban on the use of phosphate based chemicals could have implications on the work of the Board. AD to update the risk register.

Action: AD

19/030 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Minutes H&S minutes 2nd Oct 19

The Clerk advised the H&S reports and risk assessments have been included for information and noted there were no concerns since the last meeting.

H&S Statement of Intent Policy

The Clerk presented the updated Health and Safety Statement of Intent Policy and highlighted the minor changes that have been made to the existing policy.

Cllr Bowen was appointed to the role of Designated Health and Safety Board member. The Clerk would make the necessary updates and share any relevant information with Cllr Bowen.

Action: AD

The Board approved the Health and Safety Statement of Intent Policy

It was agreed that a request would be made to the Board's principal contractor for a copy of his annual risk register to provide greater assurances to the Board.

Action: AD

19/031 2019 RIVER LUGG ID BOARD ELECTIONS

The Clerk advised that nine completed nomination papers had been submitted leaving one unallocated seat on the Board for an elected member. The area the board is unrepresented in is the lower wye. Cllr Bolderson agreed to approach Allensmore parish. AD to send Cllr Bolderson the details of the ratepayers within the lower wye and who will try and identify possible suitable candidates.

Action: CB/ AD

The Clerk advised of the requirement to publish an election declaration notice in the local press to provide notification of the outcome of the election and details of whom the new board members were. The Clerk asked the Board if they were happy for their home addresses to be included, or alternatively for the Hoople office to be used. There were no objections received to using home addresses and the Board approved to public the notice and its placement in the Hereford Times.

Action: AD

19/032 CORRESPONDENCE

Defra IDB Governance review

The draft report following the review of IDB governance returns was included for information. The Clerk informed the Board a final copy was expected in the near future and would be circulated via email to Board members when available.

Cllr Swinglehurst raised the question whether there was adequate training for new members. It was subsequently agreed the Clerk would contact ADA to explore if there was any training is available.

Action: AD

IDB1 Analysis

The Clerk shared the results of a return the Board have to submit to ADA every year, for information. The report highlights where RLIDB is included in the response.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project meeting 14th November

The Clerk reported that they had met with the project lead for NFM for Herefordshire Council, where it was agreed that the Board would share details of the maintenance work within the NFM project area, and similarly, the NFM project lead will do the same for areas affecting the Board's remit. Board has shared this information with the NFM project.

A representative of the Board has been invited to attend the NFM steering group meeting on the 14th November, which is to be followed by a tour of the project measures that the NFM have been working on. The AE expressed an interest in attending to see what work the NFM project are doing.

AD to share the NFM project leads contact details with the councillors.

Action: AD

19/033 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RLIDB Management Services - 1st April 21

The Clerk reminded the Board that the Hoople contract expires March 2021 and proposed starting the tender/ procurement process soon to allow for a reasonable handover period should Hoople not be successful following the tender process.

A discussion took place in terms of who could lead the tender procurement. There were concerns that the perception council were too close to Hoople to be entirely independent. The Board asked for three quotes from companies to manage the tender process. The responsible officer to seek council lawyers view and report back to the January meeting on options who could lead the tender process.

Action: AC

The AE suggested to also look at appointing a contractor at the same time.

Action: AD

Update from ADA Board meeting (16th Oct 19)

No update to report.

EA & ADA Marches Branch meeting (TBC Nov 19)

Reminder to the Board members that the Environment Agency and ADA Marches Branch meeting is due to take place November or December. Date to be confirmed.

ADA conference 13th November 19

The Clerk advised the annual ADA conference is to take place on 13th November and should any board members wish to attend to let the Clerk know by Monday, 21 October.

Action: ALL

The Chairman requested a place be booked for him.

Action: KL

The Chairman announced that Mr Dale was standing down from the Board as was Mr Smith whom has stood on the Board for 48 years. On behalf of the Board the Chairman thanked them and all the other Board members who were standing down at the 31st October for all of their help and support. They will be a great loss to the Board.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16th January 2020, at 10.30am - 7Y Business Centre, Leominster, HR6 ONX