

1. Governance

1.1 Declaration of Interest

Board Members are advised to declare a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest on any item in the Agenda.

1.2 Apologies for Absence

1.3 Appointment of Chairman

1.4 Appointment of Vice Chairman

1.5 Chair's Announcements

1.6 Public Forum

1.7 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2023

Members Present	24.11.2021	26.01.2022	15.06.2022	23.11.2022	25.01.2023	28.06.2023
Elissa Swinglehurst Chair	√	√	√	√	√	√
Charles Pudge Vice Chair	√	√	√	√	√	√
John Cawley JC (Retired 31-10-2023)	A	√	√	√	-	√
Zita Chilman ZC	A	√	√	√	√	A
Richard Corbett RC	A	√	A	-	√	A
Malcolm Davies MD	√	√	√	√	√	√
Noorissa Davies ND	√	A	√	A	A	√
Nic Eynon NE	-	-	√	√	A	√
James Hereford Jhe (Retired 31/10/2023)	A	√	√	√	√	A
James Makin JM	A	√	√	-	√	A
Jamie Audsley JA						-
Vacancy						
Cllr Graham Biggs GB						-
Cllr Toni Fagan TF						√
Cllr Peter Hamblin PH						-
Cllr Dan Hurcomb DH						-
Cllr Robert Highfield RH						√
Roger Phillips RP	√	A	A	-	A	A
Cllr John Stone JS	A	A	√	√	-	-
Cllr Mark Woodall MW						A
John Fry JF						A

In attendance on behalf of JBA Consulting

Officer:	Craig Benson	Clerk
	Anne-Clare Landolt	Engineer
	David Blake	Finance Officer

Also in Attendance

Will Watson	Environmental Advisor
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Declaration of Interest

2023.29 None.

Apologies for Absence

2023.30 Apologies were received from Roger Phillips, Mark Woodall, John Fry, Zita Chilman, Richard Corbett, James Hereford, and James Makin.

Chair's Announcements

2023.31 The Chair informed members of the sad news that Peter Jinman had died. On behalf of the Board, she offered sincere condolences to his family and expressed her thanks to Peter for his time serving on the Board. Following on from the recent local elections there had been a number of new appointed members of the Board and felt it was appropriate for member to introduce themselves.

Public Forum/Question's

2023.32 There were none.

2023.33 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2023 were considered. Chair proposed, vice-Chair seconded and members approved as a true and correct record.

Matters arising not discussed elsewhere on Agenda

2023.34 2023.4 - The Chair noted that there was no Agenda Item for Members of the Public to ask questions of the Board. Clerk confirmed that this was an omission and would be included in future meeting papers.

2023.35 1.4 JC informed the Clerk that he was in attendance at the November 22 meeting. Clerk confirmed that the minute book would be updated accordingly.

Complaints/FOI/EIR requests

2023.36 None received. The Clerk did report on the correspondence that had been received from the NFU Regional Office who have commented on the Board's newsletter that was issued with the drainage rate demands. The Clerk confirmed that he has been invited to represent the Board at a meeting in July along with the Chair. The Board Vice Chair has also been invited to attend, as a landowner, along with representatives from the Environment Agency, Natural England, NFU and other landowners.

CLERK REPORT

2023.37 Policy – Annual Report - Clerk advised Members that the annual report summarised the Board's work during the financial year ending 31 March 2023 and would be made available on the Board's website.

2023.38 Environment Agency–The Clerk confirmed that discussion with the EA concerning the establishment of a new Public Sector Co-operation Agreement (PSCA) were ongoing. It was hoped to have the document in place by the end of the calendar year.

2023.39 ADA – Flood & Water Live 2023, the working demonstration for managing watercourses and flood defence will take place on 5-6 July 2023 at Carrington, Lincolnshire. The event was free to attend, but prior registration was required. The registration link was contained with the papers.

2023.40 Election Year – Clerk confirmed that this year would see the end of the current term of office for the elected members.

Members were asked to approve the following procedural arrangements:

- i) To confirm the appointment of JBA Consulting as returning officer.
- ii) To approve the register of electors that was prepared on 1 April 2023 and to advertise (via the website) Board approval.
- iii) It is proposed to receive nominations by post and the last date for return of the nomination papers is Friday 6 October 2023.

If there are more candidates nominated than the fixed number of elected members, then a poll must be arranged and the date for that poll is to be Monday 30 October 2023.

Members agreed to approve the above procedures.

2023.41 IDB Questionnaire – The Clerk informed members that questionnaires were still being received and it was therefore intended to tabulate them and share the response with members later in the year. It was noted that the overall response was positive, ratepayers were very supportive of the work undertaken by the Board. A number of ratepayers would like to see the Board carrying out works on “main river” systems. Clerk confirmed that once the PSCA was in place this could be achieved.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023.42 Rating Report – FO advised the balance outstanding was £6,792 and related to 42 ratepayers. 6 accounts totalling £5,086 are with the solicitor. 58% of rates have been collected to date for 2023/24.

2023.43 Internal Audit – FO advised that the Internal Audit had been completed, the internal auditor reported that there was an adequate level of control in place but did identify that member attendance meant the balance between elected & nominated members maybe swayed during decision making. He also pointed out that the board were currently changing bankers which did address the potential risk identified previously.

2023.44 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 – Section 1 – Members were asked to review and approve Section 1 of the AGAR.JC proposed, CP seconded and members approved the section.

2023.45 Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023– The FO took members through the accounts, an increase in total expenditure saw the surplus reduce to £19,095 YoY meaning A reserve balance of £209,405 was carried forward. CP proposed that the Board approve the accounts, this was seconded by MD and approved unanimously.

2023.46 Budget Comparison – The FO informed members that the income of the Board was at 100% of the budget forecast and the expenditure levels were at 92%, with Drains Maintenance & Administration the areas which saw an underspend.

2023.47 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 – Section 2 – The FO took members through the Financial Statement and asked members to approve this section. MD proposed, CP seconded and members approved the AGAR.

2023.48 Five Year Budget- FO advised the section was just for note.

2023.49 Schedule of Payments - Approval proposed by ES, seconded by CP and approved by members.

2023.50 Banking Arrangements – FO advised that the transfer to Lloyds would be completed in the coming days, The Chair asked the potential to invest the reserves, the FO confirmed the new account offered favourable options.

ENGINEERS REPORT

2023.51 Water Level Management – Maintenance – Eng reviewed the current position with regard to the spraying operation. When the Eng. applied for the assent from Natural England this year, they had raised concern over the amount of spraying that the Board were planning to undertake. Eng. summarised the activity, issues that the contractor was facing as well as the environmental and health and safety factors that impact on the task. Members approved the Eng. recommendation of accepting the contractors revised rate for this year only and review the success at the end of the maintenance season. The Chair thanked the Eng. and WW for their work on this and it was agreed that a process of monitoring the watercourses would be undertaken to ascertain the success or not of the current model that was being followed. It was suggested that a letter is sent to those ratepayers whose land abuts onto those watercourses that are to be sprayed to gain their support for the possible changes in application method and to get feedback as to the effectiveness of spraying once it has been completed. It was suggested that it would also be worthwhile asking rate payers about potential BAP works.

2023.52 Drone Surveying. Members discussed the possibility of using a drone to help support the Eng. in carrying out pre and post maintenance inspections as well as recording flood extents following periods of heavy inundation and flooding. It was agreed to look into this to find suitable products for the Board's environment.

2023.53 Network Rail Recommend Board contract undertake work this was approved by the Board.

2023.54 EA Eng. had been contacted by the EA navigation team with regard to work on the River Lugg. Chair thanked Eng. and would like to drive this further...

2023.55 Herefordshire Council reported that they have commissioned a topographical survey of Wellington Brook.

2023.56 Board keen for more capital projects particularly focussed on reducing revenue. Engineer asked to look at identifying possibilities, speaking to landowners.

2023.57 Tour of inspection – This will take place in September. either on 20 or 27th. Further information will be sent out in due course.

2023.58 Members thanked the Eng. for her high standard of work.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

2023.59 Information noted.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISER'S REPORT

2023.60 The Environmental Advisor took members through his ecological report on the Lugg Rhea. Members thanked WW for this report.

WW then reviewed the ADA Environment Day that was held in February and members were keen to support the Biodiversity Net Gain proposals that the Government were intending to launch later on in the year in November.

There was a discussion around any sightings of and the possible introduction of water voles in the RLIDB district and it was suggested that the request for information and support should be included in the annual newsletter.

WW added that white claw crayfish and signal crayfish have been found in the district. He would like to undertake EDNA surveys of the watercourses to help build up the species list within the RLIDB area. Members supported this and offers of assistance and recording sightings were given.

Any Other Business

2023.61 Flood attenuation scheme upstream of Wellington village. The Chair would pass the details on to the Eng.

Date of Next Meeting

2023.62 Wednesday 22 November 2023- Venue TBC

UPDATE: The meeting was later rescheduled to Wednesday 29th November 2023. The Venue will be Wharton Hall.

1.8 Matters Arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

1.9 Complaints/FOI Requests