

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 Chair’s Announcements

1.4 Public Forum

1.5 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023

Members Present	24.11.2021	26.01.2022	15.06.2022	23.11.2022	25.01.2023	28.06.2023	29.11.2023
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	√	√	√	√	√	√	A
Noorissa Davies ND	√	A	√	A	A	√	A
Nic Eynon NE	-	-	√	√	A	√	-
James Hereford Jhe (Retired 31/10/2023)	A	√	√	√	√	A	
James Makin JM	A	√	√	-	√	A	√
Thomas Cawley TC							√
Vacancy							
Vacancy							
Cllr Graham Biggs GB						-	-
Cllr Toni Fagan TF						√	A
Cllr Peter Hamblin PH						-	A
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	-
Jamie Audsley JA						-	-

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
Phil Chandler	Health and Safety Advisor

Member of the Public

Nick Helme	Ratepayer
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Declaration of Interest

2023.63 None.

Apologies for Absence

2023.64 Apologies were received from Toni Fagin, Peter Hamblin, Richard Corbett and Noorissa Davies.

Appointment of Chair

2023.65 CP proposed ES should continue in the role of Chair of the Board. There were no other nominations and therefore ES was Elected as Chair for a further three-year term of office.

Appointment of Vice - Chair

2023.66 ES proposed CP should continue in the role of Vice Chair of the Board. There were no other nominations and therefore CP was Elected as Vice Chair for a further three-year term of office. CP advised members that this was likely to be his last term of office.

Chair's Announcements

2023.67 The Chair thanked members for their continued support. The tour was very good as well as the discussions on the challenges faced by landowners within the district. The lunch and venue was excellent and would be ideal to use for future meetings etc.

Public Forum/Question's

2023.68 The Chair invited Mr Nick Helme to address the Board. Mr Helme thanked members for the opportunity to discuss and raise with them the issues landowners were facing namely, nobody is maintaining the main river, landowners could maintain the "ordinary watercourses" at a lower cost than the IDB, no real guide as to what you can and cannot do on main river, Natural England approval is also required when working on SSSI. Mr Helme informed members that he has some planned work on his holding that included removal of fallen trees, coppicing 20% of trees, pollarding all willows. The estimate for the works was in the region of £5-£10k. He was looking to create a template that all landowners could follow when working on main river. He suggested that the RLIDB should get involved with the project. Landowners will invite the RLIDB to work on main river and it was hoped the project would commence in 6-8 months. The Chair thanked Mr Helme for his thoughts and plans.

2023.69 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

2023.70 2023.51- MW confirmed that the embankment at Honeylake Brook had been removed.

Complaints/FOI/EIR requests

2023.71 None received.

CLERK REPORT

2023.72 Environment Agency PSCA –There appeared to have been a major turnaround as to the use of the PSCA between the Board and the EA. The EA were now suggesting that an email instruction from them would suffice for the IDB to undertake works on main river. Alternatively, the respective landowner could instruct the Board to undertake works on their behalf. The issue following these methods were funding, insurance, permits, liability. The Clerk confirmed that the PSCA was produced to protect both the EA and RLIDB and any move away from not having it in place was a risk to the Board. Chair stated that this is directly linked to the points raised by Mr Helme and if the IDB were to support landowners the PSCA should be set up. JM stated that the “eyes of the press will be on the RLIDB if we did work on the River Lugg” It was agreed that simplifying or fast tracking the permitting process would be beneficial and this is something that the Board, through the Engineer, could facilitate by preparing the applications for example. Members agreed that a way must be found for the works to be undertaken. Board agreed to use reserves to help support the works and agreed to look at forming a sub committee to discuss and possibly lead on the project.

2023.73 District Hydraulic Model – The Clerk confirmed that the application for Grant in Aid support for the model had been approved. It was intended for the tender specification to be produced in the new year.

2023.74 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.

Election Year – Clerk confirmed that there was no requirement for a poll this year and welcomed Mr Thomas Cawley to his first meeting of the Board. It was noted that there were two elected member vacancies on the Board.

2023.75 IDB Questionnaire – The Clerk informed members that the responses received showed support for the Board’s maintenance activities across the district. The effectiveness of weed control via spraying was considered to be ineffective by two thirds of those who responded. Watercourses across the district which would benefit from maintenance by the RLIDB were identified as main river.

2023.76 Board Member Area – Clerk confirmed that an area specifically for Board members was now available on the Board’s website. Members would receive an email with the details to access the information contained in this area.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023.77 Rating Report – FO advised the balance outstanding was £14,096 and that solicitors have been instructed on 23 accounts at a cost of £483. 85% of rates have been collected to date for 2023/24.

2023.78 External Audit – The External Audit for 2022/23 is complete with no issues giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

2023.79 Internal Audit Review – FO advised that the Internal Audit Review meeting would take place on 12 December and will be held virtually.

2023.80 Budget Comparison – The FO reviewed the current position of the Budget and brought members attention to the favourable interest received position.

2023.81 Five Year Budget- FO updated members on the current forecast. The Chair discussed the implications of either reducing or increasing the rate and suggested creating a new holding account were funds could be earmarked for certain projects. The Vice Chair also suggested holding the rate at the current level which MW thought would help to regain trust from ratepayers who have queried the IDB role. FO confirmed that the estimate is available for the general public to review. It was agreed that the FO would prepare a brief statement that would support the five-year budget forecast in future.

2023.82 Schedule of Payments – A list of payments totalling £95,754.75 were proposed for acceptance by CP, seconded by RH and approved by members.

ENGINEERS REPORT

2023.83 Water Level Management – Maintenance – Spend on maintenance for financial year 2023/24 is £106k. Network Rail have not yet submitted their invoice for the work undertaken on Wellington Brook. There had been a change in the local contact of the maintenance contractor which resulted in some issues with regard to work on the ground. However, since the change it would appear that the difficulties have been bottomed out. The Total View system allows the Eng. to view the work undertaken which is a step in the right direction.

Weed Control has been difficult to control and the Eng is continuing to monitor the effectiveness of spraying. Eng informed members that Himalayan Balsam was also becoming more wide spread in the district. The Engineer was in discussion with the IDB ecologist to determine the Board's approach going forward. So far the Engineer has identified it on Watery Lane, Homend Relief channel, Brierley Ditch, and the Wellington Brook.

2023.84 Sutton Rhea - Eng had been out to site at times of flooding to try and assess what precisely was happening, meeting ratepayers on each occasion. There were a number of factors to be explored. There are queries about control structures at the top end of the Sutton Rhea, issues with bund levels on Rhea lane and there were a number of unanswered queries around development works at the quarry and the performance of the flood banks. Site meeting with the EA asset team was planned.

2023.85 Wellington Brook – Eng updated members on the issue of the vehicle that ended up in the Brook. This had been removed and the Board were looking to recover the cost of removal from the owner. It was suggested that the works upstream on Wellington Brook would possibly be a good place to visit as part of the tour.

2023.86 Drone Surveying. Members were shown footage obtained from a drone, owned by RH. The images were excellent and members were fully supportive of purchasing a similar drone to assist the Eng with her work.

2023.87 The Eng currently had some additional short-term support from JBA engineers based in the JBA Newport office. They were helping by undertaking site visits to watercourses the Eng had been unable to visit. They were checking works completed by the contractor during these visits as well as capturing information on the watercourse such as access, channel details, extent of weed, invasive species, structures and services. They had started on watercourses in Lower Wye area.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

2023.88 There had been no accidents, incidents or near misses reported since the last meeting.

2023.89 Health and Safety Reports - The H&S advisor informed members that there had been one site observation undertaken since the last meeting and that the contractor were still to sign off the

actions in the report. Contact had been made with the new Contracts Manager and the Advisor was planning to arrange future site visits with him.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISER'S REPORT

2023.90 The Environmental Advisor took members through his ecological report and confirmed that he had not found any protected species on the watercourses that were inspected.

2023.91 Wye Valley Partnership meeting - The Adviser attended the meeting on behalf of the RLIDB. There were 2 restoration plans in development for the River Wye Catchment; the Environment Agency-led plan being developed by the consultancy Mott MacDonald but also a Defra plan being personally led by the then Environment Minister Theresa Coffey. The EA catchment plan will first cover the tributaries. The partnership hoped Defra would consult/cooperate with the EA led-plan. Mott MacDonald would seek consultation with various groups including the RLIDB. on the Lugg Rhea.

Any Other Business

2023.92 JM Wellington Brook. The Flood attenuation scheme upstream of Wellington village appears to have worked. Concern was raised over the development at Canon Pyon. Eng confirmed that she would add comments on behalf of the RLIDB. Members also enquired if the topographical survey of Wellington Brook, commissioned by Herefordshire Council, had been completed. Eng. had not heard but would follow up.

Date of Next Meeting

2023.93 Wednesday 17 January 2024 - Venue Leominster Golf Club.

1.6 Matters Arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

1.7 Complaints/FOI Requests