

UMIDB
UPPER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the BOARD
held at 17 Albion Place Maidstone
on **Tuesday 11 June 2019.**

Members of the Board Present

H Rogers - Chairman

J Cannon
D Goff
S Highwood
M Round
G Swift
R Thomas
C Wheeler

In attendance

M D Watson - Chief Executive
J Williams – Finance Assistant
L Rowland - Administration Assistant

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from O Baldock, S McLeod and W Thompson.

The Chief Executive confirmed that we have 2 new Councillors have been appointed from Tonbridge & Malling BC, Matt Boughton and Mark Davis. However, as we had only received notification of their appointment late last week, they have not yet been sent their introduction packs or been invited to this Board Meeting.

The Chief Executive also confirmed that C Mackonichie has also been appointed from Tunbridge Wells BC and we are waiting for official notification of her appointment.

The Chairman took this opportunity to welcome J Cannon to the meeting and confirmed to the Board that Mr Cannon had resigned from the Board and he had joined for one last meeting. The Chairman thanked him for his service of 31 years and the Chief Executive presented him with a hamper to thank him.

2. ITEMS OF INTEREST DECLARATION

None of the members present declared a pecuniary and/or non pecuniary interest in any of the items to be discussed on the Agenda.

3. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

REPORTED that O Baldock, P Harper, S Highwood, S McLeod, M Round, R Thomas, W Thompson have not yet completed their Register of Members' Interest form for the year 2019/2020.

S Highwood, M Round, R Thomas all completed their forms and handed them in at the meeting.

Members were reminded that this form should be completed by ALL Board Members at the start of each financial year and amended as necessary during the year. Any staff member who has a significant interest should also complete a form. Forms should be completed at your earliest convenience and then returned to the office.

4. MEMBERS LIABILITIES

The Chief Executive reminded Members of their responsibilities whilst an elected Member of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and went over the key points below:

“The Members have responsibility/accountability for the overall control of the IDB’s finances and therefore certain financial/fiduciary duties, breach of which could render them personally liable. These duties can be summarised as an obligation, in the context of this document, to act responsibly and with reasonable care in respect of the IDB’s finances and to properly and fully consider the implications of the IDB’s financial position. These rules are set by Government to make sure that no unacceptable risks are taken with public money. It is therefore very important that Members exercise independent judgment and proper care and diligence.”

The Chief Executive explained to members that this is taken from the ADA guidance note which has already been issued to members. A copy of the full guidance note is available on request and can be emailed to Members if required.

5. PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Members were reminded that all matters discussed relating to employees of the Board should at all times be treated as confidential. Members were reminded once again that there could be implications for the Board under Data Protection and Employment Law if matters discussed were disclosed to others.

The Finance Assistant was asked to leave the room.

The Chief Executive explained that the Finance Assistant’s contract is due to end on 17 September 2019 and he requested the Board’s approval to make her contract a permanent one.

On a proposition by R Thomas seconded by G Swift it was **AGREED** to make the Finance Assistant's contract permanent.

The Chief Executive gave Members an update of the matters relating to pending legal cases.

The Finance Assistant re-joined the meeting.

6. **MINUTES**

RECEIVED a copy of the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on 22 January 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 1)

C Wheeler requested that under Item 2 – Environment Agency Presentation that he would like the minutes to be amended to read the Board would put in a Freedom of Information Request with regards to the work carried out at Coult Stream, rather than himself personally.

AGREED by all Members present that after this correction had been made the Minutes would be correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

7. **FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 22 January 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 2)

Minutes were noted and no comments made.

8. **END OF YEAR FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RECEIVED the Minutes of the End of Year Finance Committee Meeting held on 21 May 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 3)

Minutes were noted and no comments made.

9. **INTERNAL AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Internal Audit Sub Committee Meeting held on 25 February 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 4)

Minutes were noted and no comments made.

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of meeting 1 August 2017

Item 20 – Any Other Business, New Office and Lower Depot combined facility

Investigations to be carried out, with the findings and proposals to be reported to the Board.

The Chief Executive explained in May the £80k contribution from 2018/19 budget and £80k for 2019/20 budget earmarked for this project was deposited in the LMIDB HSBC savings account, and the total fund for the project currently stands as £560k.

Minutes of meeting 17 July 2018

Item 20 – Elections

The Chief Executive explained that the Board currently has 3 vacancies for Elected Members. He also explained that Yalding Parish Council have enquired about providing a representative from the parish council to sit on the Board but the only criticism could be that we already have 2 members representing district 2 already. The Chief Executive confirmed he needs to clarify our legal position on this before we can make a decision. The Chief Executive also explained that we do not currently have a representative from Tandridge DC and he will be requesting they provide another representative.

Having more than 2 Members from one district might be a reason for holding an election but this might only be true once the 9 positions are filled. The Chief Executive has queried the situation with DEFRA.

The Chief Executive has contacted Tandridge DC requesting they provide another representative.

Minutes of meeting 17 July 2018

Item 23 – AOB, Policy to Protect Directors & Officers

Request to look into Protecting Directors and Officers Policy with higher cover and for the policy to be looked at in more detail.

This cover is now in place following both Board's agreement.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 16 – Board Inspection (Bells Pump Station)

Joint Board Inspection.

This took place on 29 March 2019.

D Goff formally thanked staff for a great day and nice lunch.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 23 – AOB, Payments to Board Members

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to draw up a policy in time for the next Board meeting so another discussion could take place.

The Chief Executive explained that he is still investigating this matter and he has spoken to other drainage boards and some of them pay their Chairman but do not pay Board Members.

Members present were generally of the feeling that attending normal Board meetings is part of the role of a Board Member and it was only necessary for payment under special circumstances and a written policy should be drafted with payment guidelines.

M Round suggested that he could provide some protocol from other Board's that he is a Member of, if this would help.

The Chief Executive accepted M Round's offer and agreed it would be a good starting point.

D Goff requested that all future Board agendas/appendixes be posted to him as he finds this costly for him to print himself. Apart from that he also reiterated that he didn't feel payments for general Board Member duties were necessary.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 23 – AOB, Website

Covered under Item 17 on today's agenda.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 23 – AOB, New Accounting Software

New Sage software.

Sage is now up and running together with internet banking making things much easier and using more up-to-date systems.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 23 – AOB, Plant and Machinery

The new plant and machinery was collected in March and is waiting to be used.

Minutes of meeting 22 January 2018

Item 2 – Environment Agency Presentation

EA to provide the following:

- Dimensions of the 2 Duddies sluices so ACE can provide a quotation to replace them
- More detailed breakdown of the precept
- Technical details for Beult Bridge works

Chief Executive to send a letter to the EA to inform them we are not happy with the Beult Bridge project and to ask about precept monies that are not spent/monies to be given back.

The Chief Executive confirmed this is still to be done.

D Goff asked if the EA had come back to us to supply a more detailed breakdown and a report for the precept.

The Chief Executive confirmed this had not been done.

All Members present felt that the EA needs to be held to account and the EA should be challenged on this.

M Round and R Thomas confirmed they were happy to assist with this and help politically if necessary.

D Goff also asked the Chief Executive if the IDB were asked to comment on the Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy for England report that the EA has produced.

The Chief Executive confirmed that ADA consults all the IDB's for their opinions, but it is in fact ADA that responds to the report on behalf of all IDB's.

R Thomas requested that the Chief Executive ask ADA if they have responded yet.

Minutes of meeting 22 January 2019

Item 18 – Email disclaimer

O Baldock recommended putting a disclaimer on the bottom of all emails sent from the office.

This was done on 6 February after being approved by a GDPR consultant.

Minutes of meeting 22 January 2019

Item 17 – Engineer's Report

Issue with service pipes at Collier Street. The Chairman suggested we source some marker posts and put them in ourselves.

The Chief Executive confirmed this matter is being discussed internally to see if its practicable.

11. INTERNAL AUDITORS END OF YEAR REPORT 2018/2019

RECEIVED a copy of the Internal Auditors Interim Report 2018/2019 produced by David Griffiths on 8 and 14 May 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 5)

The Chief Executive explained that there were 2 items in the amber category, Insurance and Online banking.

The Chief Executive explained that because our bank balances were almost at £3m (for both Board's), our Fidelity Guarantee Insurance was no longer adequate. This insurance has now been increased from £3m to £4m.

The Chief Executive also explained that our auditor had asked to look at our new online banking procedure and he identified straight away that having the Chief Executive as an inputter and approver needed to be changed. Our bank mandates have since been corrected and the Chief Executive is no longer an inputter, only an approver. The finance Assistant is still an inputter and the Administration Assistant is now the second inputter.

The Chairman took this opportunity to mention that we had lost 2 Members of the Finance Committee, D Aikman and C Stewart and asked for any recommendations for 2 new Members.

M Round volunteered.

On a proposition by C Wheeler seconded by R Thomas it was **AGREED** that M Round would join the Finance Committee.

The Chairman confirmed that he would also like to approach O Baldock if he would join the Finance Committee.

12. END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS – YEAR ENDING MARCH 2019

RECEIVED a copy of the End of Year Accounts year ending 31 March 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 6)

The Chairman confirmed that the Finance Committee had looked at this document in draft format at the May Finance Committee Meeting and at that time some figures had been queried with regards to wages and these figures have since been adjusted.

REPORTED that this document is produced purely for Board Members information and the asset values reported reflect current book value, not actual purchase price as stated in the annual return.

13. HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES

The Chief Executive confirmed that first aid training for all staff took place on 26 March 2019. That P Watson had chainsaw training in April 2019. Sun cream had been issued to all workmen in early June 2019. Purchase/replacement of all first aid kits has been arranged for all locations and finally, spill kits have been ordered for both depots.

The Chief Executive displayed on screen the Risk Assessment, Method Statement and Safety Advice Guide that O Pantrey had produced and confirmed this would be discussed in more detail with the Works Health and Safety Group Committee at their next meeting in July.

Members felt it was a good guide.

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RECEIVED the various planning applications the Board has been invited to comment on since its last meeting.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 7)

The Chief Executive read through all the planning applications received.

Members noted the planning applications for which the Chief Executive had commented on.

H Round volunteered to help the Chief Executive with the Lucks Lakes application should his help be needed in the future.

15. CONSENTS

RECEIVED particulars of applications requiring the written consent of the Board.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 8)

a) **Little Rhoden Farm, Paddock Wood Distribution Centre**

Proposal: To discharge the surface water from the Little Rhoden Farm development site into a local watercourse.

Following member consultation consent was GRANTED on 6 February 2019.

b) **West of A22 Eastbourne Road, Blindley Heath, Surrey**

Proposal: Installation of new land drain outfalls into private ditches, the existing land drains that will be moved as part of new water pipeline from Blindley heath to Outwood.

Following member consultation consent was GRANTED on 20 March 2019.

c) **Land immediately North of BCA Paddock Wood**

Proposal: Development of land comprising of hard standing and vehicle storage and Construction of new surface water outfall in IDB adopted watercourse U93.

Following member consultation consent was GRANTED on 2 May 2019.

16. ENGINEER'S REPORT

RECEIVED the Engineer's Report Number 156.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 9)

The Chief Executive read through the Engineer's Report that showed the work carried out from February 2019 to May 2019.

The Chairman commented that the report is becoming very light in terms of the schedule of work and requested that the Chief Executive ask the Works Supervisor to concentrate on the schedule of work going forward.

The Chief Executive agreed to pass the request to the Works Supervisor. He also explained at this time of year it is mainly blockage clearing and stream walking taking place and annual maintenance will commence in the second week of July.

17. WEBSITE

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Board's new website went live on 20 May and Members should have received an email confirming this.

Members confirmed receipt of the email and most Members confirmed they had looked at the new website.

The Chief Executive showed the new website on screen and talked Members through the various areas.

D Goff asked whether the website would be updated regularly and the Chief Executive confirmed that it would be maintained by the Administration Assistant and himself on a regular basis.

18. GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

RECEIVED a copy of the Anti-Bribery Policy, the Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management and Register of Members' Interests Form.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 10)

The Chief Executive asked Member to review and approve the 3 documents in question.

Members looked over the 3 documents.

On a proposition by The Chairman seconded by D Goff it was **AGREED** to approve the Anti-Bribery Policy.

On a proposition by D Goff seconded by G Swift was **AGREED** to approve the Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management.

On a proposition by The Chairman seconded by C Wheeler it was **AGREED** to approve the Register of Members' Interests Form.

The Chairman requested that a tick box be added to the Register of Members' Interests Form to give permission for Members to be contacted by email in the form for next year.

19. ADA CONFERENCE 2019

The Chief Executive explained that this year's conference will be held on 13 November 2019 at 1 Great George Street, Westminster, London and asked if any Member(s) would be interested attending.

The Chairman, D Goff, R Thomas and C Wheeler all registered their interest in attending. The Chief Executive stated that can those agreeing to attend make sure they do because the tickets are approximately £130 each.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) D Aikman

The Chief Executive asked Members for their approval to arrange a gift for D Aikman to thank him for 16 years' of service now he has resigned.

Members all **AGREED** this could to be arranged.

b) Ash Trees

G Swift wanted to raise awareness of the health and safety issues of dead ash trees as they are a dangerous tree to deal with. He explained to Members that there had not been an issue with them last year, however, this year there are likely to be 50-100 dead trees in his area.

c) Hogweed

D Goff also wanted to raise awareness of the increase in Hogweed this year. Last year his area had only encountered 2 plants, however, this year there are over 30.

21. CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed and thanked the Board for their attendance.