

UMIDB
UPPER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the BOARD
held at 17 Albion Place Maidstone
on **Tuesday 12 November 2019.**

Members of the Board Present

H Rogers - Chairman

O Baldock
D Goff
P Harper
S Highwood
C Mackonochie
S McGregor
S McLeod
J Perry
G Swift
R Thomas
C Wheeler

In attendance

M D Watson - Chief Executive
J Davis – Works Supervisor
O Pantrey – Technical Assistant
L Rowland – Office Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from M Boughton, M Davis and M Round and W Thompson.

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and informed them that he needed to discuss membership of the Board with them before continuing with the meeting.

The Chairman explained that Maidstone Borough Council had requested for a substitution for M Round to attend the meeting due to his long-term illness and had requested J Perry attend in his place.

The Chief Executive welcomed J Perry to the meeting.

The Chairman explained that there was no issue with J Perry attending the meeting, however, he wanted to discuss with the Board whether he could have voting rights or not.

The Chief Executive informed Members that he had asked for clarification from ADA regarding substituted Members. They explained that it is a bit unusual but confirmed that if they have been nominated in an official capacity that this would be OK.

P Harper explained as M Round was on long-term sick leave and it is uncertain when he will be able to attend meetings again the Policy & Resources Committee at Maidstone Borough Council approved J Perry's attendance yesterday evening.

The Chairman raised his concern that this decision had only been made within the last 24 hours.

C Mackonochie joined the meeting.

Members discussed this at length and the general feeling was as the correct procedures appeared to have been followed, this should be allowed and also encouraged should future situations occur.

The Chairman asked Members to vote and the majority of Members **AGREED** for J Perry to have voting rights, with the exception of 2 Members (D Goff and S Highwood).

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. MINUTES

RECEIVED a copy of the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on 11 June 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 1)

AGREED by all Members present that the Minutes are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

4. 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 £320k.

The Chief Executive explained there had been no real progress and this was still ongoing.

R Thomas suggested that we should have an updated valuation of the current office building once a year.

The Chief Executive confirmed a valuation had been carried out this year and the valuation was £240-250k.

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 has requested they provide another representative.

Having more than 2 Members from one district will be a reason for holding an election.

The Chief Executive confirmed no progress had been made and that he has informed Yalding Parish Council if they can find a landowner from the district 1 parish or nominate someone who has land in that area this would be acceptable.

Minutes of meeting 13 November 2018

Item 23 – AOB, Payments to Board Members

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to draw up a Members Expenses Policy.

Covered under Item 12 on today's agenda.

Minutes of meeting 22 January 2019

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

The Chief Executive explained that the EA had failed to respond to the above and have failed to respond adequately when chased for the precept report. He explained that he had received a report in the last few days, however, the report was full of holes and he was not willing to present this to the Board in its current form.

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 the site is now strimmed prior to works commencing to solve this issue.

J Davis explained that this is the responsibility of the utility providers.

D Goff explained that he had done some research on this issue and had a diagram to pass onto the Chief Executive which shows who is responsible.

Minutes of meeting 11 June 2019

Item – 11, Internal Auditors End of Year Report.

O Baldock to be asked if he would like to join the Finance Committee.

The Chairman asked O Baldock if he would like to join the Finance Committee.

O Baldock declined the offer of joining the Finance Committee.

The Chief Executive asked for volunteers to join the Finance Committee as we currently have 4 Finance Committee Members on the Upper Board, and M Round is one of those 4 Members.

P Harper volunteered.

On a proposition by C Wheeler seconded by R Thomas it was **AGREED** for P Harper to join the Finance Committee.

The Chief Executive confirmed that we would require P Harper's passport and signature etc to enable us to set him up as a signatory with our bank.

Minutes of meeting 11 June 2019

Item 20, AOB

Thank you gift for D Aikman agreed.

The Chief Executive confirmed that D Aikman was presented with a hamper in June.

5. CHAIRMAN REPORT

The Chairman confirmed that some new items had been added to the agenda and Members will notice that the order has also been changed.

The Chairman reminded Members to respond to emails regarding the Board Members to confirm whether they would be attending or not so the office can provide adequate catering for the meetings.

The Chairman also explained that going forward the Board Minutes would be circulated to all Members before the next Board Meeting and the office aim to do that within a couple of weeks of the meeting.

The Chairman explained that since the last Board meeting he has conducted a grievance hearing at the end of June, he has attended a Kent Flood Risk meeting on 2 occasions, conducted 2 Bills Committee meetings. He has also attending a Joint Services Committee meeting with the Lower Board to discuss staffing issues, an Emergency Joint Services Committee Meeting to discuss the new depot/office and the impending tribunals.

He also confirmed, he will be attending the yearly ADA Conference along with other Members tomorrow, Wednesday 13 November and he will be attending a meeting on Thursday 14 November to look at new kit. He will also be attending the Medway Flood Partnership at the end of November 2019.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Chief Executive explained that we have had an interesting year with the ongoing tribunal issue and the Spearhead mowers issue which has had a knock on affect on our maintenance programme.

The Chief Executive confirmed O Pantrey had joined the office team as the new Technical Assistant and he was impressed with the team and we are moving in the right direction. He explained that the new website and new Sage software were working extremely well, and he was very happy with where we are with regards to our health & safety and governance policies.

7. WORKS SUPERVISOR REPORT

RECEIVED the Works Supervisor Report Number 157 (previously known as the Engineer's Report).

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 2)

The Works Supervisor read through the Works Supervisor Report that showed the work carried out from May 2019 to October 2019.

The Works Supervisor expressed his concerns regarding the 18 tonne excavator, as this is now 15 years old and costing £2,000 a year to service etc. He talked through the various options with Members and requested a decision soon from the Board before the end of the financial year.

Members generally felt that hiring in an excavator with an operator would be the preferred choice and requested that the Works Supervisor provide some price comparisons for this option.

On a proposition by S McCleod seconded by C Wheeler it was **AGREED** to go ahead with the hiring option and for prices to be discussed at the next Finance Committee Meeting.

The Works Supervisor explained to Members the issues we had experienced with the Spearhead flail mowers and talked them through the pictures on his report which resulted in a bad mechanical failure. He explained that all the mowers had been sent back as they were not fit for purpose and we are waiting for a full refund from Crawfords.

On Wednesday 13 November the Works Supervisor was advised by Crawfords that a credit has now been raised and will be with us in due course.

R Thomas said that he had found all 3 reports very useful and suggested in future the 3 reports are proposed and accepted on block.

On a proposition by D Goff seconded by S Highwood it was **AGREED** to accept The Chairman Report, The Chief Executive Report and The Works Supervisor Report.

The Chairman said that he was very keen at the last meeting for Members to see the positive aspects in the reports and it was important to recognise this.

The Works Supervisor offered all Members a chance to come out and see what is happening out in the field and said that any Member was very welcome to do so if they wish.

The Chief Executive explained to Members that we had recently purchased a drone and that we will be able to visually show Members more in the future.

8. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

REPORTED that P Harper had not yet completed his Register of Members' Interest form for the year 2019/2020.

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.

P Harper completed his form at the meeting.

9. 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.

O Baldock asked if we had taken up the NFU cover that had previously been discussed.

The Chief Executive confirmed that yes this had been done via our Professional Indemnity Insurance.

S McGregor questioned the personal liability aspect and did not agree with taking personal liability and felt his actions were covered under general council conditions.

The Technical Assistant read out the appropriate section within the ADA guidance relating to the personal financial liability of Board Members. It explains that liability would be placed upon Members should they act “recklessly” and the example given was if a decision was made by members that went against all the advice and facts members were presented with. It was added that this is deemed highly unlikely to occur.

10. FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RECEIVED a copy of the Financial Risk Assessment.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 3)

The Chief Executive explained that the external auditors had criticised the Board for not having our Financial Risk Assessment reported in our Main Board meetings, even though it had been reviewed in other Committee meetings. The Financial Risk Assessment will now be shown yearly in the main Board Meetings.

The Chief Executive asked Members for any comments on the Financial Risk Assessment.

P Harper asked why our pension fund was classed as high risk.

The Chief Executive confirmed this was because we were part of the Kent Pension Fund and there was a £1m shortfall.

The Chairman said that the local authorities would also be in the same situation.

AGREED by all Members that they are happy with the current Financial Risk Assessment and to keep it under review.

11. FINANCE REGULATIONS

RECEIVED a copy of the updated Finance Regulations.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 4)

The Chief Executive asked Members to approve the changes to the Finance Regulations. He explained that there were 2 changes. The first proposed change was that the Chief Executive should be cleared to approve payments up to £30,000. He explained this was due to the workforce moving from weekly to monthly pay and the salary bill each month would always exceed the previous £10,000 limit. The other change was that the online banking process has been improved. He explained that both the Finance Officer and Officer Manager are inputters and he is no longer an inputter, only an approver which reduces risk.

On a proposition by O Baldock seconded by P Harper it was **AGREED** to approve the updated Finance Regulations.

S McGregor asked, as he was new to the Board he would like to know how we prevent any coercion with the inputter and approver.

The Chief Executive explained the monthly Bills Committee process and how each Member of the Finance Committee get to see a copy of the monthly bank statements and also details of all invoices paid.

12. POLICIES REPORT

RECEIVED a copy of the updated Governance Documents List, the Health & Safety Policy Statement and the Members Expenses Policy.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 5)

a) Governance Documents List

Members talked through the Governance Documents List at length and it was requested that a new column be added to the document for the ones needing review.

P Harper also commented on the 10 policies that had now been reviewed since 2014.

The Chief Executive explained that most of those documents were ADA approved documents and suggested that all of the policies that had not been reviewed since 2014 be included in the next Board meeting agenda.

b) Health & Safety Policy Statement

AGREED by all Members present that the Health & Safety Policy Statement be signed by the Chairman.

c) Members Expenses Policy

The Chief Executive asked Members to read and accept the new Members Expenses Policy that has previously been approved by the Joint Services Committee.

On a proposition by D Goff seconded by R Thomas it was **AGREED** to accept the Members Expenses Policy.

The Chief Executive asked Members to agree to apply to DEFRA to allow the Board to pay the Chairman an allowance of £3,500 as previously discussed.

All Members felt this should go ahead.

The Chairman explained that he does not intend to take the allowance, however, it was important for it to be in place not only for the Lower Board but also for any changes that may occur in the future for the Upper Board.

On a proposition by R Thomas seconded by S McLeod it was **AGREED** for the Chief Executive to apply to DEFRA to allow the Board to pay the Chairman an allowance of £3,500.

13. FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 11 June 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 6)

S McGregor recommended that we hold our money in 2 separate banks to reduce any risk to us should there be any problems with our bank in the future.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Finance Committee will review this and we will also ask for our internal auditors take on this.

14. JOINT SERVICES MINUTES

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Joint Services Committee Meeting held on 9 September 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 7)

Minutes were noted and no comments made.

The Technical Assistant explained to Members that our organisation chart should be updated to indicate who has health & safety responsibility.

The Chairman requested for the Technical Assistant to action this.

D Goff asked if there are any terms of reference for the Joint Services Committee and if they could be provided.

The Chief Executive thought we had these and confirmed he would check and report back on this.

15. INTERNAL AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Internal Audit Sub Committee Meeting held on 29 October 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 8)

Minutes were noted and no comments made.

The Chief Executive explained the 2 amber items in the Internal Auditors interim Report would be discussed under item 16.

S McGregor asked what our process was to appoint an internal auditor.

The Chief Executive explained that approximately 4 years ago we interviewed several auditors and appointed D Griffiths, our current internal auditor from that process.

S Highwood explained to Members that the internal auditor will also be looking at our business processes as well as the financial processes he currently looks at going forward.

16. INTERNAL AUDITORS INTERIM REPORT 2019/2020

RECEIVED a copy of the Internal Auditors Interim Report 2019/2020 produced by David Griffiths 29 October 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 9)

The Chief Executive explained that all items were green with the exception of financial planning which was amber/red.

The Chairman read out the following paragraph from the Internal Auditors Interim Report:

I will review the level of rates set, and the impact those levels will have on reserves at the time of my final audit in May 2020. If rates are not set at an appropriate level to ensure the medium-term financial viability of the Board, I will have to raise an issue in the Annual Return over the ability of the Board as a Going Concern.

P Harper did not agree it could affect as a going concern and questioned the use of such phrasing. He also enquired as to who was the internal auditor and who appointed him. The Chief Executive responded saying there was three people interviewed and David Griffiths was the chosen person.

S McGregor asked how many years financial planning we do.

The Chief Executive confirmed for this years' estimates 5 years.

17. EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT YEAR ENDING MARCH 2019

RECEIVED a copy of the External Auditors Report year ending March 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 10)

The Chief Executive talked through the External Auditors Report.

The Chairman asked if we were happy to address the report recommendations in the office or whether we required any other help.

The Chief Executive confirmed we were happy to address this in the office as the recommendations were straight forward.

18. ESTIMATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

RECEIVED a copy of the Board's Estimates for the 2020/2021 financial year.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 11)

The Chairman explained that he had received a report circulated by Maidstone Borough Council as other Members had also received. He confirmed he had sought advice from Tonbridge & Malling Council himself. He also said that it was important to raise questions about the report and talk about principles.

The Chief Executive then outlined the process taken for organising and agreeing to the financial estimates for the coming years.

The Chief Executive explained that he would like to take a 3-step approach to this.

Step 1 would be to discuss and agree the budget for the next financial year.

The Chief Executive displayed the income and expenditure pages of the estimates. He explained that next year's income from the EA Section 57 payment is predicted to remain the same (£77k) but in all likelihood it will be reduced due to poor productivity with mowers this year.

The Chief Executive explained that the position we hold is not by accident. Members voted for changes to both the office and the purchasing of plant in the November 2018 Meeting of the Board. He explained that items not considered in last years (current financial year) estimates were tribunal costs, early replacement of new flail mowers and office staff changes. He explained he had also removed the need to replace the excavator (saving £130k).

He further explained to help avoid a huge increase he has reduced the contractor's costs from £70k to 50k but cutting costs means cutting the service we provide.

S McGregor suggested that the company that sold us the faulty mowers should be held liable for the difference and we should also consider taking them to court. He also said the cost of litigation may not be viable, but it is an avenue we should explore.

The Chief Executive explained that a 20% increase would mean an extra £100k in rates and levies but it may in fact only equate to £50k when taking into account the other elements.

S McGregor commented that we were mixing capital and revenue expense and we should not be adding these together.

P Harper explained that the Director of Finance at Maidstone Borough Council also had issues with the mixing up of revenue and capital.

S McGregor said that it was hard to make a decision based on the figures as they are mixed together and not as he is used to seeing them.

The Chief Executive displayed the Expenditure Report on the screen and explained that he had taken £20k off the plant costs as we had over increased last year. He explained that legal and professional fees would be discussed under Item 24 (Private and Confidential Matters) later.

P Harper also said we cannot make a decision based on the way the figures are presented.

The Chief Executive explained that the figures have been done this way for several years and was surprised why this had not been raised before.

P Harper suggested that maybe this had not been realised before, and now that there was a suggestion of a 20% increase this had now come to light.

J Perry expressed his concerns with the financial return because of the issue with our figures.

The Chairman said that similar concerns had been expressed by his Financial Director regarding the purchase of plant in the expenditure report and the depreciation.

The Chief Executive moved on to Step 2 – Minimum Bank Balance Policy.

He explained that the Minimum Bank Balance Policy was set in January 2018 at £350k and at the time this equated to 6 months expenditure. He further explained that this year's 6 months expenditure is likely to be over £500k and it is estimated this figure will be similar for the coming years.

The Chief Executive asked Members if they wanted to increase this limit?

P Harper and J Perry asked why it was 6 months, as 6 months seemed a lot.

S McGregor said he did not have an issue with 3 or 6 months but as they had already seen that in the figures expenditure includes capital and that was more of an issue.

J Perry commented that the reserves were really quite high at £1.2m and asked why we hold on to all that cash.

The Chief Executive explained that the current level of cash might look high but as they will see the bank balances drop considerably over the next few years because the expenditure is outracing the income.

J Perry said that based on the figures that had been given that could not be used as an argument.

S McGregor said that he could not make sense of the accounts and the figures need to be redrafted.

J Perry said we are sitting on a lot of cash and he did not accept the internal auditors' comments. He said 3 months was more usual.

The Chief Executive said that at the end of the financial year we will have £600k in the bank. He said the EA precept is £120k. Next year there will likely to be £200-£300k more than income coming in and his prediction is the Board will run out of money. He said we have had 11 years of stagnation and this is now catching up with us.

The Chairman said his Financial Director had concerns over the £80k depot/office fund we were putting away each year and we could always call upon this in an emergency.

S McGregor asked what the purpose was of moving office?

The Chief Executive explained that we would need to spend a small fortune to maintain our current building.

S McGregor suggested leasing or borrowing money, then build the new office and then sell the current one.

D Goff confirmed that lots of discussions had taken place with regards to repair of the current office and the logical way forward was to move to a new building.

O Baldock confirmed that local authorities always have revenue and capital estimates separate which makes things clear to see and having them the way they are currently done causes confusion.

C Wheeler asked about EA making a contribution to the new depot/office.

The Chief Executive confirmed that we already have this and said that of the £800k, Upper have put £160k in.

R Thomas thanked Members for the information and the useful debate from both sides. He suggested that we do need to see a council method of accounts to compare the 2 methods and said we are unable to come to a decision today. He suggested once the new figures are ready, we can all meet again later in the month.

On a proposition by S McLeod seconded by P Harper it was **AGREED** to reconvene later in the month once the new figures were available.

D Goff asked the Chief Executive if he would be in a position to do that.

The Chief Executive confirmed he would try and he would come back to Members with a suggestion on dates once the figures were ready.

P Harper suggested that his Finance Director, Mark Green sit down with the Chief Executive to look at the figures.

On a proposition by R Thomas seconded by S Highwood it was **AGREED** that the Chief Executive sit down with an accountant to look at the figures.

The Chairman confirmed he would be happy to authorise for an independent accountant if necessary.

19. HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES

RECEIVED a copy of the updated Workforce Policy List.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 12)

The Chief Executive informed Members that an outside organisation have done an inspection of the depots, pump stations and office.

He explained that the main issue in the office is the fire doors are not adequate and are expensive to replace.

The Technical Assistant explained that we have to take the fire safety element seriously and we are getting quotes. It was added that we should bear in mind the likeliness of an office move. If we were to stay in the current office a fairly serious amount of money will need to be spent longer term. He explained the fire doors alone may be as much as £5k.

The Technical Assistant then moved to issues addressed at the Lees Road Depot. The condition of the car park had been noted in the inspection and trips and falls were more likely due to the poor state. He suggested that the use of Bitmac and vibrating hand roller was tested as a low-cost alternative to the previously expensive alternative of replacing the whole car park. This could then be used to gauge whether small fixes were more viable than a large re-concreting program.

The Technical Assistant also confirmed that while the overall condition was good at Lees Road, there had been failing with signage and removal of rubbish. These were being programmed in to be fixed shortly along with several other small issues.

20. WORKS HEALTH & SAFETY GROUP MEETING

RECEIVED a copy of the Works Health & Safety Group Minutes from 9 July and 7 October 2019.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 13)

O Baldock explained to Member that these meetings were very good meetings and he was very impressed with them and the staff involved.

21. 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 14)

The Chief Executive read through all the planning applications received.

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

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to keep an eye out for a planning application from Tonbridge and Malling BC for the Capel and Tudeley Brook area for 4,000 houses.

22. CONSENTS

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

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 15)

a) Stream Crossing at Knoxbridge Farm

Proposal: To Provide a stream crossing for a new farm road to serve the poultry house at Knoxbridge Farm consisting of a 6 metre 1.5m diameter culvert with headwalls – which will sit within IDB adopted watercourse No.10.

Following member consultation consent was **GRANTED** on 1 July 2019.

b) Structure 851 off Caterfield Lane, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RR

Proposal: To replace existing bridge structure 851 over the River Eden.

Following member consultation consent was **GRANTED** on 14 August 2019

c) Redgate Mill (Eridge Stream)

Proposal: To carry out a river bank repair on the Eridge stream on IDB adopted watercourse No. 41, using concrete blocks and clay).

Following member consultation consent was **GRANTED** on 14 August 2019

d) South of the Hammer Stream

Proposal: To install a control structure on a tributary of the Hammer Stream to divert flow into a shallow flood attenuation area.

Following member consultation consent was **GRANTED** on 12 September 2019

e) Whetstead Woods (Tudeley Wood)

Proposal: To regrade a tributary of the Tudeley Brook Stream around Whetstead Woods, to all allow flood flows to be have an additional route under the railway line and offer additional storage to aid in flood attenuation.

Following member consultation consent was **GRANTED** on 1 November 2019

23. APPROVAL OF CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020

Members considered the two options put forward for the calendar of meetings for 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 16)

The Chairman said that he felt the Board is facing a lot of decisions and the preferred option would be option 1.

The Office Manager commented that from the office's point of view their preferred option would be option 2 to keep consistency between the Lower and Upper Boards, this would also make it easier for the Boards' to be communicated about things around the same time.

Members **AGREED** to go for option 1 as follows:

| Date | Meeting | Time |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Tuesday 21 January | Finance Meeting & Board Meeting | 12.30pm 1pm |
| Friday 6 March | Joint Services Committee | 2pm |
| Tuesday 26 May | Finance Committee | 2pm |
| Tuesday 9 June | Finance Meeting & Board Meeting | 12.30pm 1pm |
| Friday 4 September | Joint Services Committee | 2pm |
| Tuesday 13 October | Estimates | 10am |
| Tuesday 10 November | Finance Meeting & Board Meeting | 12.30pm 1pm |

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Environment Agency Precept

The Chief Executive asked Members permission not to pay the £120k invoice we he have received from the EA until an adequate precept report has been received.

On a proposition by C Wheeler seconded by R Thomas it was **AGREED** that we should not pay the £120k invoice until an adequate precept report has been received.

b) DEFRA – Publication of the IDB Research into Board Membership

The Chief Executive showed Members some slides which is from the IDB Research into Board Membership from DEFRA.

The Chief Executive explained that the Upper Board have between 40-60% attendance from meetings and on average 8 to 11 Members attend.

The Chairman requested for DEFRA's report to be circulated when the minutes are sent to Members.

25. PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

The Chairman requested to move private and confidential matters to the end of the meeting so he would be able to ask some people to leave the room.

The Chairman asked the Works Supervisor and Technical Assistant to leave the room.

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

26. CLOSURE

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

The Chief Executive confirmed he will be in contact shortly regarding the date of the next meeting.