

UPPER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the **BOARD**
held via **Zoom Conference Call**
on **Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 1pm**

Members of the Board Present

Chairman: H Rogers

O Baldock
P Dixon
M Davis
D Goff
P Harper (most of the meeting)
S Highwood
S McGregor
W Thompson
C Wheeler

In attendance:

O Pantrey – Acting Clerk
J Davis – Works Supervisor
L Carey – Finance Officer
L Rowland – Office Manager

Carol Donaldson

The Chairman welcomed P Dixon to his first Board meeting and also Carol Donaldson who has joined the meeting to give a biodiversity presentation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from M Boughton, C Mackonochie and G Swift.

Non attendees - no response received from S McLeod.

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. MEMBERS LIABILITIES

The Clerk 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.”

4. BIODIVERSITY QUOTATION & PRESENTATION FROM CAROL DONALDSON

RECEIVED a copy of Carol Donaldson’s biodiversity quotation.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 1)

Carol thanked Members for giving her the opportunity to present to them today. She talked through her biodiversity presentation and asked Members if they had any questions?

P Harper joined the meeting.

The Chairman asked how Carol might deal with biodiversity across the 2 Boards as they are quite different.

Carol said that she did not see this as a problem as she has dealt with a wide variety of different channels in the past whilst working with the Stour IDB during her 8 years of working with them. She said she would suggest starting with the current BAP and do both Boards together to replicate what has already been done and then it would be for the Boards to decide on the priority areas to concentrate on.

The Chairman asked J Davis for his input as he has had direct involvement with Carol already and asked whether he had found this as a useful guidance tool or whether there had been any issues or conflicts?

J Davis said that originally when work first started with Carol her ideas were met with some negativity from himself and the drivers. He said at the time he couldn’t understand the benefits of narrowing down channels and leaving the fringes as they did. However, he said that Carol was very open to his comments and they visited various sites together and they soon found a very good compromise on all the streams that they worked on. They looked at low risk category areas where it wasn’t affecting rural areas and they found they could implement a lot of conservation benefits to those watercourses. For example by leaving a larger fringe this also sped up the spate condition waterflows. He explained that Carol got to understand the issues the

machine operators faced and how difficult at times it was to carry out the benefits she wanted. He also said that he has lots of photos showing the long term benefits where they had left fringes and this has resulted in not having to desilt channels as regularly as we used to.

The Chairman thanked J Davis for his useful comments.

J Davis said that it could be an idea for the next Board Inspection for Members to have a look at some of the benefits of Carol's work in the Stour IDB region.

The Chairman thanked Carol for her presentation and confirmed that this was something that both Boards needed to make a joint decision on and we would be in contact soon with our decision.

The Clerk said that the presentation you have received from Carol Donaldson is designed to highlight how the Board should and can affect biodiversity and conservation in the district. He said to compliment this, he would like to request a Member puts themselves forward to be a champion for the subject going forward. The role would be to discuss our current arrangement and how we might be able to improve it in future. The champion will update the Board on progressions and elements that may need to be considered. He said his proposal is that they then make recommendations to the Finance Committee where there is a need for related expenditure. He confirmed that Gareth Fulton had put himself forward for the Lower Board.

The Chairman asked that if any Members were interested in doing this that he would be more than happy to hear from them. He also suggested that perhaps C Mackonochie, who was unfortunately not present today could be approached to take on this responsibility.

D Goff added that if any Members know of anyone that has this kind of experience that we could bring in from outside of the Board to also make this known as we could bring them in especially for this role.

Carol Donaldson thanked Members again and left the meeting.

5. ESTIMATES & SPECIAL LEVIES

RECEIVED summary of figures and recommendation from Estimates Committee for the 2021/2022 financial year.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 2)

The Chairman explained to Members that the Finance Committee had met on a couple of occasions to discuss the Estimates and on the first occasion they were unable to come up with an agreed proposal as they had some queries on the facts and figures that had been presented to them. He said at the second meeting they managed to agree a proposal and the result of that are included in the appendix that has been sent to them.

The Chairman asked D Goff to give a brief introduction.

D Goff thanked the Clerk and Financial Officer for preparing the figures. He said that we currently have the same problem that we had last year, and we have to make a serious decision with regards to increasing the rates. He said there is enough explanation to justify a 5% increase (which equated to a penny rate of 3.8791). He said there had been talk of a much higher increase initially and he is obviously aware of the current climate we find ourselves in. He urged Members to be bold and to approve at least a 5% increase. He said he would also welcome a higher increase, and this would be open for discussion.

The Clerk said that you will know this meeting is when the penny rate is set. This dictates the amount of income we will have for the following financial year. He confirmed he had several very productive meetings with the Finance Committee that have not only looked at the future of the Board but also at the current climate we all find ourselves in regarding Covid-19. He added, while I would of course like there to be money available for projects this coming year we all decided that the most responsible course of action was to keep expenditure to an absolute minimum at this time. The summary provided highlights our predictions for the coming year and the penny rate increase we are suggesting the Board makes.

A lengthy discussion took place amongst Members and the main points discussed are recorded below.

O Baldock said that he thought a 5% was the way to go forward at the present time and he personally supported this increase.

P Harper said that he had reservations of a 5% increase in the current climate. He said that Maidstone BC were looking at reducing all of its services and did not feel it was a time to be making an increase above inflation. He wanted the Board to consider more of a modest increase of 3% considering that the Clerk had additional income ideas for the future.

S McGregor said that 3% was a normal council tax limit and he supported a 3% increase, he also said he felt a 5% would be difficult in these times.

S Highwood said that from a farmer's point of view 5% was well worth the money and there was nothing worse than having water flooded into your house and said it is an essential service and it should be well maintained.

The Chairman said he would like to explain the difference between 3% and 5% in terms of projections and this was something that the Finance Committee looked at in great detail. He said they looked at extending the depreciation period on equipment, but they did have to bear in mind the relationship we have with the Lower Board with regards to purchasing power on equipment. He said we could have achieved a 3.5% recommendation by increasing a depreciation period by a year, but this was not possible considering the additional maintenance costs and resale value of the vehicles and this therefore didn't work.

The Chairman also reminded Members of the minimum bank balance policy and if it was decided to increase by 3% then we will hit our minimum bank balances and would potentially need to change our policy or look at a much higher increase. He said we should remember that we are not taxing the councils, the councils are collecting the levy on our behalf.

D Goff said that S Highwood had made a very good point about flooding and unless you have been affected by flooding you do not realise the impact that it has. He said that he was recently shown a risk management graph that the government produce every year. On this graph coastal and inland flooding are second and third behind a pandemic and continues to be an increasing problem. He said if we don't maintain flooding systems, we will have more flak from residents.

P Dixon asked how this compares to the Lower Board and is this a worst-case scenario. He also asked about possible other incomes and changes to the EA precept. He said he does not like running on deficient and this looks quite serious and we must address it.

The Clerk confirmed that the Lower Board were proposing a 3.5% increase and said that it was important to remember that the Lower Board are in a different position because of their asset situation and they need to hold more money than the Upper Board do. He said the recommendation from ADA remains that we hold a years' worth of expenditure and said that the Upper Board need to get their income and expenditure more inline and they had already removed around £100,000 of expenditure. He said that he appreciated 5% was a large increase, but it was less than what was originally being asked for. If the Boards are wanting to move forwards with things like biodiversity application etc. and get back to what we used to do, that will involve the readoption and maintenance of structures and none of this has been accounted for. He said this is why the recommendation may be unpalatable to some and that this has not been made frivolously. It has been made to bring our income and expenditure back together inline over time and appreciates a 5% is large but not as large as what was previously spoken about.

W Thompson said that he would like to propose a 5% increase and said we have the problems that we do because we have not acted in the past.

D Goff said that that average increase in the last 15 years had been around 2.7% and that we have to value the staff in all of this and reminded Members that we have also lost a Technical Assistant in this process.

P Harper raised the issue of the £927,829 balance that was recorded in section 2 of our AGAR and said he felt this was a lot of money to be sitting on.

The Chairman asked the Finance Officer about our current cash limit.

The Finance Officer confirmed that our cash flow is nowhere near that and our paying out account is just under £65,000 at the moment and around £600,000 in our savings and said that we will be using the reserves.

The Chairman asked if the £927,829 included capital assets.

O Baldock said that the £927,829 figure included our total fixed assets and it was not as quite as rosy as it appears and added that in section 7 of the AGAR the balance carried forward is only around £750,000 so we must look at the facts that go along with these figures.

M Davis said that an increase of 5% concerned him as it was above inflation and also said if we have to do that to balance the books that's what we may have to do. He was also concerned at the flack we might get in increasing by 5% and we must have a very good justification. He also asked whether we see ourselves having to make similar increases in the future. Or was this likely to be a one off?

The Clerk said that an increase was likely to be unavoidable going forward until we are able to get expenditure and income inline and said the Finance Committee had spent a lot of time discussing the figures. He added that there is certainly room to increase our income in the future but until we have a foothold on this we do rely on the levy.

The Chairman confirmed that the Finance Committee's recommendation was a 5% increase. He then asked Members to vote on the two recommendations of 3% and 5% that had been discussed.

A vote was requested for a 3% increase that was proposed by P Harper. 2 Members voted for this proposal (P Harper and S McGregor). The remaining 8 Members voted against.

On a proposition D Goff, seconded by S Highwood it was **AGREED** to set the penny rate at 3.8791 and that the Clerk and the Chairman should sign the Drainage Rates & Special Levies Certificate.

8 Members voted for this proposal and 2 voted against (P Harper and S McGregor).

6. NEW OFFICE PROCUREMENT

RECEIVED D Goff's Report regarding possible new office and Plans.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 3)

The Chairman asked D Goff to give an introduction on the possible new office.

D Goff said that it had taken him a lot of time to produce the report and thanked the staff and the Lower Board in supporting him. He also thanked M Davis for his question with regards to how much this is going to cost the Board and confirmed it would be a ball mark figure of £320,000 which was based on £80,000 per year for 4 years and was our contribution of half of the new office build. He added that this would obviously need to be looked at in more detail as this was figure was originally discussed some time ago.

The Chairman gave some background information especially for P Dixon as he is new to the Board. He explained that a possible office move has been in discussion with the Lower Board for a few years and that the Board made the decision to contribute £80,000 per year for 4 years to make up their £320,000 contribution for the project. He confirmed that after 2 payments of £80,000 have been made and the Board decided last year that they no longer wanted to contribute this sum and were looking at alternative ways of funding this contribution. He said at the last Board meeting we discussed various alternatives including having our own offices, our own staff and renting offices.

The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions?

A lengthy discussion took place amongst Members and the main points discussed are recorded below.

O Baldock thanked D Goff for his excellent report and said that it had drawn him to an inevitable conclusion that we must join the Lower Board and commit ourselves to the new office and that renting property is dead money and this was not a longer term advantage to the Board.

P Harper agreed with what O Baldock said and said that the Lower Board will go ahead with the build anyway and as staff are shared between the Boards it is the logical thing to do. He said he thought it would be a good idea to investigate the option of a public work loan or mortgage facility to pay for the balance or even the full contribution.

S McGregor agreed with P Harper's comments with regards to borrowing the funds needed and said we must move in with the Lower Board as separation of the Board's was not feasible.

M Davis said that if we were a standalone Board he would be an advocate of selling Albion Place and renting offices. He said before making the decision we need to be sure how this is going to be funded and know exactly how much this is likely to be and would like more clarity from the Lower Board. He added that because of the staff situation we should be working together with the Lower Board and would support a new office with them if renting is not an option.

O Baldock agreed with M Davis said also agreed with what P Harper's suggestion with regards to a public loan. He added that we have got to the point where we must make a decision on this now as it has been delayed for too long.

C Wheeler said that M Davis made a lot of sense and felt we should postpone a decision until we have more information and realistic figures from the lower Board and he also had reservations about the choice of site.

W Thompson said that we should agree to the new offices with the Lower Board but relook at the design/size of the office which could reduce costs considerably. He asked if we had received a quote for the sale of Albion Place as this would go towards to the costs. He also suggested that a committee be created to deal with this.

The Chairman confirmed the valuation of Albion Place was £250,000 as of April 2020 in its current state.

P Dixon said that as a new Member to the Board he has found this a bit confusing, but as we have a small amount of staff shared between the Boards he could not see a justification for separate offices. He said it seemed the Lower Board were operating very much on their own and felt renting would be far simpler, but this was difficult because of the relationship with the Lower Board. He asked why we do not have a better relationship with the Lower Board.

S Highwood said that the obvious conclusion is we have got to work together. This was a solution we agreed to 4 years ago and us pulling out of a deal we had already agreed to go into should not be an option. He said we should stick to our guns and support the Lower Board's proposal. He said how we fund it is another discussion, but we should continue with our original support.

D Goff said that the relationship with the Lower Board is critical and we did make the decision 4 years ago and the Lower Board quite rightly thought we would go with it and then our doubts came in. They have carried on and have been quite taken aback because we haven't kept to our word. He explained that he has been trying to improve the relationship with the Lower Board and met them recently with the Chairman. He said he accepts how we are going to fund this is another issue but in principle we have to decide and as suggested by W Thompson we need to set up a joint committee so things are open and transparent as to what we are doing. He said as he has mentioned in his report, discussions by the Estimates Committee in the past had not been minuted, but this has now been changed going forward. He added that this split and indecision is also very difficult for the staff and we must make a decision.

The Chairman thanked D Goff and said the critical point has been made that this Board made the decision 4 years ago that we would acquire new offices with the Lower Board and the principle of that has not changed and what we need to decide on is how we are going to do that.

M Davis wanted to make the point that some Members were not around when the decisions were made and the fact that no decisions have been minuted is a worry. He questioned if this was a change we can no longer afford and did not want to be bound to a decision made 4 years ago without a thorough investigation and said we are starting again to some extent.

C Wheeler supported what M Davis said.

W Thompson suggested that as some Members had not had a vote on this we should have a new vote.

D Goff said if we can make the decision that we are going to go ahead on the project that we would still need to work on the finer details. He said he understands that we need to get on an even keel with this and he would make it his job to do that.

S McGregor said that he agreed in principle to working with the Lower Board depending on costings and the final details.

On a proposition by The Chairman, seconded by D Goff it was **AGREED** in principle to sell the offices at Albion Place and look to re-accommodate our office in a new build with the Lower Board at a site likely to be close to the Lower Board's new depot.

All Members unanimously **AGREED**.

Members then discussed various options of a sub-committee.

D Goff suggested 2 Members from each Board form this committee and as he firmly believes in the project, he wanted to be part of the committee along with ideally a Member that was not already on a committee.

M Davis put his name forward and explained to Members he has over 30 years' experience as a commercial property solicitor.

On a proposition by The Chairman and seconded by W Thompson it was **AGREED** to nominate a sub-committee to liaise with the Lower Board regarding the new office project which included D Goff and M Davis.

The Members anomalously **AGREED**.

7. **MINUTES**

RECEIVED a copy of the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on 9 June and 25 August 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 4)

AGREED by all Members present that both sets of Minutes are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman when this was possible.

8. **ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

RECEIVED a copy of the Action List of the Board held on 25 August 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 5)

No comments were made.

9. **CHAIRMAN REPORT**

The Chairman confirmed that M Round had resigned from the Board and we were currently waiting on a new nomination from Maidstone BC. He confirmed that he had also approached Ashford BC and Tandridge BC to try to fill the empty seats that we have. He continued by saying that the last few months had been very busy and at the start of the pandemic there had been lots to do in terms of staff operation during the lockdown and organising working from home. He added that staff and some Board Members including himself were having weekly Zoom conference calls and that this

had worked very well during this time. He thanked all the staff for putting in the extra time for the business to carry on as normal. He said that on top of this the previous Chief Executive had also left the organisation and a new Clerk had been appointed. The Finance Officer was also replaced during this time and in addition to this a tribunal case was settled and further information can be discussed later when private and confidential matters are discussed under item 26.

The Chairman offered his personal thanks to the Clerk for standing in as a temporary Clerk and doing the job so well that the Board were able to confirm the position to him permanently within the first 3-4 months of him undertaking the role. He also thanked The Office Manager and Finance Officer during this period of disruption and thanked the Finance Officer for taking to her new position so well.

He added that important meetings between the Upper and Lower board Chairmen and Vice Chairmen had now been introduced and he confirmed that he would be attending the online ADA conference tomorrow along with the Clerk.

10. CLERK REPORT

The Clerk thanked the Chairman for his report and also thanked the Office Manager, Finance Officer and Works Supervisor for making it easy for him to transition into his new role. He updated Members as follows:

Covid Response - The initial response to the pandemic was taken back in March. It saw the introduction of home working IT facilities, new rules relating to office and depot working and a shift in what was considered normal practice regarding collection of rates and levies. I am pleased to report that we still have not had a positive case of Coronavirus in the staff roster and continue to maintain reasonably strict guidelines in the office and depots.

As we move into November, Covid-19 continues to cause not only us but the country problems regarding how best to operate. I have taken the decision that all office staff will be working from home primarily until the New Year. We shall then take a decision based upon government advice and staff feedback as to whether we return to the office. It is worth noting that the effect of home working has been minimal in terms of productivity but there are concerns around the missing social aspect of office life. While the impact of this may not seem important at first, loneliness and isolation are a real problem. I will continue to monitor staff through meetings and DSE assessments going forward.

Staffing - Lorna Carey has now completed 3 months at the IDB, and we have undertaken a review. She continues to impress with her attitude towards improvement of the office systems and has become a welcome member of the team.

We are also set to hire a new member of the ground force to work from Lees Road. This will return the number to 4 after the loss of Stuart Noble earlier in the year.

Annual pay rise discussions have taken place in Lincolnshire and the recommended increase/decrease is being finalised at this time.

Health and Safety - The development of a new health and safety plan is now in the final stages. This aim is to set out a more concise approach from the Board regarding its health and safety responsibilities, while adding some missing/outdated elements such as company risk assessments.

Office Admin - The change over to the digital system for staff paperwork has happened and is subject to teething problems as learning progresses. Overall, the response has been favourable from the workforce, and it appears to be easing workloads in the office.

The rate book system referred to as DRS has been updated by Phil Camamile of the Kings Lynn IDB and we have agreed with the LMIDB to adopt the latest iteration. The quote for upgrading has been accepted by the Joint Services and should provide the board with a modern system from which to interact with stakeholders. It is earmarked to start being used publicly in April 2021.

Planning and consents work were taken on by Pete Dowling of Stour IDB on a short-term basis until we had decided upon a long-term solution. We thanked him and his Chairmen for allowing his assistance in a very tricky period. This work is now being handled by the Sustainable Planning Team at Kings Lynn IDB / WLMA after successful passing of new development strategies. Work will be sent there at our discretion and contributions will be sought after taking their advice. Some outstanding consents have been approved by the Clerk in conjunction with the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Finance Committee relating to minor developments in Eridge and Lingfield.

I can confirm that we have received recommendation on a consent that included the new commuted fees. Due to the changeover period for the new strategy it was deemed suitable to include payment of this fee as optional on this occasion. Going forward commuted fees will be a standard condition of consent where applicable.

EA Partnership - The Board has had little interaction with the Environment Agency since the change in management. I have sought a meeting with members of the EA that are relevant to the Upper district and this meeting is set for mid-November. As requested, it will include discussions over PSCA works and the precept payment levels.

Local Issues - The concern that the Gravelly Ways stream will flood into the neighbouring housing estate continues to be a serious matter for residents. The structure on our watercourse has been neglected and now does not offer the same levels of diversion into the Tudeley Brook. After a site visit and discussions with both KCC and residents, I have decided that we will take back the maintenance of the drop board structure and include it in the works of the ground force. This should aid in easing both flood risk and the fears of residents that they were not being suitably protected.

It was previously noted that the Mill Stream and River Bourne are in a poor state. These are COWs (Critical Ordinary Watercourses) that are supposed to be maintained by the EA. The work to these will be a topic of discussion when we meet in November and it is hoped can be resolved under a PSCA agreement.

Training - Training has taken a back seat due to the lockdown and restrictions, but we have completed Abrasive Wheels renewals and completed a drone pilot test since July. I am carrying on with AAT Level 2 studies and exams. We also managed to complete several toolbox talks via Zoom.

11. WORKS SUPERVISOR REPORT

RECEIVED the Works Supervisor Report Number 160.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 6)

The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions and confirmed that the Clerk had already answered a question he had with regards to the watercourses in red. It had been confirmed that these were the COWs watercourses.

O Baldock thanked J Davis for his report and said that he always found them interesting to read and they are very much appreciated.

J Davis said that he would like to offer new Members the opportunity to join him, when situations allow to have a look around the district if they wished to do so. He explained this would give them a better understanding of the district and the works that are undertaken and give them an insight of the problems that are faced.

The Chairman thanked John for this offer.

12. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST 2020/21

REPORTED that C Mackonochie had not yet completed her Register of Members' Interest form for the year 2020/2021.

The Office Manager confirmed that she would post a form out to C Mackonochie.

13. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RECEIVED the updated Financial Regulations.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 7)

The Clerk explained that the changes to the Financial Regulation were changing Chief Executive to Clerk and also pointed out the changes in 19.3 and 20.2 with regards to salaries payments.

All Members present **AGREED** the changes to the Financial Regulations.

14. POLICIES REPORT

RECEIVED a copy of the updated Governance Documents List, Scheme of Delegation, The Division of Responsibility and Statement of Controls.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 8)

All Members present **AGREED** the changes to the Scheme of Delegation, The Division of Responsibility and Statement of Controls.

M Davis asked why some of the renewal dates were left blank.

The Office Manager confirmed that the outstanding policies and policy reviewed dates will be looked at in the New Year.

15. FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 26 May, 13 October, and 20 October 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 9)

No questions raised.

16. REPLACEMENT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Chairman explained that since M Round has resigned from the Board we are now looking for a replacement for him on the Financial Committee and asked if there were any volunteers?

No volunteers came forward.

The Office Manager asked the Finance Committee Members present if 8 December at 10am would be a convenient time to have the next Finance Committee Meeting.

The Chairman, D Goff and C Wheeler confirmed this was a convenient time for them.

17. JOINT SERVICES MINUTES

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Joint Services Committee Meeting held on 27 July and 25 September 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 10)

The Chairman asked if any Members had any questions on the Joint Services Minutes.

No questions raised.

D Goff thanked the Office Manager for the detail we are now receiving in the minutes.

ANNUAL RETURN UPDATE (AGAR)

RECEIVED a copy of the AGAR for year ending March 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 10C)

The Chairman explained that we have had issues with the AGAR and the Clerk and Finance Officer have made the necessary corrections.

The Clerk confirmed the corrections were at the request of PK Littlejohn and asked Members to look at the recommendations in section 3. He explained we had been asked to reconcile several areas, some of which went back several years. He thanked the Finance Officer for her hard work in finalising the AGAR with the challenges she faced.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions.

No questions asked.

18. IDB1 FORM 2020

RECEIVED a copy of the IDB1 form for 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 11)

The Clerk explained to Members that this was the first time Members have probably seen this form and that this would be presented to Members every year going forward.

D Goff confirmed that the IDB1 form is completed and sent off to DEFRA and this is the form that they check and focus on things like biodiversity and attendance of meetings. He said we were informed by ADA last year that we were on the outskirts of their radar, so it is important that the form is looked at and agreed by the Board.

The Chairman asked Members to confirm they have read and approve the IDB1 form.

All Members confirmed they had read the IDB1 form and **AGREED** the form.

19. HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES

O Baldock said he would like to give thanks to the Clerk for the Health and Safety Plan that we now have in place and the amount of work he has put into it.

The Clerk informed Members that there had been an accident reported recently from O Brunning, as he tore his calf whilst carrying out his duties. He explained this resulted in a 2 week break from work and when he returned he carried out light duties until he was fully fit to return to his normal duties.

20. WORKS HEALTH & SAFETY GROUP MEETING

RECEIVED a copy of the Works Health & Safety Group Minutes from 27 July 2020.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 12)

The Chairman asked if any Members had any questions.

No questions were raised.

21. PLANNING APPLICATIONS & CONSENTS

RECEIVED particulars of applications requiring the written consent of the Board and WLMA's new Planning Report.

(As attached to these Minutes - Appendix 13)

No questions were raised.

22. APPROVAL OF CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021

RECEIVED proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2021.

(As attached to these Minutes – Appendix 14)

AGREED dates:

Upper Board

Tuesday 23 March	Board Meeting	1pm
Tuesday 25 May	Finance Committee	10am
Tuesday 15 June	Board Meeting	1pm
Tuesday 19 October	Estimates & Finance Committee	10am
Tuesday 16 November	Board Meeting	1pm

Joint Services

Tuesday 2 March	Joint Services Committee	10am
Tuesday 5 October	Joint Services Committee	10am

Internal Audit

May (TBC)	Internal Audit Sub Committee	2pm
October (TBC)	Internal Audit Sub Committee	2pm

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Board Members Payments

The Finance Officer confirmed that payments for Board Members mileage expenses and hours would no longer be paid via payroll and confirmed we had been misadvised

on this matter. She explained that going forward Members should send in an invoice which details the mileage and any hours they are claiming separately.

The Office Manager confirmed that she would keep a record of these expenses hours for Members and contact them every six months so they can check her records are correct and go ahead with processing the claims.

b) Haviker Street Damage

The Clerk informed Members that recently the Upper Board had been accused of causing damage in the Haviker Street area to telephone cables and also a car. He explained that the Works Supervisor looked into this by looking at the trackers on the our vehicles and plant and we had not been in the area on the day of this damage so this was a false accusation and we were able to prove this damage was not caused by our machinery.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 23 March at 1pm.

25. PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

The Chairman asked the Works Supervisor, Office Manager and Finance Officer to leave the meeting at this point so he could update Members on private and confidential matters.

Members were reminded that all matters discussed relating to employees of the Board should always 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.