

# ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2016, 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

**PRESENT:** H Raby (Chairman); C Allen; K M Baker; G Grey; E Heads; E Ruston; J Sewell; L M Simpson and R Warrener.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** F Bowler (Chief Executive/Clerk); J Oldfield (Director of Operations) and R Easom (Committee Clerk).

**1 APOLOGIES** for absence were received from B Chapman and M R Eaysr.

**2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2015**

**The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record for the Chairman to sign.**

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

**Huntingdonshire District Council Maintenance Works – use of Lattenbury Services**

Mr Allen, Project and Assets Manager from HDC informed members that the Council had decided that it could not use the Board's tendered rates from Lattenbury Services, for watercourse maintenance works, in order to avoid the cost of the tender process. HDC are required to follow the tender process.

**5 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2015 AND PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19**

**The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report together with an A3 plan showing maintenance works completed.** He added that the maintenance of grills, trash screens, etc. was on-going.

**Members accepted the Works Progress Report for the period April to December 2015.**

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme together with an A3 plan showing the maintenance works proposed.

**Members approved the Works Programme 2016/17.**

Discussion took place:

**Lattenbury Services**

Mr Raby said he had received good feedback regarding the quality of the maintenance work carried out by Lattenbury Services.

### **Riverside Park, Huntingdon**

Mr Allen asked whether the section of watercourse from the ring road to the river was not an IDB maintained watercourse. The Director of Operations confirmed that it was not but agreed to send officers to check the state of it and if necessary send a letter to Huntingdonshire District Council regarding its maintenance.

### **Allen's Orchard, Brampton**

Mr Allen asked whether the section of watercourse under the B1514 had been maintained. The Director of Operations said the Environment Agency had maintained the open section of watercourse which the Board had been willing to carry out. There are difficulties due to gardens being either side of the watercourse and he believed the EA had carried out some handwork. Mrs Ruston said she believed Lattenbury Services had carried out some dredging at the end of 2015.

The Chairman asked that officers inspect the watercourse or speak with Lattenbury Services in order to ascertain what works have been carried out.

### **Huntingdon Racecourse**

The Director of Operations informed members that the section of watercourse downstream of Huntingdon Racecourse had recently been maintained by the EA as part of the IDB Precept Local Choices.

## **6 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD MAY – DECEMBER 2015**

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

### **Members accepted the Technical Report.**

Discussion took place:

### **Former Travis Perkins site, Ermine Street, Huntingdon**

Mr Allen mentioned that planning permission had been granted for a care home on the former Travis Perkins site, although he was not sure if the surface water would be draining to Barracks Brook culverted watercourse.

## **7 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2016/2017**

**Members approved the report and the following recommendations:**

- (i) The general development contribution should be increased to £4.52 per impervious square meter from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016;**
- (ii) Where the outfall flows into a Board watercourse the Board take a development contribution and/or where the outfall flows into a tributary, the developer will fully fund any necessary adoption;**
- (iii) The Clerk should be authorized to negotiate appropriate commuted sums from developers when the Board agrees to adopt new works.**

**8 REVIEW OF ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/2017 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE**

The Clerk presented the General Estimates for 2016/17 which recommended a zero percentage increase in the rate and special levy for the 2016/17 financial year. The EA precept is not being increased in 2016/17 and a 5% increase has been allowed for in the following two years. The Clerk said she had just learned of a 9% reduction in the allocation of Highland Water Contribution monies which could result in a reduction if all Boards put in a full claim. However, this is likely to have a greater impact on the bigger Boards. A small amount of agricultural land has passed into development and will be attracting a small amount of additional special levy from Huntingdonshire District Council. The Clerk added that the Board's balances were currently at the upper end of audit recommendations.

**The Board agreed the to a zero percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2016/17 of 3.95 pence in the pound of Annual Value giving an income of £70,457 and authorised the Chairman to sign and seal the rate.**

**9 FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April to 31 December 2015**

The Clerk presented the Finance Report which included individual Board income and expenditure; cheque list; investment and bank account balances; income and expenditure through the Group account and balance sheet.

**The Finance Report was approved.**

**10 (i) EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2014/15**

The Clerk reported that an unqualified opinion had been given by the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP. The only matters raised were those raised by the internal auditor which have now been addressed, as shown on the Interim Internal Audit report enclosed.

**Members accepted the External Audit report for 2014/15.**

**(ii) INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2015/16**

The Clerk drew members' attention to the internal auditor's Interim Internal Audit report dated November 2015. The internal auditor had carried out the first part of the audit in November 2015 and examined the Boards' internal controls. He was satisfied with the controls and had given adequate assurance. The Clerk said an additional member of staff has now been employed, a Business Studies apprentice, and it was hoped that the extra levels of staffing should aid the segregation of duties and enable the Boards' to achieve substantial assurance.

The Clerk reported that all of the recommendations of the internal auditor's report had now been implemented, as details on the final page.

**Members accepted the Internal Auditor's Interim Internal Audit Report, November 2015.**

**(iii) TO RE-APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**

**Members approved the re-appointment of Gowing Internal Audit Services Ltd to the Board.**

**11 To approve amended Register of Members' Interest Form**

The Clerk explained that the external auditors for the Buckingham and River Ouzel Board had raised the issue of there being no evidence that the Members' Code of Conduct has been read and accepted by the Board members. Although members are provided with a Members' Code of Conduct they had not previously signed to say that they would adhere to it. Therefore, the Register of Members Interest Form had been amended to include this. For consistency, the form is being amended for all three Boards in the Bedford Group.

**Members approved the amendment to the Register of Members' Interest Form.**

**12 Changes to Bedford Group of IDBs meeting structure**

The Clerk explained that, following discussion with the internal auditor, the two largest Boards in the Group were likely to be changing their meeting structure. The Bedfordshire & River Ivel Board has approved changes but the Buckingham and River Ouzel Board were not due to discuss the proposal until their Board meeting the following week. It was likely that both Boards would have three meetings every year, not just in an election year. The Executive Working Group would be dissolved and the Joint Management Committee, which is responsible for the joint administration of the Boards would meet three times per annum rather than twice. The Clerk asked members if they were still content to stay with the two board meetings per annum.

The Clerk said the only change which affected the Alconbury & Ellington Board was the JMC meetings increasing to three times per a year, as either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board attend these meetings. If approved the JMC meetings will take place in the future in May, October and January. Officers asked that members agree to a substitute being appointed from their Board if neither the Chairman nor Vice Chairman were available.

**Members agreed to continue with the two board meetings per annum.**

**Members agreed to the attendance, of the three Joint Management Committee meetings per annum, by the Chairman or Vice Chairman or a substitute nominated by officers.**

**13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**EA Main River Maintenance – Alconbury Brook**

Members again expressed concern about the lack of maintenance on Main River. Some members said they had received letters from the EA stating that works would be carried out but little or no work had been done.

The Chairman said officers had suggested that the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement could be used in order for the Board to carry out works on behalf of the EA and asked members whether they would consider approving a budget of £25,000 for some 'one-off' maintenance.

**Members were not in favour of the Board paying for works which should be carried out by the EA. They felt that this could set a precedent and agreed that officers should, initially, write to the EA requesting that they carry out the works and specify which stretches of Main River need the most attention.**

#### **New Development, SE Brampton Hut**

Mr Sewell said he was concerned about surface water from the proposed new development on this 30 acre site. The Director of Operations said there was an initial discussion following an enquiry from the developer's consultants about a year ago. Mr Sewell said he would forward on to the Director of Operations copies of letters he had received regarding the development. Mr Allen said he, in his capacity as an HDC officer, would also look into the surface water strategy for the development. The Director of Operations said the developers would be required to fully attenuate on the site.

#### **Huntingdonshire District Council Membership on the Board**

##### **Co-option of former Board Member, HDC representative – M Baker**

The Chairman reported that Mr M Baker, who had lost his seat as a councillor on HDC in May 2015, had expressed an interest in serving again as a Board member.

The Clerk said that, as HDC do not take up their full complement of representatives on the Board, they may be willing to appoint Mr Baker as a representative. The Clerk said she would contact Mr Baker with regard to pursuing this. Alternatively Mr Baker could fill a casual vacancy for an elected member on the Board.

**Members agreed, in principle, to the co-option of Mr M Baker.**

##### **Mr Simpson, HDC representative**

Mr Simpson said the current Board meeting was to be the last he attended as he would be resigning as an HDC representative in May 2016. He added that he had enjoyed his time on the Board and had appreciated the opportunity to see the Boards' new offices.

##### **Mr Allen, HDC Officer Representative**

Mr Allen said the current Board meeting could be the last one he attended as he understood that HDC's policy had changed and officers were no longer to be members of IDBs. He added that his post of Project and Assets Manager at HDC could be made redundant.

**Members requested that officers send a letter to HDC, on behalf of the Board, expressing concern that a Project and Assets Manager may no longer represent HDC as a Board Member and pointing out the valuable contribution that Mr Allen, as an HDC officer in such a post, has made to the Board.**

The Chairman thanked Mr Allen and Mr Simpson for their contributions to the Board.

#### **13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7 June 2016 – Board Meeting**

The meeting closed at 11.17am.