

ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2015, 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

PRESENT: H Raby (Chairman); K M Baker; M G Baker; M Broughton; B Chapman; M R Eayres; G Grey; E Heads and E Ruston..

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

The Chairman welcomed Mr Malcolm Broughton of AgReserves Ltd. Members had agreed to co-opt Mr Broughton to the Board at the November 2014 Board meeting.

1 APOLOGIES for absence were received from L M Simpson and R Warrener. (Apologies were received from C Allen after the meeting).

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Miss Grey and Mrs Ruston declared interests if there was to be any discussion regarding the A14 Improvement Scheme.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2014

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

4 MATTERS ARISING

Brampton Brook

Mrs Ruston said that the EA had, in early January, carried out some dredging. They had also taken out reeds from Allen's Orchard down to Park Road.

Spaldwick

Mr M Baker said that following him writing a letter to the Environment Agency regarding trees growing in the watercourse and pointing out that some residents were worried about the risk of flooding, within nine days the EA had cleared the watercourse. He said he had written to the EA and thanked them.

Watercourse No 23, South of Alconbury

Mr K Baker complained that contractors, Lattenbury Services, had carried out works in late September, following heavy rain, when the watercourse was in flood. The Director of Operations said that Lattenbury Services did not usually do that and he would follow up the issue.

5 PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16, 2016/17 AND 2017/18

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme.

Members approved the Works Programme 2015/16.

Discussion took place:

Easton/Ellington

Mr Chapman asked for information on what work was to be carried out on watercourses 14_1 and 14_2 showing as Easton on the schedule.

The Director of Operations said that there was an error in the schedule. The location should have been listed as Ellington and not Easton. He said it was planned to weed cut the lower section and flail and weed cut the upper section.

6 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2014

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report.

Members accepted the Works Progress Report.

Discussion took place:

Mr Raby asked if the Board could obtain a derogation from the Defra restrictions which are due to be implemented regarding hedge cutting.

The Director of Operations said the issue had been raised at the ADA conference. IDBs were requesting a blanket exemption and the Defra representative on the question and answer panel at the conference had agreed to take this action back to Defra.

7 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members accepted the Technical Report.

Discussion took place:

Local Choices Initiative

Mr Broughton asked whether it was likely that any maintenance works would be carried out on the Alconbury Brook. The Director of Operations said there was some hope that the Local Choices initiative, as explained in the Technical Report, would result in some maintenance works being carried out on Main River in future years. However, due to funding, it would be limited to clearing blockages from trees.

The Director of Operations said that another option for the Board to consider in the future could be to allocate a budget of say, £10,000 in a financial year, and for this to then be spent on maintenance of sections of Main River, at the Chairman's discretion. This could also be part of a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement, with the works carried out by the Board to deliver actual benefits on the ground.

Miss Grey said she thought that maintenance works were the responsibility of the riparian owner. The Clerk said this was often the stance taken by the EA. However, the Board's stance is that if

watercourse maintenance is in the programme the Board would carry out the maintenance when on site, whereas it is unlikely the Board would make a special trip to remove a fallen tree, which would need removing by the landowner.

Consultation – Flood Risk Management Plan

The Director of Operations said officers had submitted the Boards' response to this consultation on Friday 30th January 2015. He said officers were disappointed that, in the compilation of the plan, there had been a total lack of engagement with IDBs and other flood risk management authorities.

8 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2015/2016

Members approved the report and the following recommendations:

- (i) The general development contribution should be increased to £4.35 per impervious square meter from 1st April 2015;**
- (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.**

9 REVIEW OF ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/2016 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE

The Clerk presented the General Estimates for 2015/16 which recommended a zero percentage increase in the rate and special levy for the 2015/16 financial year. She said this was in line with the audit recommendations as regards the level of balances and also the EA precept is not being increased in 2015/16.

The Board agreed the to a zero percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2015/16 of 3.95 pence in the pound of Annual Value giving an income of £70,179 and authorised the Chairman to sign and seal the rate.

10 FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April to 31 December 2014

The Clerk presented the Finance Report.

The Finance Report was approved.

11 (i) INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Clerk presented the report which was a follow up of the 2013/14 audit.

The report stated that the Board continues to have good controls and the internal auditor could provide Adequate Assurance.

Outstanding issues which the internal auditor was recommending be addressed were:

- a. The market testing of engineering consultancy services.
- b. The car allowance scheme; as many IDBs have reduced the mileage rate they pay to staff.

The Clerk said the market testing of engineering consultancy services was currently being undertaken. The car allowance scheme was discussed by the Executive Working Group on 13 January 2015 and it had been agreed that the Clerk should produce a more detailed report to the next EWG and JMC meetings in April 2015.

Members accepted the Internal Audit Report.

11 (ii) TO RE-APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members approved the re-appointment of Mr David Gowing as Internal Auditor to the Board.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Gerry Whitfield, former internal auditor to the Bedford Group

Mr Heads informed those present of the recent death of Gerry Whitfield. Gerry had been internal auditor to the Bedford Group of IDBs for a number of years. The Clerk said she had been informed of the sad news by Jean Heading at ADA Gt Ouse Branch.

Spaldwick

Mr M Baker thanked the Director of Operations for attending a site meeting with him at Spaldwick. He said it had been very useful in allaying fears.

Mr M Baker added that he hoped to be returned as District Councillor following the May election but said that if he was not then he would like to take the opportunity to say that he had enjoyed his time on the Board.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 2 June 2015 – Board Meeting

The meeting closed at 10.58am.