

ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2014, 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

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

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

The Clerk took the chair as Chairperson pro tem.

1 APOLOGIES for absence were received from B Chapman; M R Eayres and L M Simpson .

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
There were no declarations of interest.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN
Mr H Raby was elected as Chairman, unanimously.

4 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN
Mr J Sewell was elected as Vice-Chairman, unanimously.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 June 2014.
The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record for the Chairman to sign.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 June 2014

Brampton Brook

Mrs Ruston said the Environment Agency were planning to carry out weed-cutting and flailing on the bank but no dredging.

Stukeley Meadows Railway Culvert

Mr Raby queried what the Health and Safety works to improve access to the weed screens had involved. The Director of Operations said the ground levels had been changed to improve access and a short sectional fence installed to protect operatives from falling.

Town Park, adj to Sainsburys

Mr Sewell asked whether the Town Park at Sainsburys was also part of the Board's annual handwork contract. The Director of Operations said it was, but it was cleared more frequently by

the Town Council as the park floods. Mr Allen said it was also on Huntingdonshire District Council's emergency list.

Spaldwick

Mr Allen said HDC had pointed out to the EA that no maintenance work has been done in this area. Mr M Baker said he had also pointed this out as there were trees growing in the watercourse.

Alconbury Brook

Mr Sewell raised the issue of Alconbury Brook. Mr Allen said the EA has been asking where dredging was required. The Director of Operations said it had been included in the list which the Board provided to the EA. Mr Sewell added that the EA had been planning to dredge it in summer 2014.

The Director of Operations mentioned the new EA initiative called Local Choices which concerns the precept which the Board pay to the EA, and should allow the Board to have a say in where Main River maintenance works are carried out. The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee has accepted a 6 year programme and Alconbury Brook has been highlighted in this initiative.

Mr Warrenner said that three weeks prior to the meeting the road to Hamerton was flooded. This was much earlier than would usually be expected. He also reported trees in the bottom of the brook.

SUDS Approval Body (SAB)

The Clerk said there was an update on page 13, the Technical Report, under Flood and Water Management Act 2010, regarding this issue.

7 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO OCTOBER 2014

The Director of Operation presented the works progress report adding that some of the watercourses showing green on the A3 plan may now be completed. Easton was now completed.

Members accepted the Works Progress report.

Discussion took place:

Alconbury - watercourse no 23

Mr Warrenner said that Keith Baker land owner and Board Member was not happy that flailing on the watercourse through to Brook Lodge had just been done again as it was only carried out 2 years ago and had disturbed his shooting vegetation cover. The Director of Operations said Mr Baker should have received a statutory notice of entry and he hoped that the contractors had spoken to him prior to carrying out the work. The Director of Operations added that more frequent flailing was being carried out on sections of watercourse in order to keep them in better condition.

Easton

Mr M Baker said that two months ago some people wearing EA clothing had said they were working for the IDB. The Director of Operations said that only Lattenbury Services are contracted to carry out maintenance works for the Board and he would look into it.

8 TECHNICAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JUNE TO OCTOBER 2014

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members accepted the Technical Report and the following:

A14 Improvement Scheme

Members agreed that, subject to payment of fees, the Section 23 and Byelaws Consenting process be included under the Highways Agency's Development Consent Order (DCO), such that IDB approval is required for these consents under the DCO rather than the Land Drainage Act.

Discussion took place:

A14 Improvement Scheme

Mr Sewell said he had objected to plans to allow some of his land to become flood plain. Mr Allen said the full design is still awaited. HDC has just received the environmental impact report and sizes of culverts have been agreed with the EA.

Ermine Street, Lidl development

The Director of Operations said the developer was required to attenuate to greenfield run-off rates, but a figure of 5 litres per second had been agreed on, as this forms the minimum practical size of a hydrobrake flow control to avoid significant risk of blockage. The developer was part attenuating and part free discharging, for which a pro-rata development contribution had been paid to the Board. The latest drawings showed the access road and car park too close to the boundary fence preventing access to the watercourse. The Board's officers have requested that the developer provides access for the Board to maintain the watercourse.

Mr Allen said the management company which owned the open space in Percy Green had gone into liquidation. He said there is a balancing pond there and Huntingdonshire District Council will be taking over responsibility for this as part of the public open space. He said that responsibility for the telemetry box remained with the Board.

9 FINANCE

(i) FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2014

The Clerk presented the finance report adding that the net deficit on the income and expenditure account was due to payment timing differences and the Defra Grant in Aid Health & Safety works over-spend. The Director of Operations will be putting in a variation order for the cost of additional works and it is expected that the Board's income and expenditure for the full year will be as estimated.

The Finance Report was accepted.

Discussion took place:

Mr Allen asked for details about the Health and Safety Works which had been carried out. The Director of Operations said they included improvements to the safety of weed screens and access.

These improvements are fully funded by Defra, however, the payment of the additional works has not yet been sanctioned.

(ii) EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2013/14

The Clerk presented the External Audit report for the financial year 2013/14 and reported that an unqualified opinion had been given. The Clerk said that the document would be made available on the Boards' website.

Members approved the External Audit report.

Discussion took place:

The Clerk said that the three Boards in the Bedford Group each have different external auditors which has caused some difficulties as they have different requirements. However, it is hoped that now the Audit Commission has been abolished it may be possible, from 2017, to choose one external auditor for all three Boards from a selection. It is hoped that ADA will be able to set up the selection panel and issue new guidelines so that future audit requirements will be consistent for all IDBs.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

3 February 2015 – Board Meeting

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vacancy on the Board

The Clerk reported on the elected member vacancy. Members suggested the Clerk writes to Malcolm Broughton of AgReserves Ltd to make him aware of the vacancy, with a view to co-opting to the Board.

RAF Brampton

Mrs Ruston was concerned that developers Campbell Buchanan wanted to increase capacity in her brook which joins Brampton Brook at Allen's Orchard. The Director of Operations said the developers had been into the Board's office to meet with Principal Engineer, Trevor Skelding, as per the technical report, but had not mentioned increasing the size of the brook. Any works to the brook would require landowner agreement and formal consent from the Board. The Director of Operations noted the members' reports that last year stubble was washed on to the flood plain, suggesting that RAF Brampton was actually in the flood plain despite the new modelling. This information would be shared with the EA.

Mrs Ruston asked where surface water from RAF Brampton currently goes. The Director of Operations said he did not know without referring to site plans. Mrs Ruston said any more water in that area was asking for trouble. At the moment only the road floods, not properties.

The meeting closed at 11am.