

## **ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

### **Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2014, 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

**PRESENT:** H Raby (Chairman); C Allen; K M Baker; M G Baker; B Chapman; G Grey; 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)

The Chairman asked members if there had been any problems due to excess water in their areas. No members reported any significant problems.

**1 APOLOGIES** for absence were received from M R Eayres; E Heads; D Horsford and K Roe.

**2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 June 2013.**

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

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

**Environment Agency – Main River Maintenance**

The Director of Operations said officers continue to lobby the EA regarding the lack of maintenance on Main River. In view of the situation in Somerset and the feeling amongst members that the Board had, again, been lucky with the pattern of rainfall, he suggested a letter be sent to the local Member of Parliament emphasising the need for maintenance and the importance of agricultural land as well as urban. He reported that the two other Boards in the Bedford Group had agreed to do the same.

**Members agreed that a letter should be sent to local Members of Parliament regarding the lack of maintenance on Main River.**

**5 PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2014/15, 2015/16 AND 2016/17**

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme.

**Members approved the Works Programme 2014/15.**

Discussion took place:

**Brampton**

Mrs Ruston asked whether the Board would obtain any contribution towards the works at Brampton. The Director of Operations said the Board would not receive any contribution. However, the Clerk said the maintenance work would attract Highland Water Contributions from the EA which would be approximately £4,000, making a net cost to the Board of approximately

£6,000. The Director of Operations said there was a length of approximately 250 meters around the Buckden Road bridge for which the EA and would need to procure a specialist contractor due to significant access constraints. The Chairman said officers should contact the EA about dredging that section.

The Chairman enquired about the trees in the watercourse and the Director of Operations said they are the responsibility of the riparian owners. The drainage authority has powers which it would normally use when carrying out maintenance. However, it is normally expected that riparian owners manage their trees generally.

Mr Sewell made reference to a tree blocking a watercourse and altering the flow of water in the Huntingdon racecourse area. Mr Allen recommend that the County Council Flood officers be contacted.

Mr Sewell said watercourse 12, west of the A1 had been cleared and was now lower than the section between the A1 and the main river. The Chairman suggested the Director of Operations investigates the situation and if viable add this reach of watercourse on to the maintenance programme.

## **6 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2013**

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report.

### **Members accepted the Works Progress Report.**

#### **Easton**

Mr M Baker commented that recent maintenance works in Easton had been excellent.

#### **Spaldwick**

Mr M Baker said there were trees growing in Ellington Brook (main river) near the A14 and also Willow House (ordinary watercourse). The Director of Operations said the watercourse near Willow House was the riparian owner's responsibility. However, the Board was due to maintain watercourse 21 north of the A14 at Spaldwick which will aid the discharge of flow away from this area.

## **7 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD MAY – DECEMBER 2013**

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

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

Discussion took place:

#### **Brampton**

Mr Allen reported that Godmanchester and Brampton had now split and had their own flood warning systems.

He also reported that Anglian Water have agreed to try pumping in Allen's Orchard during times of flood, on a trial basis.

### **Ellington Road, Brampton**

Mrs Ruston said a watercourse adjacent to the A14 in the vicinity of Brampton Hut, which was not an IDB watercourse, had been filled in. She said Alexanders surveyors were investigating.

### **Woolley**

Members said there were problems on the Woolley road and the EA were examining the watercourse due to complaints about the road flooding and the Highways Agency had been clearing roadside ditches.

## **8 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2014/2015**

The Director of Operations presented the Review of Development Contributions report and drew the attention of members to additions to the report: bullet point *c*) and also '*Where the discharge flow is into a tributary of the Board's main network, the developer is required to fully fund the necessary adoption of the associated tributary watercourse.*'

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

- (i) The general development contribution should be increased to £4.15 per impervious square meter from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014;**
- (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.**

Discussion took place:

### **Alconbury Weald**

Mr Allen referred to the new development and said that outline planning permission had been given and a meeting had taken place about drainage and the impact on surface and foul water. He said the development was being tightly controlled. Planning officers were ensuring that the surface water run-off would be no worse than previously and may even be better.

## **9 REVIEW OF ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/2015 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE**

The Clerk presented the General Estimates for 2014/15 which recommended a zero percentage increase in the rate and special levy for the 2014/15 financial year. She said this was in line with the audit recommendations as regards the level of balances and also the other two Boards in the Bedford Group had agreed zero percentage increases for 2014/15.

**The Board agreed the to a zero percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2014/15 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 2013**

The Clerk presented the Finance Report. She added that interest rates were still low and Lloyds bank was now the main bank used for investment as funds had been withdrawn from the Co-op. However, the Nationwide was also being considered. The Executive Working Group discusses investments at their quarterly meetings.

**The Finance Report was approved.**

### **11 i) EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2012/13**

The Clerk reported that the external audit for the 2012/13 financial year had been completed and an unqualified audit opinion was received.

**Members accepted the External Audit report.**

### **ii) INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Clerk presented the report which was a follow up of the 2012/13 audit.

The report stated that the Board continues to have good controls and the internal auditor could provide adequate assurance. The Clerk added that it was hoped that since the employment of an Apprentice Finance and Rating Assistant it would eventually be possible to gain substantial assurance due to additional segregation of duties.

There were two issues which the internal auditor was recommending:

- a. Where appropriate the use of confidential Board/Committee reports (pink papers) to be introduced.
- b. Consider voluntary introduction of the Data Transparency Act, either in full or in part.

The Clerk said these items were discussed by the Executive Working Group on 14 January 2014. It was agreed that the confidential papers should be introduced. However, the EWG agreed that the Board would comply with the Data Transparency Act either in part or in full, if and when IDBs were included in the legislation.

**Members accepted the Internal Audit Report.**

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

Mr David Gowing had proved satisfactory and the Clerk recommended that he be re-appointed.

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

## **12 TO APPROVE REVISED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Clerk presented the revised financial regulations explaining that the amendments had been necessary due to the change-over to paying suppliers by BACS.

**Members approved the revised Financial Regulations.**

Mr Allen commented on funds being held by the Co-Op bank. The Clerk said the Co-op Bank was still being used for day to day banking but not for investment.

**13 TO APPROVE THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Clerk presented the Scheme of Delegation drawing particular attention to the section stating that ‘Alconbury and Ellington pay a fixed sum annually which is subject to an inflationary increase each year linked to the Retail Price index’.

**Members approved the Scheme of Delegation.**

**14 TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF POWERS OF ENTRY ON TO THE BOARD EMPLOYEES ID CARDS**

‘ALCONBURY & ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

POWERS OF ENTRY

Introduction

The Board is required to approve the following wording which will be used on official documentation, including identity cards, and which gives authorization to its officers and representatives using the Powers of Entry on to Land to carry out its works under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (amended 1994):

*‘14 (2) The Board has Powers on Ordinary Watercourses to a) maintain existing works; b) to improve any existing works; and c) to construct new works to any watercourse or drainage works. 14 (4) authorizes any person to enter on the land for the purpose of maintaining existing works.*

*64 (1) Any person authorized by an internal drainage board, after producing a duly authenticated document, may at all reasonable time enter onto land for the purpose of exercising any function of the Board and any function of the Act’.*

The Board authorizes its officers and representatives under the above sections of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (amended 1994), and will provide duly authorized documentation of authority.’

**Members authorised its offices as above and approved the above wording for inclusion on the Board’s employees’ ID cards.**

**15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 3 June 2014 – Board Meeting**

The Chairman said members were invited to hold the next board meeting at the newly built offices of the Bedford Group; Vale House at Stewartby, Bedford. It was proposed that members meet at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley at 10am and travel to Stewartby. A buffet lunch would be included.

**Members agreed that the next meeting of the Board, on 3 June 2014, being held at Vale House, Stewartby.**

**16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**A14 – new route**

Mr Allen said the new A14 was being ‘fast tracked’. There will be a public consultation and it was hoped that the work would commence in 2 years’ time. He presumed the Board would be consulted.

Mr K Baker gave his apologies for the meeting on 3 June 2014.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.