

BUCKINGHAM AND RIVER OUZEL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at 2pm on 10 June 2014 at Vale House, Stewartby.

PRESENT: N Costin (Chairman); H Powell-Shedden (Vice Chairman); P Bowsher; F Chapman; R Haynes; P Hirons; H J Hunt; V McPake; and D Prosser.

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

1 APOLOGIES were received from M Galloway; D Hopkin; D Isham; B Spurr; N Warren and A Webb.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no relevant declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2014

The minutes of the General Purposes Committee and Board meetings held on 4 February 2014 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

SUDS Approval Body (SAB)

Mr Hirons asked whether the time frame of Section 106 agreements was an issue concerning SuDs. The Director of Operations said it was not an issue for the Board. If a SuDs pond was not completed then the Board would not adopt it.

Broughton Brook Sewer Outfall from Maidstone Road / cascade weir

Mr Bowsher asked for an update on the current situation concerning Broughton Brook sewer outfall. The Director of Operations said there had been no response from Anglian Water and the Board's solicitor was still involved.

Lower Weald

Mr Prosser enquired about the situation regarding Lower Weald. The Director of Operations said that progress had been slower than he had hoped due to staffing resources. He said there are queries regarding the listed buildings on the site and he needs to meet with the landowner about works on the site.

Board Vacancies

The Clerk said the 3 vacancies still remained on the elected membership but the current year was an election year and a new Board will be formed for the Board meeting on 4th November 2014.

Employee Code of Conduct Policy

The Clerk said that the new Employee Code of Conduct policy had been deferred as she was still awaiting an updated model document from ADA, on which the policy will be based. The existing employee rules set out in the employee handbook were still in place in the meantime.

Padbury Brook

The Clerk said that Mr Powell-Shedden's suggestion regarding contacting the local Member of Parliament had not been acted upon due to the meeting taking place with the Secretary of State, as detailed under agenda item 12, Any Other Business.

Audit

The Clerk referred to the Data Transparency Act and informed members that it had been confirmed that IDBs are included in the legislation and it would be necessary to publish a monthly list of supplier payments over £500 on the Boards' website.

Employee ID Cards

Mr Hirons asked whether the new ID cards had been produced and issued. The Director of Operations said they had not as it was proving difficult to find a supplier of suitable quality cards.

5 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on 28 APRIL 2014

The Chairman presented the minutes which were noted.

Discussion took place:

Purchase of 6" towable pump

Mr Hunt asked if the pump was a replacement. The Director of Operations said it was an additional one.

CESAR (Construction Equipment Security And Registration) System

The Clerk said the Boards' insurance broker was going to consult with the insurers about any benefit to be gained from having CESAR on items of plant.

6 PROGRESS OF WORKS PROGRAMME (PROGRESS OF WORKS REPORT 2013/14)

The Director of Operations presented the Progress of Works report and said that due to the exceptionally wet weather, flood duties and saturated ground, maintenance on some watercourses, marked in orange, had not been completed. These works will be carried forward into the 2014/15 programme and contractors may be used.

The Progress of Works Report 2013/14 was accepted by the Board.

Discussion took place:

Caldicotte Brook

Mrs McPake said she wished to thank the Board and the Parks Trust for the work which had taken place on keeping grills in the area clear. She said that the works in Walnut Tree were completed five days prior to heavy rain and there had been excellent partnership working.

Simpson

Members discussed works at Simpson and the main road in Simpson flooding. The Director of Operations said some works were carried out on the watercourse there but the flooding of the road was not the Board's responsibility.

Compensation claim – Robinson & Hall for JB Baylis and Partners

Mr Hirons asked whether photographic evidence is taken when the Board carries out such works. The Director of Operations said that photographs were not taken as such compensation claims are received infrequently.

7 Technical Report (including Schedule of Consents)

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

The Technical Report for the period January to May 2014 was accepted by the Board.

Discussion took place on:

Milton Keynes Tariff

The Chairman asked whether the progress on the legal agreement for the adoption of the Brooklands Meadow phase 1 strategic SuDs was moving fast enough. The Director of Operations said he wanted to ensure that the Board was protected and the developer was committed to paying the legal fees.

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

Mrs McPake raised the issue of so many bodies now involved in flood management and no one map to indicate responsibility for maintenance. Mr Bowsher agreed. The Clerk said the issue has been raised during discussions on partnership working with the EA and the Lead Local Flood Authorities and added that the LLFA now has a responsibility to compile flooding information.

Planning Applications

Mr Haynes asked for more information on the three Milton Keynes Council planning application objections. The Director of Operations said he would obtain more information. The Chairman asked that the information be sent to all members.

9 FINANCE

i) Finance Report for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

The Clerk presented the Finance Report.

Members accepted the Finance Report for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Discussion took place:

Mr Hirons said the setting out of the individual special levies was not clear.

Investment

The Clerk said that all investments were now with Lloyds as investment money had now been withdrawn from the Co-Op bank. Mr Bowsher asked whether there was general guidance to follow with regard to investments. The Clerk said the Group has a strategy. Money is currently not to be 'tied up' for too long and there were plans to close the Group's Co-op current account. The Executive Working Group reviews investments quarterly.

ii) To approve the Financial Statements for year ending 31 March 2014.

The Clerk presented the Financial Statements.

Members approved the Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2014 for the Chairman and Clerk to sign.

Discussion took place on the following:

Mr Bowsher asked how the Income and Expenditure Account on page 9 of the Financial Statements tied in with the Income and Expenditure Account Agenda item 8(i) on page 33 of the agenda papers. The Clerk said that the two accounts were not the same as the Financial Statements includes all payments made via the Group account and there are anomalies including the Labour Operations and Plant Fund towards which the Board pays a 40% share.

iii) To approve the Audit Commission Annual Return and Annual Governance Statement year ending 31 March 2014

Members approved the Audit Commission Annual Return and the Annual Governance Statement (answering questions 1 – 8 in the affirmative) for year ending 31 March 2014 for the Chairman and Clerk to sign.

9 INTERNAL AUDIT

(i) To Receive the Annual Internal Audit Report

The Clerk said that Adequate Assurance had been given. Substantial Assurance was expected in the future due to the employment of the apprentice Finance/Rating Assistant and the resulting greater segregation of duties. The Clerk added that no other Drainage Board currently has higher than Adequate Assurance.

Members approved the Internal Audit Report dated April 2014.

(ii) To Approve the Internal Audit Strategy & Audit Plan 2014/15

Members approved the Internal Audit Strategy & Audit Plan 2014/15

Discussion took place:

Recommendation 05.02.01 – Market test the supply of engineering services

Mr Bowsher asked if Hannah Reed were the Board's civil engineering consultants. The Clerk said that they were. They are on the Group's Preferred Supplier list and the Board does obtain preferential rates. Also, the last two years has seen an increase in expenditure with them due to Defra schemes and this is due to reduce. Members agreed that market testing could be problematic, however, the Chairman said that, as the matter had been highlighted, it was necessary to carry out the market testing and hopefully substantial assurance would be achieved.

(iii) To Approve the Revised Risk Register

The Clerk highlighted the issue of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance. She is currently endeavoring to increase this cover in line with the requirements of the external auditor. However, the expenditure on the new office/depot has helped reduce the risk due to the reduction in balances and also, as this project is completed, it has been removed from the risk register.

Members approved the Revised Risk Register dated April 2014.

10 To Approve the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 Employer's Policy Statement

The Clerk tabled a document entitled 'Postscript to Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer's Policy Statement following the Executive Working Group Meeting on 2nd June 2014'.

Following discussion of all of the EWG recommendations in the Postscript to Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer's Policy Statement, members agreed (with the exception of Mrs McPake who abstained) with the recommendations and for these recommendations to be incorporated into the Bedford Group of Drainage Board's Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer Policy Statement.

11 Election

(i) To Approve the Register of Electors

A copy of the Register of Electors as at 1st April 2014, was tabled. Members informed the Clerk of two changes to the register.

Members approved the Register of Electors

(ii) Election Process

The Clerk outlined the election process.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Padbury Mill

Mr Hirons reported that the road flooded here very frequently. He realized it was not quite in the Board's area being about 100 yards from it. The Director of Operations said the issue was with the Environment Agency as this section is Main River, but added that there had been heavy rain in the spring and early summer so it was not surprising the river was unable to cope in channel with such high flow.

Visit to the Boards' offices on 9th June 2014 by Owen Paterson, MP, and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Mr Powell-Shedden reported to the Board on the visit which he had attended as Vice Chairman. The Association of Drainage Authorities had arranged the visit and Lord de Ramsey, President; Henry Cator, Chairman and Jean Venables, Chief Executive of ADA attended. Also in attendance was an officer from Defra and Julie Foley, the Environment Agency's Area Manager. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Beds & River Ivel Board had also attended together with the Clerk and Director of Operations. The visit comprised of a presentation on the IDB's function, including the work to accommodate the significant development in the Drainage District in Bedford and Milton Keynes; discussions on key issues in land drainage and flood risk management; and a tour to several Sustainable Drainage System sites and watercourses to illustrate the importance of maintenance of the whole system.

Mr Powell-Shedden thanked the Clerk and the Director of Operations for the excellent presentation. He said the Minister was very enthusiastic about the way the Bedford Group were operating; recognizing its skills and proficiencies. Board members had expressed their concern about lack of maintenance on Main River and the fact that they are concerned about standing idle during the bird nesting season.

The Minister had invited the Bedford Group of IDBs and ADA to submit projects for consideration in the Autumn Spending Review. Mr Powell-Shedden said that the Board should put forward a business case for funding of such work as soon as possible.

Mr Bowsher raised concerns about a ‘knee jerk’ reaction and said the environmental consequences should be considered.

Mr Powell-Shedden recommended that officers respond to the Minister by producing a business case for Defra funding for a pilot project to carry out work on Main River.

The majority of members agreed that officers should produce a business case for Defra funding for a pilot project to carry out work on Main River.

The Clerk said she would email to members a copy of the presentation made to the Minister.

Resignation of Chairman

The Chairman, Mr Costin, informed members that this Board meeting would be his last. He said he hoped that some new, younger members could become involved. He said he was also Vice Chairman of the ADA Great Ouse Branch and wanted to make members aware of this vacancy and the opportunity to be nominated. The Clerk added that ADA had recently been incorporated and there was a meeting scheduled for July regarding the new structure. There will now be two ADA branch meetings per year and the Gt Ouse Branch included all IDBs within the Gt Ouse catchment.

The Clerk thanked Mr Costin for his contribution and added that he would remain as Chairman until the meeting of the new Board in November 2014.

Members gave a vote of thanks for Mr Costin’s attendance on the Board since 1991.

General Purposes Committee

Members discussed the annual General Purposes Committee meeting which has, in previous years been held to discuss the forthcoming years works programme and estimates, with meeting minutes and recommendations then going to the Board Meeting. As there is a lot of duplication of papers and discussion the Clerk suggested that no General Purposes Committee be scheduled for January 2015 and that all matters would be discussed by the full Board.

Members agreed that there should be no General Purposes Committee in January 2015.

13 DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING – 4 November 2014

The meeting closed.