

BUCKINGHAM AND RIVER OUZEL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at 2pm on 18 June 2013 at Longueville Hall, Newton Longville.

PRESENT: N Costin (Chairman); P Bowsher; A Dransfield; R W Edwards; M Galloway; R Haynes; V McPake; D Prosser; N Warren and A Webb.

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

1 APOLOGIES were received from A Gurney; P Hirons; D Hopkin; M C Howell; H J Hunt; D Isham and K Janes.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chairman declared an interest in so far as he is a member of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Mr Bowsher declared an interest during discussion of the Progress of Works Report as he is an employee of The Parks Trust.

Mr Prosser declared an interest during discussion about additional requests for work on land which he occupies.

3 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman informed members of the resignation of Mr Howell as Vice Chairman of the Board.

Mr Dransfield asked about the circumstances of Mr Howell's resignation. The Chairman and the Clerk responded and following discussion Mr Dransfield said he would approach Mr Howell, on behalf of the Board, and ask him to reconsider.

Members agreed to defer the election of Vice Chairman until the next Board meeting on 4th February 2014 in the hope that Mr Howell would reconsider.

4 MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD 5 FEBRUARY 2013

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 5 February 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Broughton Brook Sewer Outfall from Maidstone Road / cascade weir

Mr Bowsher asked what the current situation was concerning Broughton Brook. He said it was a matter of concern and the erosion was getting worse.

The Director of Operations said he was working with the Board's solicitor trying to find appropriate Queen's Counsel Opinion. He said that whilst there was a serious erosion problem at the Anglian Water outfall weir structure, there was not a flood risk.

Mrs McPake said that residents felt there were serious problems and that it would be useful to impart the information that there was not a flood risk. The Director of Operations said he would keep members informed.

Tour of Inspection/Members' Training Day

The Clerk said the Tour of Inspection/Members' Training Day will be deferred until the new office/depot opening.

Mr Prosser raised objection to the intention to hold future Board meetings at the new premises rather than Newton Longville. Other Members supported the central location of the new office for Board meetings. The Chairman said the matter would be explored further.

Mrs McPake said she had not seen any information about the ADA Demonstration on 17th July. The Clerk said she would email a link to members.

Overhead Cable Incident

The Director of Operations reported that the workforce had taken part in a refresher training course on Overhead Cables on 24th April 2013.

Lower Weald

Mr Edwards asked whether the Board had secured any of the funds from the Milton Keynes £3.75m 'roof tax' towards flood attenuation for Lower Weald. The Director of Operations said an initial payment of £238,000 had been received towards the design and construction of the scheme and when completed the Board will invoice Milton Keynes Council for a further £50,000 to cover engineering administration and appraisal costs. The Board will have to cover the cost of maintenance works as the tariff funding provides only a limited amount of money which has to cover the whole of the expansion development areas. Elsewhere, the Drainage Tariff is designed to cover only maintenance of SuDS assets that are designed and built by the developers in the expansion areas, albeit, that future capital replacement isn't funded by the tariff.

Mr Prosser said it seemed that no maintenance work or improvement to existing structures had been undertaken at Lower Weald which would stop flooding in the village by getting the water away. The Director of Operations said that annual maintenance works were in the programme, but no improvement works to the existing culverts had been carried out due to limited resources and the need to follow the process of opening up negotiations with the landowner again to alter what the Board had built approximately 10 years ago. Also, it was important to liaise with Milton Keynes Council as the area is a designated Conservation Area. He said the issue was not just maintenance and the project has to be delivered in a coordinated fashion to deliver the benefits. Property protection is the first phase of the scheme and a survey was due in two weeks' time.

The Chairman said he recalled that the occupier of the land was consulted when the Board carried out the project approximately 10 years ago and it was designed to enable his livestock to graze.

It was agreed that the Director of Operations should report on his progress at the next Board meeting on 4th February 2014.

Board Vacancies

The Clerk said the 3 vacancies remain on the elected membership and informed members that Defra were presently consulting on the reconstitution of Drainage Boards as 21 member Boards and this should probably be considered as the next step.

6 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on 29 APRIL 2013

The Chairman presented the minutes which were noted.

Discussion took place:

Land Drainage Operative, Banksman – Personal Injury Claim

The Clerk reported that the LDO who was pursuing a personal injury claim against the Board was still on sick leave with shoulder pain and insurance assessors had been in contact with officers.

Internal Audit Report

Mrs McPake commented on internal auditor providing only Adequate level of assurance.

The Clerk said Substantial Assurance has not been given due to the fact that the finance and administration department has few staff and segregation of duties is not always possible. However, this is being addressed: the Assistant Finance Officer is changing to a part-time contract and it is planned to employ an apprentice Finance Assistant who will work towards the Association of Accounting Technicians qualification.

Mr Dransfield asked why the Internal Auditor was not present at the meeting. The Clerk said the Internal Auditor had not attended the meeting as he had no matters of concern. However, he had stated that members may contact him direct, via email, if they have any queries or concerns. The Clerk said she would provide his contact details to any member who requested them. Mr Dransfield asked if there would be a cost saving from the Internal Auditor. The Clerk replied that the audits cover the Bedford Group not individual Board, which already provides significant value.

New Office/Depot Accommodation - Update

The Director of Operations said the contractors were due to set up on the site the next week. The agreed works had been carried out on behalf of the vendor: the access culvert had been installed, a rising main diverted and overhead cables put underground.

7 PROGRESS OF WORKS PROGRAMME (PROGRESS OF WORKS REPORT 2012/13)

The Director of Operations apologised for an error on the first page, the Summary page: the 'Progress (m)' column should have been dated 2012-13 not 2013-14.

The Progress of Works Report 2012/13 was accepted by the Board.

Members approved the following recommendations (Mr Prosser abstained from the voting on the additional requests for work):

The Parks Trust Partnership Working

It is recommended that the Board continues to make a contribution to the Parks Trust's watercourse maintenance works which are in line with the Works Programme, based on works completed and Board approval.

Additional Requests for works for 2013/14

- a) **Mr. Pell, Common Farm, Eaton Bray has requested that watercourse 135a be added to the programme for maintenance. Watercourse 135a is 300 metres long. These works would cost in the region of £1500.**
- b) **Mr. Crook, Hill Farm, Addington has requested that watercourse M13 and M14 local to him be weed cut, following the excellent clearing and dredging works the Board did two years ago. It should be noted that these watercourse are programmed for flailing only in 2013/14. To weed cut approximate 2 km of watercourse would cost around £1000.**
- c) **Mr Prosser, Cedars Farm, Mursley, has requested that watercourse S49 be added to the programme for maintenance. Mr Prosser has offered to assist by carrying out all the handling/burning of vegetation once cleared and reinstatement works. The lower**

reaches of watercourse S49 are scheduled for maintenance in 2014/15, so the upper section equates to 1658 metres of watercourse. These works would cost in the region of £5000, and save the Board about £2500 of burning and reinstatement costs.

Discussion took place:

Loughton Brook - The Bowl, Milton Keynes

Mr Dransfield drew officers' attention to the fact that a section of the watercourse could be culverted and it could therefore be a waste of resources if maintenance works were to be carried out. He said it was important that the Board's officers comment on the Milton Keynes Council consultation document that looked at options to regenerate the area and which was presently out for consultation. The Director of Operations said that any option to culvert the Loughton Brook would likely be unacceptable on environmental grounds under the Water Framework Directive. Members advised officers to pursue this as they felt that the Board should have been consulted, pre formal consultation.

8 Technical Report (including Schedule of Consents)

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report and added that Lower Weald had already been discussed under matters arising from the Joint Management Committee meeting minutes.

The Technical Report for the period January to May 2013 was accepted by the Board.

Discussion took place on:

Milton Keynes Western Expansion Area

Mr Dransfield drew officers' attention to the fact that it seemed that works were recommencing on this development.

EA Leighton Buzzard Scheme

Mr Edwards, a member of the Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committee, said he believed that there would be no further progress at this time as the funding was not available.

9 FINANCE

i) Finance Report for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013

The Clerk presented the Finance Report.

Members accepted the Finance Report for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

ii) To approve the Financial Statements for year ending 31 March 2013.

The Clerk presented the Finance Report and explained that the large surplus of £305,758 included ring fenced commuted sum money and less maintenance costs.

Members approved the Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2013 for the Chairman and Clerk to sign.

Discussion took place on the following:

Mr Edwards asked whether the reserves were sufficient. The Clerk said that Audit recommend that reserves should be half of the Special Levy and rate income and the current level of reserves was just above that amount.

iii) To approve the Audit Commission Annual Return and Annual Governance Statement year ending 31 March 2013

Members approved the Audit Commission Annual Return and the Annual Governance Statement (answering questions 1 – 8 in the affirmative) for year ending 31 March 2013 for the Chairman and Clerk to sign.

Members gave a vote of thanks to the Clerk/Finance Officer for the presentation of excellent finance reports.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT

(i) To Receive the Annual Internal Audit Report

The Clerk drew members' attention to the recommendation ref A2 of the Internal Audit Report – Elected Board members (not Council Representatives) can claim mileage allowance for attendance at Board meetings.

Members approved the Internal Audit Report dated May 2013.

(ii) To Approve the Internal Audit Strategy & Audit Plan 2013/14

Members approved the Internal Audit Strategy & Audit Plan 2013/14

Members said they did not feel it was necessary for the Internal Auditor to attend the next Board meeting if there was nothing of concern and suggested that his planned days for the Internal Audit 2013-14 be reduced from 5.5 days to 5 days.

(iii) To Approve the Revised Risk Register

Members approved the Revised Risk Register dated April 2013.

Discussion took place:

Mr Bowsher asked who the Chief Executive was. The Clerk responded that she was the Chief Executive and also the Responsible Finance Officer.

Mr Dransfield said he was surprised that the risk level for loss of income through error or fraud was a level 6. The Clerk said this was a standard risk level for fraud and some of that risk is then transferred to insurance. The Clerk said she would bring the risk level matrix to the next Board meeting.

The Chairman said the next scheduled review of the risk register was 31st December 2013.

11 TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING DRAFT POLICIES:

(i) Employee Code of Conduct Policy

Following discussion members agreed that the Employee Code of Conduct Policy document should be incorporated into the existing Employee Handbook and therefore not approved at this time.

(ii) Hospitality and Gift Policy

The Clerk added that there is a book available in the Boards' offices in which members and employees of the Board should record any declarable hospitality or gifts.

Members approved the Hospitality and Gift Policy.

(iii) Document Retention Policy

The Clerk said the possibility of remote storage was being considered as part of the new computer system. Also officers are investigating whether Local Authorities already store plans which the Board holds on file and whether the amount of data which the Boards' store could therefore be reduced.

Members approved the Document Retention Policy but suggested that the Internal Auditor's advice be sought to ensure six years was sufficient time to retain certain documents.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Former Brickyard at Bletchley, Milton Keynes

Mr Webb raised the issue of flooding in the brook.

Mr Edwards said that he thought Milton Keynes Council had sole responsibility for Cottingham Brook, as this area was outside the Drainage District

The Chairman asked Mr Edwards to report back to the meeting regarding responsibility. He asked that the Board's officers also check their records and a letter could possibly then be sent from the Board to Milton Keynes Council.

13 DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING – 4 February 2014

The meeting closed at 3.57pm