

ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

PRESENT: H Raby (Chairman), M Baker, B Chapman, A Lensen, E Ruston, D Tysoe and R Warrener.

IN ATTENDANCE: B Agass (Chief Executive/Clerk); J Oldfield (Director of Operations); N Souter (Accountant) and A Smith (Committee Clerk).

1 APOLOGIES for absence were received from I Gardener.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 May 2018

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

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Director of Operations reviewed the contractor's performance as suggested, explained to members that although there was a settling in period with the new contractor, subsequent work has been to an acceptable standard. The Chairman added they also faced poor ground conditions.

One member added their dissatisfaction with the work that was carried out and will be looking at whether this needs to be re-done.

5 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2019 AND PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report together with an A3 plan showing maintenance works completed. Two areas were pointed out to members that were yet to be completed, it was explained that this was due to the recent spell of wet weather. Officers are liaising with the landowners regarding an appropriate time to gain access. Members were informed that there is the possibility of there being an early bird nesting season which may stop works slightly earlier than normal.

One member asked if the Board had looked at the watercourse at Great Stukeley down from the Sewage Works where the bank slippage had occurred. They were advised that this hadn't be assessed but would request for an officer to go out.

Easton

An email was received from the Parish Council thanking the Board for its work and continued effort over the years maintaining the watercourse running through the village.

The Chairman asked what the plan was for both upstream and downstream of Easton, it was explained this was in for flailing to maintain the good condition.

Once member informed the Board that where the water goes over a Ford at the far end of the watercourse, there are 3 pipes which are partially blocked. The Director of Operations explained he wasn't aware, but the Board can take a look to determine the best solution and also with the possibility if its structural then this may fall with the local highways department.

Members accepted the Works Progress Report for the period April to December 2019.

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme together with an A3 plan showing the maintenance works proposed. A revised spreadsheet was tabled at the meeting, showing the addition of flailing to all watercourses. This was to take advantage of the system being in a good condition due to the hard work that had been carried out in previous years.

Members approved the Works Programme 2020/21.

Discussion took place

One member reported details to the Board regarding a watercourse in Wooley where flood water comes out of the ditch and ponds on the road. The Director of Operations explained this may again need to be a joint effort with Highways especially if traffic management is required however officers would look at the problem.

A member expressed concerns with regards to watercourse Alc_4 and how there may be a section that is inaccessible and therefor won't be able to be maintained by the Board. The Director of Operations explained that the Board has been working closely with the A14 team however a handover will take place. The Board will be working closely with Highways to ensure these sections are maintained properly.

The Director of Operations was only aware of one possible problem area between the A1 and A14. The Board are currently in discussions with Highways England.

6 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD MAY – DECEMBER 2019

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members accepted the Technical Report.

Discussion took place:

The Director of Operations also added further information regarding Laws Crescent at Brampton where the developer has placed a tarmac footpath too close to the watercourse within the Board's byelaws. Discussions have taken place regarding moving the footpath to the location

shown on the original drawings which received consent. The Board are currently awaiting the developer's response. If no response is received actions will be escalated.

The Director of Operations stressed the importance of retaining the byelaw strip in order for the infrastructure to remain accessible and well maintained especially where infrastructure is rapidly encroaching. The Chairman asked for an update on the byelaws being approved by DEFRA. It was explained that the updated byelaws are currently awaiting approval from DEFRA, it was hoped that these would have been approved however the timeline has been impacted upon by recent parliamentary elections and Brexit preparations.

One member commented on the amount of dredging that had taken place along the watercourse at the former RAF site, which had led to the old headwall structure being discovered. Officers believed the maintenance works undertaken were to restore levels to the original hard bed level, which tied in with another outfall on the watercourse.

The Chief Executive explained in a recent meeting with the Environment Agency funding had been granted from DEFRA to provide further appraisal work along the Alconbury Brook as well as trying and find a solution.

7 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2020/2021

The Chief Executive presented the report. She added that the policy was consistent with the Bedfordshire & River Ivel and the Buckingham & River Ouzel Boards.

Members approved the report and the following recommendations:

- (i) The general development contribution should be increased to £5.45 per impervious square metre from 1st April 2020;**
- (ii) The Clerk should be authorized to negotiate appropriate commuted sums from developers when the Board agrees to adopt new works.**

8 REVIEW OF ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/2021 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE

Income from Rates and Special Levies

The Principal Accountant presented the General Estimates for 2020/21 which had been based on a 0% increase in rate and special levy income for 2020/2021 with no further change in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

Maintenance Expenditure

The Principal Accountant presented the maintenance estimates which reflect the forthcoming works programme. The Chairman made comment regarding the Board's healthy balance however something to be mindful of should a large maintenance issue arise. He questioned how this was looked upon by the auditor. The Chief Executive explained with the increased programme for the upcoming year therefor will keep the Board in line and maintain a healthy figure especially when being a smaller Board.

One member questioned the increase in dredging, the Director of Operations explained this allowed for the work at the rear of Centenary Way in Brampton, which is currently out for tender. This work is weather dependent and therefor may overrun into next year.

The Board agreed the to a zero-percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2020/21 of 3.95 pence in the pound of Annual Value giving a rate and special levy income of £91,142 and authorised the Chairman to sign and seal the rate.

9 FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April to 31 December 2019

The Accountant presented the Finance Report which included:

Receipts and Payments through the Board's individual Bank Accounts with NatWest;
Cheque list;
Investment and bank account balances;
Income and Expenditure Account for the period ending 31 December 2019 and
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019.

The Finance Report was approved.

The Chairman requested members approval for the newly appointed Clerk/CEO be added to the bank account signatories and for the out-going Clerk to remain for the time being.

Members agreed to the newly appointed Clerk/CEO, Mrs Beverley Agass, to be added as a signatory to the bank account.

10 TO RE-APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR 2020/21

Members approved the re-appointment of internal auditors, TIAA, to the Board for the financial year 2020/21.

The Clerk said following the Board appointing TIAA to carry out the 2019/20 internal audit, they were due to come to the Boards' offices 17 & 18th February 2020. Their Annual Report would be presented to the Board.

11(i) TO APPROVE THE UPDATED DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

One member asked what processes were in place to ensure the record retention schedule was adhered to, the Chief Executive explained this was maintained by good housekeeping and monitoring the type and levels of information officers receive. The Board also appoints a Data Protection officer and Senior Information Risk Officer.

The revision time scale of the policy was question by members, it was explained this is a maximum compulsory period and the Board would look to review this more regularly.

Members approved the updated Document Retention and Disposal Policy

11(ii) TO APPROVE THE DATA PROTECTION POLICY

To be taken to and discussed at the next Board meeting.

12 WATER RESOURCES EAST

The Chairman outlined the background to Water Resources East and a letter from David Thomas, ADA Water Resources East Board representative was tabled. ADA is funding £15,000 across the Anglian Water Region and the Alconbury & Ellington Board's membership fee, payable to ADA, for the first year is £60.56. He recommended to members that this fee be paid, initially for the first year, in order for the Board to be involved at the early stages of the initiative.

Members expressed a concern that our voice may not be heard due to the large number of members on the strategic group however the Chief Executive reassured members view and comments were listened to and this would continue. The aim is to look at the whole process end to end, not just water management, with a slightly different approach. By having every step represented at these meeting seems the most appropriate way.

It was agreed the Alconbury & Ellington Board to pay a subscription, for one year, to Water Resources East in the sum of £60.56.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Risk Management Workshop-

The Chief Executive canvassed members for their views on holding a risk management workshop for Board Members prior to reviewing the Risk Management Strategy. Members were advised of the provisional date for the training being held at the Board offices on 21st April. The workshop will be open to all members, an electronic invitation will be sent to all members.

Board Membership-

The Chief Executive highlighted that as board membership can fluctuate between periods of election it may be more appropriate to consider incorporating into the model standing orders a %age of Board membership (which may be subject to change) rather than a fixed number of members.

Members agreed to seek to engage with DEFRA regarding changes to the current Standing Orders to reflect a percentage of Board membership.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 5 May 2020 – Board Meeting

The meeting closed at 11:43.