

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

### **Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

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

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

The Chairman welcomed, to their first meeting, Mr Lensen, Director of Farming, Agreserve Ltd and Cllr Tysoe, HDC.

**1 APOLOGIES** for absence were received from Mr J White.

**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**

**Byelaws**

The Clerk gave an update on the situation with the revised byelaws. They have been sent to Defra for signature but Defra have an issue with some wording, which they had recommended. Due to the UK's exit from the EU there has been a delay with getting the issue resolved. However, the revised byelaws can still be used. The alteration will be a minor adjustment once approved and the byelaws will not need to be re-submitted to Defra for signature.

**Easton**

Mr M Baker said he had met the Boards' Site Manager Eastern in Easton recently and he was pleased that the Boards' officer had been made aware of the complaints residents had made about arisings being left on the bank of the watercourse when maintenance works were carried out in 2017/18.

**A14 Road Improvement – Olivia Cottage, Park Road Brampton**

Mrs Ruston said because there had been little rain over the winter she could not comment on whether the drainage around the cottage was improved or that the flooding which had taken place could be attributed to the build-up of debris in a temporary culvert. The Director of Operations pointed out that there had been a flood alert over the previous weekend, and the Alconbury ford road had been closed.

### **Alconbury Brook**

Mr Warrener made reference to the Board's works clearing out the watercourses in the area and said he had been concerned to learn that the Environment Agency were talking about blocking the Alconbury Brook and turning an area into wetland. He asked the Director of Operations if he knew anything about it. The Director of Operations said it was part of their Natural Flood Management project that had been previously discussed.

The Chairman suggested that officers monitor the situation. The Director of Operations said that officers are involved with the Natural Flood Management initiative and do attend meetings and do plan to get more involved.

### **General Data Protection Regulation**

The Clerk said the Boards' officers were to take part in some GDPR training at the Boards' offices on 26 February 2019. She added that Board members were also invited to attend and the Committee Clerk would send out an email to members with some more information.

## **5 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2018 AND PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22**

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report together with an A3 plan showing maintenance works completed. He said the last few years of more intensive maintenance has watercourses in better condition and lighter maintenance works were required.

### **Members accepted the Works Progress Report for the period April to December 2018.**

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme together with an A3 plan showing the maintenance works proposed.

### **Members approved the Works Programme 2019/20.**

**Members agreed that heavy clearing works should be carried out on Watercourse No. 5 adjacent to Park Road, Brampton in addition to the 2019/20 Works Programme as presented and approved, see Agenda item 8.**

Discussion took place:

### **Brampton**

Mr Sewell made reference to the watercourse near the golf course. He said there were one or two trees on the adjacent pasture that might cause a flood risk and would benefit from being removed. He said he would talk to officers as he could aid the Board with this.

The Chairman said there seemed to be more annual flailing and not so much weed cutting and dredging with excavators in the current programme. The Director of Operations said that the Board had undertaken more maintenance in recent years and were now able to carry out lighter duty, frequent maintenance. The Chairman asked if heavy maintenance would be needed in the future. The Director of Operations said six or seven years ago the

West end area had very expensive works carried out. Silt was removed and the bed of the watercourse had to be stabilised. This was at a cost of approximately £50,000 for one kilometre of watercourse. Mrs Ruston asked whether it was a satisfactory result. The Director of Operations said it has made the handwork easier to carry out as well as ensuring conveyance capacity is maintained.

The Chairman said it was a sensitive area and Mr Sewell agreed, particularly with regard to the extra development taking place by Bellway Homes. The Director of Operations said the site was being attenuated to greenfield run-off rates, but the watercourses in Brampton are critical.

## **6 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD MAY – DECEMBER 2018**

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

### **National Farmers Union (NFU)**

The Chairman and Officers thanked Mrs Ruston for helping host the visit.

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

Discussion took place:

### **Consents - RAF Brampton**

The Chairman highlighted the RAF Brampton consent. Mrs Ruston said the foul water discharge was the main concern on the site and that River Lane was starting to struggle. Mr Sewell added that this was an issue forty years ago, although the sewer was upgraded.

Mr Lensen asked whether the £50 consent application fee was sufficient to cover Board costs. Officers said it was a statutory fee and all that the Board were permitted to charge although this was being reviewed and may change in the future. The EA had changed to ‘permitting’ and they now had charges on a sliding scale depending on how involved the permits are. Also, at present, Board consents concerning the A1/A14 improvement scheme were subject to a legal agreement and officers’ time would be charged.

## **7 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2019/2020**

The Director of Operations presented the report. A replacement page was tabled which set out a change to the wording regarding the 5.9% increase. He 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 £5.30 per impervious square metre from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019;**
- (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 2019/2020 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE**

### **Income from Rates and Special Levies**

The Clerk presented the General Estimates for 2019/20 which had been based on a 10% reduction in rate and special levy income for 2019/2020 with no further change in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. She explained this recommendation was mainly attributable to the large amount of land which had moved from agricultural rates to special levy due to the A1/A14 improvements. All transfers of land have been made. To leave the rate at £0.0395 would result in more than double the rate and special levy income being held in balances. In the past auditors have agreed to the Board exceeding the one year's rate and special levy income due to the small size of the Board and the possible cost of unplanned, necessary works. But to leave the rate unchanged could result in reserves of more than double the one year's rate and special levy income. Another factor to consider was the increase in special levy for Huntingdonshire District Council.

### **Maintenance Expenditure**

The Clerk said that maintenance costs have substantially reduced over the last two years and although allowance has been made for maintenance costs increasing balances could still increase.

Members discussed the Clerk's recommendation and were reluctant to reduce the rate. Given that watercourse No. 4 to Brampton Wood was last substantially cleared in the 2015-16 programme members were of the opinion that watercourse No. 4 should be cleared again given the amount of development currently taking place and the importance of the watercourse. This would result in an extra cost, a reduction in balances and avoid a reduction in the rate.

**The Board agreed the to a zero percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2019/20 of 3.95 pence in the pound of Annual Value giving a rate and special levy income of £90,084 and authorised the Chairman to sign and seal the rate.**

**Members agreed that heavy clearing works should be carried out on Watercourse No. 5 adjacent to Park Road, Brampton in addition to the 2019/20 Works Programme as approved under Agenda item 5.**

## **9 FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April to 31 December 2018**

The Clerk 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 2018 and
- Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2018.

**The Finance Report was approved.**

**10 TO RE-APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR 2019/20**

**Members approved the re-appointment of internal auditors, TIAA, to the Board for the financial year 2019/20.**

The Clerk said following the Board appointing TIAA to carry out the 2018/19 internal audit, they were due to come to the Boards' offices 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Their Annual Report would be presented to the Board.

**11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Sewell said that a tree which he had previously reported as causing a blockage in the Alconbury Brook had been removed. He said the EA appeared to have done a fair job of clearing from the bypass to Nuns Bridge.

**12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 21 May 2019 – Board Meeting**

The meeting closed at 11.09 am.