

THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held at 2.00pm on Thursday 4 August 2016
In the Brave Room at the White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, CT16 3PJ

PRESENT

Mr M J G Tapp (Chairman), Mr A D Linfoot OBE (Vice Chairman), Councillor M J Burgess, Mr P S Dunn, Councillor A K Hicks, Councillor M Martin, Councillor M Ovenden, Councillor D O Smith, Mr J E F Smith, Mr G R Steed and Councillor S Walker.

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms D McNamara (Incident Response Team Leader – Upper & Lower Stour Area, Environment Agency), Mr I Martin (Member of the Public), Mr P N Dowling (Clerk & Engineer to the Board) and Ms A Eastwood (Finance & Rating Officer).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D M Botting, Councillor M D Conolly, Mr P E Dyas, Mr P Howard, Councillor P J F Sims, Councillor H Stummer-Schmertzing, Mrs G Wyant and Mr M P Wilkinson. Apologies were also received from Mr D Godden (IDB Contracts Manager, Rhino Plant Hire) and Mr J Dilnot (Engineering Assistant).

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 2 JUNE 2016

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on Thursday 2 June 2016 were received. It was proposed by Councillor Martin, seconded by Mr Dunn and resolved that the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings at that meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Environment Agency Works

The Chairman asked Ms McNamara if the results from the survey on the Aylesford Stream to test the phosphate levels had been received. Ms McNamara reported that she still has not received the results despite chasing it, she said she will inform all concerned once she is in receipt of them.

Ref: W7-7

Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs)

The Chairman reported that the Board has finalised the PSCA with Dover District Council and he asked the Ashford Borough Council Representatives if there had been any developments on the decision to set up a PSCA with ABC. Councillor Hicks reported that she has had discussions about it but was informed

that ABC do not have any work that needs doing at the moment. The Chairman stated that the setting up of the PSCA Agreement can be lengthy and its existence does not mean that it has to be used, though if works need to be carried out at short notice a PSCA must be in place. Councillor Hicks stated that she will pursue this with ABC.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES AND WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 18 JULY 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes and Works Committee held on Monday 18 July 2016 were received. It was proposed by Councillor Burgess, seconded by the Vice Chairman and resolved that the minutes be received.

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Stonar Cut

The Chairman asked Ms McNamara if the final document setting out the new agreed procedure for operating the cut has been distributed to all the interested parties. Ms McNamara stated that the document is ready and just awaiting printing and will soon be distributed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM JOINT REPORT OF THE CLERK & ENGINEER AND FINANCE & RATING OFFICER FOR THE PERIOD 1 MAY TO 30 JUNE 2016

The Chairman read through the report (this report is fully integrated in the FGP meeting minutes – 18 July 2016).

Ref: W1-39 Main River Rationalisation Project

The Chairman stated that this project will be subject to substantial discussion between the Environment Agency and the Clerk & Engineer to the Board due to the Board's drainage district being appointed as one of the 10 frontrunner locations. The Chairman stated that initial discussions are underway and will be for quite some time. The Clerk & Engineer reported that he recently attended a meeting with Shaun McManus (who is currently the EA Project Lead for this pilot), Simon Cox and Simon Beal. He further reported that the original list was a desktop exercise put together in a short space of time, which has since been revised and a greater focus has been placed on the Lower Stour Area; meaning that this is not a complete review of the whole catchment at this stage. The Clerk & Engineer reported that the original 56km identified for potential transfer to the IDB has been reduced to approx. 40km and a lot of the pumping stations, tidal outfalls and major assets on the original list have now been removed and the focus is on the Main Rivers.

The Clerk & Engineer further reported that he will be attending a workshop with local EA staff on 7 September and although the frontrunner project is focusing on the Lower Stour Marshes, the EA have agreed that it would be beneficial to analyse the whole catchment to create a list of potential future transfers. He stated that this exercise will highlight areas where the Environment Agency has problems in getting funding and consequently maintaining the rivers and there is a need to establish whether these

areas are important sections to the IDB, or others, and if not the solution may be to decommission them completely and return them to riparian responsibility.

The Clerk & Engineer re-affirmed that this frontrunner project is about getting the process right to ascertain what will work and is acceptable and it is to be rolled out nationally. So far the EA has identified 5,500km of Main Rivers which would be better managed locally by IDBs and Local Authorities. Councillor Martin asked if the funding of the extra work has been discussed. The Clerk & Engineer stated that initially it is about agreeing a principle of who is best placed to manage certain river sections and discussions about funding will ensue.

Ms McNamara stated that this is a huge project and the EA has nominated an officer to specifically manage this project full time. She further added that the EA is very conscious of the cost impact that any transfers will have on IDBs, Local Authorities and landowners and it will all be considered.

Councillor Burgess asked if there are any other South East IDBs within the 10 frontrunners. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he believed there to be a short section on the Isle of Sheppey that the Lower Medway IDB have been asked to consider.

Ref: W4/Review Defra Consultation: Changes to water abstraction licensing exemptions.

It was reported that whilst no formal response has yet been received from Defra in respect of ADA's submission to this consultation, it has been confirmed at meetings between Defra and ADA that volumetric limits will not be imposed, contrary to what was proposed in the consultation document, which is some progress.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that Defra is trying to bring into licencing any transfers from outside an IDB district to within an IDB district, currently all Main Rivers in the South, apart from the Tidal Stour, are regarded within the Board's district but, according to information received, Defra is classifying all Main Rivers as being outside an IDB district. This would make a significant difference to the Board as any feeds from a Main River into an IDB watercourse would have to be licenced which would create extra work and could prove to be very expensive with each licence costing around £1,500 as has been suggested.

The Chairman stated that ADA is in discussions with Defra, but there is currently little the Board can do to influence the outcome of this consultation.

Ref: W4/WSR Rainfall & River Flow Data

The Clerk & Engineer summarised the rainfall data as previously reported in the F&GP meeting minutes: March – an average of 62.7mm (14% over the LTA of 54.8mm); April – an average of 49.3mm (98% of the LTA of 50.1mm); May – an average of 37.6mm (81% of the LTA of 46.5mm); June – an average of 84.6mm (67% over the LTA of 50.7mm). Soil moisture deficits had increased prior to June's heavy rainfall and ended the month below long term average. June 2012 was the last time SMDs ended the month of June below the LTA but they are expected to rise quickly as temperatures increase. Although groundwater levels are falling they are reported to remain in the above normal to notably high ranges. Storage levels remain above LTAs in the southeast. Bewl reservoir was recorded to be at 94% on 16 June.

Ref: W7 IDB Programme of Works (Including works carried out under PSCA)

Weed Cutting

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the 2016-17 weed cutting programme has commenced and joint IDB/EA land entry notices have been issued to all affected landowners. He further reported that approximately 55km of weed cutting is to be carried out again on Main River under the PSCA – this work consists of approximately 30km of mechanical cutting and 25km of manual cutting. All of this work is to be delivered through the Board's regular maintenance contractor, Rhino Plant, which is estimated to provide a further cost saving when compared to previous years but it will involve additional supervision and support.

De-silting

The Clerk & Engineer reported that there has been a slight change to the desilting programme for 2016-17 due to priorities identified by the Engineering Assistant. The Port Rill Dyke (111), Stourmouth Lead Dyke (200) and Watchester Drove Lead Dyke (214) have been added to this year's desilting programme and Supperton Dyke (86), Red House Wall Lead Dyke (292) and Deal Town Dyke Upper (297) have been removed. This change has not greatly affected the length to be covered or cost to be incurred.

In addition to this, further Main River de-silting is to be considered under the PSCA, currently expected to be approximately 10km (including sections of North Stream (Chislet), Chislet Pump Channel, Delf, Minster Stream, North Poulders Stream North & South Streams (Hacklinge) and River Wantsum). Land entry notices will be issued as soon as the programme has been finalised.

Tree & Shrub Maintenance

The Clerk & Engineer reported that details of the 2016-17 tree maintenance programme will, as usual, be finalised during this year's weed cutting season using feedback from the Board's maintenance contractor. This work will be scheduled for completion in late 2016/early 2017, although some work may be necessary earlier to facilitate de-silting operations.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that although some tree maintenance work may be required this year under the PSCA, it is likely to be much less than the large amount completed in 2015-16.

Structures Maintenance

The Clerk & Engineer reported that level surveys will be carried out over the summer in order to continue the installation of water level gauge-boards when water levels are reduced in the autumn, starting with the Preston-Grove and Chislet Marshes. He further reported that minor repairs will be carried out to a number of structures in the coming weeks, including Tipper Drove Feed (IDB122) which was recently vandalised (hand railing part-removed and the feed fully opened which resulted in water levels in the North Stream being significantly lowered through Marshside).

Obstruction Clearance

The Clerk & Engineer reported that routine inspections of watercourses continue to be carried out and obstructions cleared as necessary, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall.

Water Level Control

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Board's Water Level Controller has continued to manage water levels throughout the district extremely well, on both IDB watercourses and Main Rivers (under the PSCA), in close cooperation with the Environment Agency.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that there was a report of dead eels at Minster pumping station by a member of the public to the EA. There are already restrictions when the pump can be run (September and October being high risk) so this occurred in a lower risk period but due to the incident the pump had to be stopped, which affected upstream levels. The Clerk & Engineer stated that it was concluded that the heavy rainfall and low temperatures were a factor in this incident. The EA is planning to install a fish friendly pump which can be solely run throughout the summer – this will hopefully be completed this year. There are also investigations into the possibility/appropriateness of fitting a fish scarer to the mouth of the inlet channel.

Contract Expenditure

The Clerk & Engineer reported that as this year's routine watercourse maintenance activities have not yet started, expenditure to date is nearly all for water level control and routine asset maintenance. Expenditure up to 30 June totalled £16,178.71.

Ref: A4-3 Biodiversity

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Carol Donaldson Associates (CDA) has now resumed surveys of a selection of IDB watercourses in line with the Board's recently revised BAP. Further enhancement works are being considered at South Poulders Main Stream (IDB170) in Sandwich, which might involve KSCP's volunteer group. Discussions have continued with local EA staff regarding the possibility of channel enhancement works upstream of Nethergong Bridge on the Sarre Penn, which has been problematic in recent years with repeated flooding. It is hoped that the channel can be re-profiled in order to improve flood conveyance and to improve bankside habitat. A water vole survey has been carried out and an enhancement proposal is still to be developed in consultation with the land owner.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that all river maintenance operatives were given a biodiversity briefing on 15 July which went extremely well. Carol's recommendations were taken on board and Mr Darren Godden (Rhino Plant Hire – Contracts Manager) was very supportive and Carol was pleased with the feedback received.

Ref: W7G Environment Agency Works

The Clerk & Engineer ran through the list of works as reported in the minutes of the F&GP meeting.

Councillor Smith reported that he had received an email from Barrie Neaves stating that the East Stour and Aylesford Stream have been cleaned, with 19 supermarket trolleys removed. Councillor Smith further stated that he will resurrect the concept with ABC to hold supermarkets responsible for the cost of removing these trolleys as they should be responsible for controlling their property as previously suggested.

Work is continuing on the Asset Information Management System (AIMS). The Clerk & Engineer reported that ADIS (ADA's asset management database) is no longer being supported. He has contacted ADA about this and spoken with Mr Ian Nunn about the possibility of using AIMS but there is a concern that this might create additional work than it is necessary because the Board would use the system to record details of assets and their conditions rather than to its full potential.

Ref: A7-1.1 Shared Engineering Resources Agreement

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the cooperation arrangement with the Upper & Lower Medway IDBs has continued, with benefits achieved as previously reported. The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Medway IDBs have employed a full time Technical Engineer which does not affect the agreement in the short term but may result in changes in the future.

Ref: W5 Planning Applications

The Clerk & Engineer ran through the list of planning applications of interest to the Board as reported in the F&GP meeting Minutes.

Ashford Borough Council

Councillor Hicks reported that she is aware of a proposal for 915 houses in the south of Ashford which will affect the Whitewater Dyke with part of it being within the flood plain and the developers are currently suggesting that the floodplain be changed. Councillor Hicks further reported that she has spoken with Barrie Neaves and there does not seem to be an opposition to 'move' the floodplain. The Clerk & Engineer stated that the Environment Agency will ensure that there is no loss within a certain level range (if the developer takes it from one area will be required to compensate in another) and the EA will not object. The Chairman stated that the Board must ensure to check this proposal when it comes through. Councillor Martin stated that the Environment Agency should scrutinise these proposals thoroughly and ensure they use their powers to oppose/stop developments that will have a future negative effect in the management of watercourses. Ms McNamara stated that developers have to demonstrate that their development proposals are sustainable.

Dover District Council

15/01290 Land off Albert Road, Deal.
Creation of a mixed-use development incorporating 142 residential units, office space, and link road.

Councillor Ovenden reported that outline permission has been granted for this application.

Ref: W1-21 KCC Flood Risk Management Committee - SuDS

The Chairman reported that KCC's Flood Risk Management Committee wrote to Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supporting the views and reiterating the

problems highlighted in the Pitt Review (letter fully incorporated in the F&GP meeting minutes) regarding the future sustainability of SuDS. The Clerk & Engineer reported that following the Committee's request he wrote to KCC expressing the Board's support on these points and he further pointed out on the letter that consideration should be given to reviewing existent SuDS to ensure that their long term management is also assured.

Councillor Hicks reported that on the larger development sites, within ABC, they will set up management companies which will evolve into resident's associations when the sites become fully occupied, to ensure sustainability into the future.

Ref: W5/NATGRID Richborough Connection Project

The Clerk & Engineer reported that discussions were continuing in respect of a Statement of Common Ground between the Board and National Grid. Councillor Walker reported that the Local Parish Councils are attempting to block this proposal as local residents are extremely unhappy about it. The Chairman stated that it is not within the Board's remit to object therefore the Board cannot support or otherwise; the Board can only try to ensure that whatever is done does not adversely affect the drainage district.

ADMINISTRATION

Ref: A. 8-1 Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) – Annual subscription

The Clerk & Engineer reported that due to the success of the recent FLOODDEX trade event for flood defence and the water level management sector, and the moneys received from it, the ADA has indicated that there will be no increase to annual subscriptions.

Ref: R1 Scanning of Ordnance Survey Maps

The Clerk & Engineer stated that the Board's maps and archives are kept in the office basement which unfortunately is damp and the maps and archives are deteriorating as a result. In order to retain this information, as well as to improve conditions in the basement, it is suggested that the maps be scanned. A quote for this work has been received from Stor-a-file Kent, Image House, 334 High Street, Rochester Kent ME1 1JE amounting to £778 plus Vat.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Smith and resolved that arrangements should be made to have the Ordnance Survey Maps and other important archives scanned. This was agreed by all Members present.

Ref: R1 DRS - Rating Programme

The Chairman reported that the Board's rating system needs to be updated, because Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board who currently produce the Board's drainage rates demands is changing the programme in which they process the Board's information, and have therefore requested additional information from the Stour Board. A four-digit plan number and the four-digit OS field number is required for each and every assessment (land parcel) within the Board district. Unfortunately, whilst the majority of this information

can be found manually on the Ordnance Survey maps held by the Board, it is not held in a digital form. As this will be a time consuming process, JBA Consulting was asked to provide a quote to carry out this work, that quote has now been received and it is £7,953. This quote is higher than expected but this being a very specialised work it is difficult to find alternative quotes. JBA Consulting has recently carried out the same process for the Medway IDBs. Whichever way this work is done the information is needed by November 2016. For JBA to carry out the digitisation of the Field Data they would need the Ordnance Survey Maps to be scanned first at a cost of £778 (as above).

When this additional information has been established, LMDB has indicated that to manually input this information into their system will cost £2,072 (a one-off charge). The ongoing costs of the existing arrangement have also been estimated to be £1,336 per annum from 2017-18.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that due to the difficulties and potential risks of being reliant on another IDB for the administration of its rating system, the Board should consider managing its own system. The nationally recognised Drainage Rating System (DRS) is owned and run by the Water Management Alliance (WMA) at King's Lynn. Enquiries have been made into purchasing this software and the estimated costs are shown below and are compared to the estimated future costs for continuing with LMDB:

DRS – Option 1		LMDB – Option 2	
<u>Initial costs:</u>		<u>One off Costs:</u>	
Map Scanning	£ 778	Map Scanning	£ 778
Data supply (LMDB)	£ 400	Digitisation of Field Data	£ 7,953
Licensed copy of DRS (WMA)	£5,500	Manual Input of Data	<u>£ 2,072</u>
Data transfer (WMA)	£1,000		
Staff training (WMA)	<u>£1,000</u>		
Total	<u>£8,678</u>		<u>£10,803</u>
<u>Recurrent Costs: Annual support costs (WMA)</u>		<u>Recurrent Costs: Annual Costs</u>	
	<u>£ 875</u>		<u>£1,336</u>

The above costs are not truly comparable but just an indication of what the two options' costs during the current financial year for the Board to be able to raise the 2017-18 drainage rates. The option to stay with LMDB includes the digitisation of the field data which is not included in the set up costs for the DRS because this, although needed in the future to be able to link the data to the GIS mapping system, is not essential to the ability to raise the rates, therefore not a cost that needs to be incurred during the current financial year when it has not been budgeted for.

The ongoing annual costs of DRS, based on the estimates received, would be £461 lower than the existing arrangement.

The Finance & Rating Officer stated that if the Board were to decide to install the DRS system for the Board's rating needs it is estimated that once the system is installed and correctly populated, the staffing time to maintain it would not increase.

After considering all the costs, risks and benefits involved for both options it was proposed by the Vice Chairman, seconded by Councillor Martin and resolved that option 1 be acted upon. This was agreed by all Members present and the Clerk & Engineer was asked to make the necessary arrangements with Water

Management Alliance to have the Drainage Rating System installed in time to raise the 2017-18 drainage rate demands.

Ref: A9-1.6 Office Premises – Telephones & Broadband

It was reported that on the Chairman's approval, the office telephone system has been upgraded so that better use can be made of both telephone lines. As a result of reviewing the situation, a 2-year contract has been entered with British Telecom which is expected to reduce all costs considerably, to the extent that the cost of upgrading the system will mostly be cancelled out by the savings achieved over the next 2 years.

Ref: A9-2 Maps – Training

It was reported that the Medway IDBs are arranging a training day with JBA Consulting for the new Arc GIS mapping system, which was recently purchased by the Board, and had provisionally asked if Stour staff would like to attend the course to share training costs but has subsequently realised that there are not sufficient places. The Board's officers would certainly benefit from this training and it was decided that alternative training should be arranged for the Stour staff once the DRS system is installed to facilitate the integration of data with the GIS Mapping system.

Ref: A9-3 Office Premises – Fixed Wiring Testing

It was reported that an Electrical Installation Inspection was recently carried out of the Board's premises, both the office and the flat. Although the report found no potentially dangerous matters requiring immediate action, a number of observations were made with 7 improvements recommended. Quotations have been received from 2 companies, with the cheapest being £650.00. It is not essential that this work be carried out immediately but the Board should consider this matter.

The F&GP Committee considered it wise to proceed with these improvements as it is essential for insurance purposes that there are no grey areas. These improvements will be carried out by One Call Electrical Ltd on 10 August 2016.

Ref: A7-3 Staff Training

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Board's Engineering Assistant, Mr J Dilnot, is aiming to commence a 2 year HNC Civil Engineering course in September 2016, as discussed during his appointment. The cost for the 2 years is approximately £6,000 which we originally assumed would be split equally between both years and therefore allowed £3,000 in the 2016-17 budget. However, we have been informed that the cost is approx. £4,000 for 2016-17 and £2,000 for 2017-18.

The Chairman stated that the overall costs would work out the same, added that it is important that Mr Dilnot becomes appropriately qualified and recommended that the necessary arrangements should be put in place for Mr J Dilnot start on the HNC Civil Engineering course in September 2016. All Members agreed.

Ref: A1-2

Membership of the Finance, General & Works Committee

The Chairman reported that Councillor M Conolly expressed his wish to be replaced on the F&GP Committee because due to other Council Commitments on Mondays he finds it very difficult to attend these important meetings. The Chairman stated that ideally the Committee should retain a Member from the Dover District Council. Therefore, Councillor M Ovenden was approached to join the F&GP Committee in place of Councillor M Conolly.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Dunn and resolved that Councillor M Ovenden be appointed to the F&GP Committee with immediate effect.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Hicks asked Ms McNamara if she had any knowledge about concerns regarding possible future flooding in Canterbury which would lead to a proposal for a reservoir upstream of Wye. Councillor Walker expressed his curiosity because if this is a fact he does not have any knowledge of it. Ms McNamara stated that she was not aware but she will enquire and report back.

MEETING CLOSED

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed and thanked the Members for their attendance.
