

THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held at 14:00 on Thursday 9 November 2017 at
Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 9SN

PRESENT

Mr M J G Tapp (Chairman), Mr A D Linfoot OBE (Vice Chairman), Mr G R Steed (Deputy Vice Chairman), Councillor M J Burgess, Councillor M D Conolly, Mr P S Dunn, Councillor A Hicks, Mr P N Howard, Councillor M Martin, Councillor D Smith, Councillor H Stummer-Schmertzing, Mr P Williams, Mr L Woollorton and Ms G Wyant.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Dilnot (Engineering Assistant), Mr P Dowling (Clerk & Engineer to the Board), Ms A Eastwood (Finance & Rating Officer) and Mr S Revell (Water Level Controller).

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms Carol Donaldson (Carol Donaldson Associates), Mr Alex Bateman (EA Main River Rationalisation Project Lead), Ms Debbie Thompson (EA Incident Response Team Leader – Upper & Lower Stour Area) and Mr Darren Godden (Rhino Plant Hire, IDB Contracts Manager). The Chairman also welcomed Mr Liam Woollorton to his first Board meeting as a Board Member (appointed by Canterbury City Council).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D M Botting, Mr P E Dyas, Councillor M Ovenden, Councillor P J F Sims, Mr J E F Smith and Mr M P Wilkinson.

ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

In accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Board's Rules and Standing Orders there is a requirement for the Board to elect a Chairman for the ensuing year. Cllr D Smith proposed that Mr M J G Tapp be re-elected to the post of Chairman, this proposal was seconded by Cllr A Hicks. There being no other nominations, it was resolved that Mr M J G Tapp be elected to the post of Chairman for the period ending November 2018.

ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that in accordance with the Board's Rules and Standing Orders, there is a requirement for the Board to elect a Vice Chairman for the ensuing year. The Chairman proposed Mr A D Linfoot for the post of Vice Chairman, this proposal was seconded by Mr G R Steed. There being no other nominations, it was resolved that Mr A D Linfoot be elected to the post of Vice Chairman for the period ending November 2018.

ELECTION OF A DEPUTY VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that on the internal auditor's recommendation the Board created a new post of Deputy Vice Chairman and Mr G Steed was elected mid-year and has been doing a great job. There is now a requirement for the Board to elect a Deputy Vice Chairman for the ensuing year. The Chairman proposed Mr G R Steed for the post of Deputy Vice Chairman, this proposal was seconded by Cllr M Martin. There being no other nominations, it was resolved that Mr G R Steed be elected Deputy Vice Chairman for the period ending November 2018.

ELECTION OF A FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES AND WORKS COMMITTEE FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that the Board's Rules and Standing Orders also require the Board to elect a Finance, General Purposes and Works Committee for the ensuing year. The Chairman stated that last year's committee consisted of himself, the Vice Chairman, the Deputy Vice Chairman, Mr P S Dunn, Mr P E Dyas, Councillor A Hicks, Councillor M Ovenden, Councillor D Smith, Councillor H Stummer-Schmertzing and Mr M P Wilkinson. With there being no other nominations, the Chairman proposed that the same Finance, General Purposes and Works Committee be re-elected for the year ending November 2018. The proposal was seconded by Cllr M Burgess and agreed by all present. It was therefore resolved that the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Deputy Vice Chairman, Mr P S Dunn, Mr P E Dyas, Councillor A Hicks (Ashford Borough Council), Councillor M Ovenden (Dover District Council), Councillor D O Smith (Ashford Borough Council), Councillor H Stummer-Schmertzing (Thanet District Council) and Mr M P Wilkinson be elected to form the Board's Finance, General Purposes and Works Committee for the period ending November 2018.

APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that the Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Board to appoint/re-appoint an Internal Auditor for the ensuing year. The Chairman further stated that it was agreed at the previous Board meeting that the current Board's Internal Auditor, Mr David Griffiths of D G Consultancy Ltd could continue being the Board's Internal Auditor for a further two years. It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Hicks and resolved that Mr David Griffiths be re-appointed as the Board's Internal Auditor for the period ending November 2018.

ELECTION OF AN INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW TEAM FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that the Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Board to review its Internal Audit arrangements annually. This review is carried out by the Board's Internal Audit Review Team which consists of three Board Members. The current Internal Audit Review Team consists of Mr P S Dunn, Councillor A Hicks and Mr G R Steed. It was proposed to replace Cllr Hicks on the Internal Audit Review Team due to her having been on the committee the longest (run on a 3-year rotation). The Chairman thanked Cllr Hicks for all her assistance and time on the Internal Audit Review Team and asked for another volunteer to join the team. Cllr D Smith volunteered to join as the third member of the team. It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr H Stummer-Schmertzing and resolved that Mr P S Dunn, Councillor D Smith and Mr G Steed be elected as the Board's Internal Audit Review Team for 2017-2018.

PRESENTATION BY MS CAROL DONALDSON (CAROL DONALDSON ASSOCIATES) ON THE BOARD'S BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

Ms Donaldson stated that her presentation will cover the work done on the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) over the last year. Ms Donaldson reported that she finished her first round of surveys of IDB maintained watercourses two years ago and following this she proposed a series of ongoing actions to build on the biodiversity improvements achieved. One of these actions was to continue with a small amount of survey work to monitor the effects of agreed changes and this year she re-surveyed 23km of watercourses. Updated watercourse summary sheets, which are used by Rhino Plant when carrying out maintenance works, have been agreed. Ms Donaldson stated that when re-surveying she notes if the land use has changed over the last 6 years, whether nitrate and phosphate pollution has changed and highlights possible enhancements within the channel. She reported that she has concentrated on watercourses included in the desilting programme because this provides an opportunity to do additional work such as creating pools, berms and low flow channels whilst plant is already on site. Ms Donaldson reported that she has trained two new members of staff in survey techniques to provide additional cover and support in future if needed.

Parrots Feather

Ms Donaldson reported that one of the biggest challenges is tackling the infestation of the invasive plant Parrots Feather in the Wademarsh Stream on the Chislet Marshes. She stated that she and the Board's Engineering Assistant had walked the affected area in January to assess the effectiveness of last year's management and even though a very rigorous cut was carried out in the Autumn, the plant was beginning to come back into the margins.

Ms Donaldson stated that the mechanical weed cut had removed the bulk of the plant, but it did not tackle the margins. She added that we cannot completely strip the channel of vegetation as we would effectively be displacing other species such as water vole which would be illegal. Ms Donaldson stated that she had sought advice from other organisations such as the EA and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and to their knowledge no one has tackled Parrots Feather on this scale before. Weed spraying had been suggested but this would remove all vegetation, would be very costly and it may not tackle the problem. Therefore, it was decided to continue to carry out a fuller cut followed up by hand-pulling of the plant from the margins. This manual work has been carried out by Rhino Plant staff and the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership's volunteer group. Ms Donaldson reported that this work is being completed in 500m long sections, isolated by in-channel nets, and being over 5km in total will take at least 10 years. She further reported that the first 500m section is now completely clear and she is hopeful that we will be able to eradicate this invasive weed for good.

Enhancement Work

Ms Donaldson reported that KSCP volunteers have also helped to carry out some enhancement work on watercourses, namely Sturry Road Dyke (IDB34) where debris was collected, overhanging vegetation was cut back, and wetland plants planted. She added that Port Rill (IDB111) had also benefited from enhancement work; this channel which flows through woodland had become over-widened, sluggish and silty over the years. Pioneering work was carried out to improve access and the channel was desilted by Rhino Plant. To maintain a more natural and healthy ecosystem some of the removed wood was fixed to the channel banks at a low level, and a month later the channel was already looking healthier due to higher flow velocities. Later in the year, when the channel had stabilised, the volunteer group installed small bundles of brushwood which are to trap silt on the edges. Ms Donaldson stated that this work is helping to create a cleaner and faster flowing watercourse, gravels have been exposed and fish have returned to this watercourse for the first time in years.

Ms Donaldson reported that she and the Clerk & Engineer had met with the EA to discuss Pig Stream (IDB7) and Buxford Dyke (IDB25) which both support populations of White Clawed Crayfish and are some of the last

remaining strongholds for this endangered species in Kent. It is therefore important that these watercourses are managed appropriately, and any proposals or enhancements work for their benefit. Ms Donaldson further reported that the possibility of a partnership between the IDB, the EA and the KSCP is being discussed to attract outside funding for carrying out more surveys on those channels and to look at enhancement opportunities.

Ms Donaldson reported that she has been discussing possible improvements to the Shalmsford Street Dyke (IDB31) with landowners. This channel previously contained White Clawed Crayfish but sadly they are no longer present. Currently silt is dropping out in the centre of the channel and high nitrate levels are leading to huge blooms of watercress. There are potential improvements that would move the silt, reduce nitrate levels and provide clean gravel.

Ms Donaldson reported that she has met with Natural England and Hinxhill Estates to discuss ways to improve Bourne Dyke (IDB20), in particular silt running off from neighbouring land. Ms Donaldson stated that as part of her survey work she talks with landowners throughout the year and she particularly highlights pollution problems which landowners are keen to know about so that they can address them.

Tree Management

Ms Donaldson reported that during her surveys she had noted lots of trees across the drainage district which have heritage value and can also be valuable for wildlife, particularly as bat roosts. Some of these trees are extremely old and can cause problems if they fall into and block watercourses. She further reported that she inspected the trees she had noted over the years with two different tree surgeons (who gave their time for free) to give an assessment where some remedial management might help to prolong the life of these trees. She further reported that she had attended a course by the Bat Conservation Trust and had drafted a code of practice for the IDB on the inspection of trees prior to carrying out work to ensure that the Board does not fall foul of the law.

Working with Rhino Plant Hire

Ms Donaldson reported that she has continued to work with Rhino Plant and gave another talk at the start of this year's cutting season, as a refresher to all involved in IDB maintenance activities. She stated that she is extremely pleased with the cooperation she receives from Rhino Plant and IDB staff and is particularly pleased with improvements to biosecurity; all plant and equipment is cleaned before moving to another site. She further stated that the hand weed cuts have been excellent this year and she feels everyone has learnt from working together.

Main River Rationalisation

Ms Donaldson stated that this project provides lots of opportunities to improve the management of some Main Rivers but also to assess how changes to maintenance on some IDB channels can benefit biodiversity. She reported that she has had conversations with Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) and other specialist interest groups and pooling this knowledge will be useful. Managing some IDB watercourses biannually will provide opportunities for wildlife and fauna to thrive, such as the Shining Ramshorn Snail and Tubular Water Dropwort. However, one of the channels originally identified for biannual maintenance was the Pig Stream (IDB7) but as this watercourse has White Clawed Crayfish it needs to continue to be cut annually to maintain connectivity between populations.

Ms Donaldson stated that within the next few weeks she will be assessing the channels proposed for less maintenance in the future and will try to ensure the best is achieved for wildlife as well as drainage and flood risk.

Questions

Mr Williams asked if measures have been taken to contain the further spread of Parrots Feather on the Chislet Marshes. Ms Donaldson replied the survey concluded that structures (crossings etc) are limiting the spread of the weed but nets have also been installed to catch any loose fragments while work is carried out. Fortunately we are able to work gradually downstream in this main channel and upstream spread is considered unlikely. She added that the situation will continue to be monitored.

Cllr Martin stated that she found Ms Donaldson's presentation very interesting and commended her for the work she has been doing. She asked if there was any American Crayfish in this area. Ms Donaldson replied that we are very fortunate to not have Signal Crayfish in the Stour Catchment as this would have a catastrophic effect on the native White Clawed Crayfish. Ms Donaldson added that the biosecurity measures being employed are to stop the transference of disease such as crayfish plague.

Ms Wyant stated that she is interested in the Port Rill enhancements and the effect they may have on local flood risk. Ms Donaldson stated that the work was done in a very short section by Britton Farm where there was a lot of silt and fallen trees in the channel, so the works should have lessened the flood risk.

The Chairman thanked Ms Donaldson for her presentation.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2017

The minutes of the Board held on Thursday 3 August 2017 were received. It was proposed by Cllr Stummer-Schmertzling, seconded by Ms Wyant 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

There were no matters arising from this meeting.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2017

It was proposed by the Deputy Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee held on Monday 23 October 2017 be received.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Ref: W1-39 Main River Rationalisation Project (MRR)

The Chairman invited Mr Bateman to give the Board an update on the MRR Project. Mr Bateman reported that the progress of this project is at the same place in all the pilot areas bar one, which has been delayed slightly, with the informal consultation now finished. He stated that attendance at the public drop-in sessions was varied, being quiet at times and busy at others. The average attendance had been around 20 people, but feedback had been positive.

Mr Bateman reported that there has been universal support for this project from the different pilot regions, with each IDB and local EA team having their own issues and challenges to work through. He further reported that no issues or objections have been raised by local partners or EA management teams. Mr Bateman stated that the Formal Public Consultation will commence in January and the necessary information will need to be ready and available to the public. Notices will be placed in the legal section of local newspapers covering the areas where there are watercourses proposed for de-maining, explaining the process and advertising where information can be viewed. Interested parties will be able to log-on to citizen space on the gov.uk website and will be able to comment electronically or find details of who to contact directly (i.e. Mr Bateman). There will be various ways where the public can find out more information and register their support or objection.

Mr Bateman reported that the Formal Public Consultation will not end until the middle of February when all feedback will need to be collated. Mr Bateman expressed his thanks to the IDB staff and Members for their support with the drop-in sessions and the project in general. He added that he feels that we are in a good position in the Stour, but some issues still need to be sorted out, such as the Minster siphon.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that from the Board's perspective there is a need to more fully establish details of the assets for transfer and to follow-up on the 8 'conditions' stated by the Board when the agreement in principle was made.

Cllr Conolly asked how will Parish Councils and others be made aware of the Formal Consultation. Mr Bateman replied that there will be a mail-shot to all key stakeholders advising of the start and finish dates of the Formal Consultation and all the different mechanisms by which they can seek additional information or provide comment. Mr Bateman further stated that all Local Authorities have been met with and informed of this project well in advance.

Cllr Martin asked if the EA is satisfied that the watercourses to be transferred will be appropriately managed by the IDB. Mr Bateman replied that the EA is very supportive of this project in this region because the Stour IDB is considered to be one of the leading organisations as it has a similar mind-set and ways of working to the EA.

Cllr Martin asked Mr Bateman whether the EA will wish to de-main more watercourses in the future. Mr Bateman replied that the EA could potentially de-main more stretches of Main River especially if this project is seen as successful by all parties concerned.

The Vice Chairman asked what the timescale is expected to be after the Formal Consultation. Mr Bateman stated that if it all goes according to plan, to which there are no guarantees, the EA is looking to formally hand over the watercourses in June/July 2018 with a complete review and finalisation in the following months. He further stated that if there are big issues causing a delay the former deadline will possibly move to November.

Cllr Martin asked if extreme weather was to occur would that have any effect on the deadlines. Mr Bateman replied this project is about the long-term management of these watercourses and the EA's management of flood events would not change.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bateman for his update.

Ref: W7 IDB Programme of Works

Weed Cutting/ Spoil Spreading

The Chairman commented on the access problems caused by landowners growing maize alongside watercourses and stated that it would be useful to write to landowners suggesting they consider environmental

schemes which leave strips alongside watercourses. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he plans to do so and will be discussing details with Rhino Plant staff.

Structures Maintenance

The Clerk & Engineer showed photographs of structures in need of replacement/repair: Cuckold's Stop on Cuckold's Lead Dyke (IDB91) on Preston Marshes; Netherhale Stop on Brooksend Stream (IDB115); Sheerwater Stop on Sheerwater Lead Dyke (IDB197) and Boiling Spot Stop (IDB268) which retains higher water levels in Ring Sewer to help maintain the SSSI. These structures will be inspected when water levels have been reduced.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that when complete replacement of any of these structures is needed, it would make sense to consider installing tilting weirs rather than stop-board structures, depending on cost and available budgets.

Water Level Control

The Chairman asked Ms Thompson if the installation of eel-friendly pumps is still planned to go ahead at Minster Pumping Station. Ms Thompson confirmed that this is still planned but no installation date has been given. She added that she will continue to pursue this.

Ref: W7G

Environment Agency Works

Ms Wyant asked Ms Thompson when the Little Stour is due to be weed-cut. Ms Thompson replied that this is planned for this month. Ms Wyant reported that she had received complaints from residents about the weed-growth in front of the river between Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux never being cut. Ms Thompson stated that this section is cut in close cooperation with the EA's Biodiversity Team and she is aware of concerns by some local residents.

The Vice Chairman asked Ms Thompson when Coldharbour Outfall on the Northern Sea Wall will be repaired. Ms Thompson replied that some temporary repairs had been carried out. Mr Revell added that contractors were in fact today measuring up for a new seal, but it appears that the door is also bowed. A new seal is to be fitted, on the next available tide, to improve the situation for the short-term, but a complete new door will need to be fabricated which should be fitted in the Spring. The Clerk & Engineer commented that this has been a problem for a while, with sea water leaking into the freshwater marsh on every tide. The Board's Water Level Controller and EA staff had therefore been operating the Coldharbour Penstock more frequently to limit saltwater intrusion. He further reported that the problem has been prolonged due to the EA's change of framework contractors, but this situation should soon improve.

Ms Thompson reported that the Northern Sea Wall shingle recycling project has been completed with 32,000 tonnes of shingle being moved to better protect the seawall, and the smaller saltwater lagoon has been enlarged to almost double its original size. She stated that the length of time that this shingle bank will last will depend on weather conditions, but the situation will be monitored. Ms Thompson reported that the lagoon area has been fenced-off as before to stop dog walkers and other members of the public from disturbing the birds.

Ref: W5

Planning Applications

The Chairman ran through the planning applications as listed in the F&GP Committee meeting minutes and invited comments.

Canterbury City Council

17/01322 – Discharge of condition related to drainage (Court Hill, Littlebourne)

Mrs Wyant referred to this application which includes a new medical center which is urgently needed and asked if there is any indication of a timescale for the condition to be satisfied so that works can begin. The Clerk & Engineer replied that KCC has been working on this for some time but were unable to recommend discharge, although he believes that progress is being made.

Dover District Council

16/01476 – Erection of 70 dwellings with associated infrastructure on land north of Church Lane, Sholden.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he has, after numerous requests, received an application for consent for a surface water drainage outlet from the whole of this development area into the Southwall Road Dyke (IDB301). He re-stated that developments are going ahead without the necessary SuDS being in place. Members agreed that this situation must be addressed by Council Planning Departments.

Other Applications

Cllr Conolly reported that there is an application for a Travellers' site at Westmarsh Drove, Westmarsh. He reported that caravans started to move in back in May 2017 and currently the Council is taking legal enforcement action, but the landowners have made a formal application for a change of use for the site. This application is to be decided by the Planning Inspectorate at the end of February 2018. Cllr Conolly stated that this is an area of high flood risk (Flood Zone 3) and that Dover District Council has objected as strongly as it can.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that he is aware of the enforcement action and has tried to make contact with the site owner because fencing has been erected alongside Westmarsh Drove Lead Dyke (IDB202) without the required consent. He added that the landowner's consultant has replied stating they will be prepared to move the fence back if their planning application is successful. This situation will be reviewed when the planning application has been decided.

The Chairman stated that there is a similar planning application for Moate Farm at Fordwich, but this is not in an area of such high flood risk.

Cllr Martin expressed her concern regarding the Council's limited powers, especially when powers to make decisions are given to the Planning Inspectorate – Councils then have these decisions imposed on them. Cllr Conolly agreed, stating that the settled population in the small village of Westmarsh is only around 100 and this application is for caravans taking up to 35 people which is a very significant increase.

Ref: W5/NATGRID Richborough Connection Project

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he has received three batches of consent applications so far in relation to this project which are determined in consultation with all local Members. He stated that some of the applications are to make use of existing culverts, but only limited information has been provided, and he would have expected pre- and post-construction surveys to have been provided to demonstrate that no damage is caused.

Mr Dunn asked if the Board is making sure that all the culverts used are in good repair prior to use and that they are not damaged in any way. The Clerk & Engineer replied that some of the culverts are already in a very poor state of repair. It has been agreed with the Board's Chairmen that any consents issued in relation to existing culverts will need to include a condition requiring no detriment.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that all new culverts appear to be adequate.

The Chairman stated that any claims for damage made will be a matter for landowners to take up directly with National Grid and that the Board cannot be held responsible. The Clerk & Engineer agreed with the Chairman and stated that in the case of existing crossings the Board has merely confirmed no objection, in terms of channel flows and local flood risk

Ref: W15 Applications for Consent and Enforcement Actions

The Clerk & Engineer ran through the Consent Applications in the F&GP meeting minutes and invited additional comments:

16-ST-02 Alterations to an existing culvert in South Poulders Main Stream (IDB170) at Sandwich (Retrospective)

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Mr Smith has removed the problematic culvert from South Poulders Stream as requested, without the need for direct enforcement action. The site has been inspected and the recently installed pipe extensions were found to be approx. 500mm in diameter, but the original pipe was found to be much larger (approx. 750mm high and 1300mm wide oval pipe) and not 500mm in diameter as originally stated by Mr Smith. The Clerk & Engineer stated that this highlights another problem/risk with the consenting process; the accuracy of information provided by applicants. Mr Steed suggested that this issue should be included in the forthcoming review of the consenting process.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he expects Mr Smith to re-apply for consent for a new crossing and he will need to demonstrate its suitability. He added that the upstream road culvert is approx. 1.2 m in diameter, so Mr Smith would be expected to propose something of similar size (and not the 600mm diameter pipe suggested previously).

Mr Steed asked if it is definitely known that no further works have been carried out since removal of the culvert, as he had observed plant working in the vicinity when passing. The Clerk & Engineer replied that he has informed Mr Smith that he must not carry out any further works without first obtaining the Board's written consent. Mr Godden added that he had only recently arranged for this watercourse to be weed-cut and no further works had been carried out.

LEVIES INCOME

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that all Local Authorities apart from Canterbury City Council have paid the second instalment of the Special Levies. She further stated that she is chasing CCC. Mr Woollorton added that he would also chase this payment.

FINANCE

Ref: F.1-2 Interim Audit of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2018

The Chairman reported that the Internal Auditor, Mr David Griffiths, conducted his Interim Audit of the Board's accounts and accounting documentation for the year ending 31 March 2018 on 10 October 2017 – this report is fully inserted in the F&GP minutes.

The Chairman considered Mr Griffiths' report to be very good and he thanked the Board's staff for their good work. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Hicks and resolved that the Interim Internal Audit Report of the 2017/2018 Accounts and Accounting Records be received and approved.

Ref: F.1-5 Conclusion of Audit – Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017

The Chairman reported that the Board's external auditors (PKF Littlejohn LLP) completed their review of the Board's Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017. The external auditor's certificate and report is given at Section 3 on page 4 of the Annual Return which details any matters arising from the review. The external auditors have approved the Annual Return with no recommendations or actions required. The completed Annual Return has been published on the Board's website and on the Board's Notice Board outside its office.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Burgess and resolved that the Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2017 be received and approved.

Ref: F.5-4 Watercourse Maintenance Contract Review

The Chairman reported that the Board's Watercourse Maintenance Contract with Rhino Plant Hire started on 1 April 2015 and is scheduled to end on 31 March 2019. The contract can be extended by up to 3 years by joint agreement (until 31 March 2022). Should the current Contract not be extended, the formal Tender process should be started early in 2018.

The Chairman reported that a Watercourse Maintenance Contracts Review Sub-Committee needs to be formed and asked for volunteers. He reminded Members that this Sub-Committee had previously been delegated the authority to make final contractual decisions on behalf of the Board.

It was proposed by Cllr Hicks, seconded by Mr Williams and resolved that the Watercourse Maintenance Contract Review Sub-Committee will consist of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Deputy Vice Chairman, Mr P Dunn, Cllr D Smith and Mr M Wilkinson, and that this Sub-Committee has the delegated authority of the Board to make final decisions.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that he will contact Sub-Committee Members to arrange a first meeting in December.

ADMINISTRATION

Ref: A.1-1 Dates for 2018 Meetings

The following dates were set for the 2018 meetings of the Finance Committee and the Board.

| <u>Finance Meetings</u> | <u>Venue</u> | <u>Board Meetings</u> | <u>Venue</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Monday 15 January 2018 | Board's Office | Thursday 1 February 2018 | Dover District Council |
| Monday 30 April 2018 | Board's Office | Thursday 17 May 2018 | Swan Centre, Willesborough |
| Monday 16 July 2018 | Board's Office | Thursday 2 August 2018 | Ashford Borough Council |
| Monday 22 October 2018 | Board's Office | Thursday 8 November 2018 | Canterbury City Council |

Ref: A3-6 Health & Safety Policy Review

The Chairman reported that the Board's Health & Safety Policy has been reviewed and re-written by Invicta Safety, a local independent Safety Consultant. The Chairman reported that a Health & Safety Policy Review Sub-Committee needs to be formed to consider the new set of policy documentation and asked for volunteers.

It was proposed by Mr Dunn, seconded by Cllr Martin and resolved that the Health & Safety Sub-Committee will consist of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Deputy Vice Chairman, Cllr M Burgess and Cllr A Hicks.

It was further agreed that following the Health & Safety Policy Review, this Sub-Committee will go on to review the Board's Consents procedure.

Ref: R1 DRS - Rating Programme

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he has had an update from the Middle Level Commissions, based in Cambridgeshire, who are collating all available IDB GIS data on behalf of ADA. They have reported that they are making progress and should be able to get the IDB's drainage district digitised accurately by the end of the year.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tranche 1 Transfer Date and PSCA Works

The Chairman reported that it was discussed at the last meeting that to aid with estimates and programme planning it would be helpful to know the exact date of when the sections of Main Rivers in Tranche 1 are to be transferred to the IDB. He further added that if the transfer date was the beginning of a financial year i.e. 1 April 2019, this would make planning easier. The Vice Chairman stated that it is crucial to know in good time the date at which the transfer is to go ahead.

The Clerk & Engineer agreed that the transfer date is important for financial planning, but also to plan and organise the works programme. Rhino Plant needs to programme the works and the Board needs to serve formal notice on landowners. He added that if there are any further delays to the project programme, it would be sensible to delay until the new financial year as suggested.

The Chairman further stated that the Board also needs to seek clarification from the EA regarding PSCA works. The Clerk & Engineer reported that he has discussed this briefly with Mr I Nunn, EA Operations Manager, and he was of the view that the EA will probably have additional work to replace any 'losses' resulting from the Rationalisation Project. Ms Thompson stated that she will make enquiries with Mr Nunn to ascertain which work would be best kept in-house and which work would be better passed on to the IDB under the PSCA.

Debt Collection

The Clerk & Engineer reported that a new Court Pre-Action Protocol for Debt Claims came into force on 1 October 2017 and will have implications when taking drainage rate non-payers to court. ADA is to provide guidance on this new protocol.

BAP Sub-Committee

The Chairman stated that a Sub-Committee needs to be re-formed to discuss actions under the Board's Biodiversity Action Plan and he asked for volunteers.

It was proposed by Cllr Conolly, seconded by Cllr Stummer-Schmertzling and resolved that the Biodiversity Sub-Committee will consist of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Deputy Vice Chairman, Mr P Williams and Mr M Wilkinson.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that this Sub-Committee may need to meet over the coming months to consider some of the proposed enhancements that Ms Donaldson is working on.

MEETING CLOSED

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked Canterbury City Council for allowing the Board to use the meeting room, he also thanked all the Members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.