

## THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held at 14:00 on Thursday 17 May 2018 at  
The Swan Centre, Cudworth Road, Ashford, Kent TN24 0BE

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### PRESENT

Mr M J G Tapp (Chairman), Mr A D Linfoot OBE (Vice Chairman), Mr G R Steed (Deputy Vice Chairman), Mr D M Botting, Mr P S Dunn, Mr P E Dyas, Mr P N Howard, Councillor M Martin, Cllr P J F Sims, Cllr D Smith, Cllr H Stummer-Schmertzing, Mr M P Wilkinson, Mr P Williams and Mr L Wooltorton.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P Dowling (Clerk & Engineer to the Board) and Ms A Eastwood (Finance & Rating Officer).

### WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr & Mrs Hunter from the Butterfly Conservation. The Chairman also welcomed Ms D Thompson (EA Incident Response Team Manager).

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M J Burgess, Cllr M D Conolly, Cllr A Hicks, Cllr M Ovenden, Mr J E F Smith and Mrs G Wyant. Apologies were also received from Mr I Nunn (FCRM Operations Manager for KSL, EA) and Mr J Dilnot (Engineering Assistant). The Chairman enquired about Mr Smith's health, the Clerk & Engineer replied that he is improving and stated that he had passed on the Board's best wishes.

### PRESENTATION BY MR I HUNTER – BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Mr Hunter introduced himself and explained that he volunteers at Sandwich Bird Observatory and at the Butterfly Conservation which is a National Charity and keep records on moths as well as butterflies. Mr Hunter informed the Board that he is the Butterfly and Moth Recorder for Kent and as the interest in moths is increasing he receives thousands of records per year which he logs onto the National database.

The Butterfly Conservation is constantly searching for new ways of funding and has recently setup a Project called Kent's Magnificent Moths. The county has been divided into different areas and one or two species of moths significant to each area has been chosen to focus on – there are 2,500+ moth species in the UK.

The Butterfly Conservation owns some land and they liaise with landowners to manage other land principally for butterflies and moths which entails getting lots of factors right such as local plants and surrounding conditions and for conservation to work there needs to be a broad view of the immediate surroundings. Mr Hunter carried out a slide show on the moths known to be present in Kent which includes some rare moths such as the Black-Veined Moth and the Fisher's Estuarine Moth. The latter is protected by the European Habitats Directive and it is only found along the Kent and Essex coast in the UK and also very rare in Europe. The moth mainly feeds on hog's fennel which is also rare.

Section 41 Moth Species are species which are considered under the Natural Environment Research Council Act of 2006 (NERC) to be of significance to biodiversity – these species are heavily present in the South East with the highest concentration in the UK being at Sandwich Bay. A bid to the Lottery Heritage Fund was recently made concentrating on these landscapes and selected moths such as the Bright Wave found at Royal St George's Golf Club, Fisher's Estuarine found on the coast, the White Spotted Sable found inland, the Sussex Emerald and the Marsh Mallow in the Dungeness and Romney Marsh area, the Rest Harrow at Stodmarsh to name just a few. The Lower Stour wetlands have the Fiery Clearwing which mimics a wasp and feeds on curled dock-weed, and in the UK, it is only found at Samphire Hoe near Dover and Betteshanger Country Park near Deal, therefore extremely rare and the Butterfly Conservation is trying to create conditions so that it can spread.

Flooding can be a problem in coastal habitats but with the different ideas about coastal management it may encourage the spread of some of these moths. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme has been very successful in Essex creating more habitat and planting hog's fennel helping the Fisher's Estuarine spread inland. Once the Kent's Magnificent Moths' Project receives more funding there will be engagement opportunities which will provide public awareness and hopefully raise interest from different sectors such as farming. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme covers potential ways of raising funding for managing moths and their habitats and the Butterfly Conservation is happy to advise.

Ms Thompson stated that she was really pleased to meet Mr Hunter and she would like some advice and information on butterflies, on how to manage the grass cutting of the Sandwich Tidal Defences Scheme. She stated that the first cut has been done but the EA would like some guidance for the future. Mr Hunter agreed to pass on his contact details so that something can be arranged. Ms Thompson reported that the EA has implemented a mowing regime at Faversham Creek and found hog's fennel in abundance.

Cllr Martin commented that flooding may lead to the loss of some species but at the same time encourage new species. Mr Hunter agreed that warmer climate is bringing changes, for instance the Red Admiral was not seen in the UK during the Winter but now they are present. He added that salt from coastal flooding will kill off the Hog's Fennel, so the Butterfly Conservation is seeking to plant more inland to compensate for any immediate coastal loss.

Cllr Martin asked about the difficulties in raising funding. Mr Hunter replied that it is extremely difficult especially in times when there are so many cut-backs, and Charities are always looking for new sources. Mr Williams stated that Countryside Stewardship Scheme is Natural England's main funding where they work with landowners to set up agreements to manage land in a particular way.

Mr Botting stated that he feels that often when projects concentrate on a particular species, they will be detrimental to other species. He believes Natural England's management plan for the bittern at Stodmarsh has reduced the quantity of birds present. Mr Hunter disagreed and although he did not have figures to hand, a greater variety of birds has been recorded at Stodmarsh as the conditions provided suit other birds such as reed warblers. Mr Botting replied that this had not been his experience.

Mr Howard agreed that creating conditions for moths might cause conflict with other wildlife projects. Mr Hunter replied that the most successful projects manage areas for what is best naturally, and a plan must be in place which takes all other interests into consideration.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hunter for his presentation and Mrs Hunter for her assistance. He further stated that these views will be passed onto the Board's biodiversity advisors and if there are any actions that the Board can reasonably take to aid this project, it will.

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2018

The minutes of the Board held on Thursday 1 February 2018 were received. It was proposed by Mr Dyas, seconded by Cllr Martin 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 these minutes.

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 30 APRIL 2018

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee held on Monday 30 May 2018 be received.

### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

The Chairman reported that the MRR meeting on 10 May with Catherine Wright (EA FCRM Director), Innes Thompson (ADA Chief Executive) and local EA and IDB representatives went well and there was positive feedback from all. The Clerk & Engineer reported that it was reassuring to see that this project is still supported at high level by the EA and Defra. He further reported that the EA Director of Flood Risk Management can now decide on the transfers rather than needing Ministerial approval and this should make the process simpler and faster from now on. The current plan is to get the formal documents agreed this Summer with a view to transferring the watercourses in April 2019.

Mr Dyas asked if there was any further news on the Minster Siphon because in its current condition it is causing it to be very high water levels. The Clerk & Engineer replied that the EA has agreed to fully repair this structure prior to transfer.

#### Ref: W4/Review    Review of Water Abstraction Licensing System

The Clerk & Engineer reported that efforts are continuing, to find a sensible solution to this new licensing system. He reported that whilst it had been suggested at the F&GP meeting that the Board write to the Minister in support of ADA's position on this, he had spoken with ADA's Chief Executive who had reported that some progress was being made with Defra and the EA so asked the Board to hold fire on the letter of support, appreciated though it is.

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

##### De-silting

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the desilting to be delivered in 2018-19 on Main River is unlikely to be as much as 10km. Ms Thompson stated that the programme has been cut due to the funding cut. The Clerk &

Engineer stated that he is still hoping to include the northern arm of the Minster Stream, but this would have to be funded using the Precept.

Mr Dyas stated that it has often been agreed in the past that maintenance has been lacking and now it is reporting that it will suffer further cuts. All Members agreed that regular maintenance of the drainage network is essential.

### Water Level Control

The Chairman asked Ms Thompson for an update on the Sarre Tilting Weir. Ms Thompson reported that works started on 10 May and have progressed well, the new hydraulic system was commissioned successfully, was tested and inspected on 16 May and additional repairs were also carried out. Mr Wilkinson stated that he is relieved that these works have been completed.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he spoke with the RSPB about the reported leak on the North Stream at Hacklinge, but they have confirmed that they have inspected the site and found there to be no leak at that point, so it could have been just the intensity of the rain which caused the recent flooding problem.

### Ref: A4-3      Biodiversity

The Chairman reported that unfortunately Carol Donaldson has decided to move on to new challenges but would be prepared to quote for one-off projects in future if required. He further reported that contact has been made with the KSCP with a view to possibly engaging them to advise the Board on biodiversity issues again in the future. The Clerk & Engineer reported that he has met with the KSCP and they are keen to advise the Board and agree that some of the projects that they are already working on would fit in well with the Board's BAP. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he is waiting for a confirmation of their availability and costs and he will then advise the BAP Sub-Committee.

It was reported that the KSCP is continuing to monitor the mink situation by working with landowners, and the Board has offered to assist with monitoring if required. The Deputy Vice Chairman stated that the presence of otters, which has been reported recently, will reduce the number of mink.

Cllr Smith reported that no further pollution problem on Waterbrook Dyke (IDB27) has been reported and as investigations by Southern Water and Ashford Borough Council did not find a problem it is assumed that it was a one-off situation.

### Ref: W7G      Environment Agency Works

Ms D Thompson provided a few updates on EA activities:

- The main maintenance programme will start in July as usual, but the Sandwich scheme has had its first cut
- Brewery Sluice will be refurbished in the Winter
- Repairs to the leak at Caytor Bridge will no longer take place as no funding is available
- The Northern Sea Wall is being monitored for shingle movement and work will be carried out as needed. The Chairman stated that the Board is concerned about the repeated blockages caused by shingle movements. Ms Thompson reported that there is an outfall extension plan of 15 metres which is hoped to go ahead this year. The Chairman questioned if this would just move the problem 15 metres further out. Mr Woollorton reported that he is working on this extension and believes that it will provide

a significant improvement, although a small amount of shingle recycling will still be needed. He further reported that a similar outfall extension was carried out at Greatstone and it has been very successful.

Mr Wooltorton went on to report that to create this extension a permit will be required from the Marine Management Organisation. However, Crown Estates as owner of the foreshore has requested a fee of £100,000, which is considered completely unjustified. Mr Wilkinson stated that this work is essential for the ongoing drainage of the Chislet Marshes. Ms Thompson assured Members that we can be highly confident that the work will take place once the financial arrangements are sorted out.

In relation to the efforts to improve flows in the Delf, Mr Dyas commented that the railway culvert is the main problem, something that the Town Council is seeking to address with the help of Network Rail.

Mr Wooltorton reported that two large willow trees were cut down recently immediately downstream of Willow Close and were left in the river. He asked Ms Thompson if the EA had found out who may have done this and why. Ms Thompson replied that unfortunately this could not be established, and it can only be assumed that it was malicious act.

#### Ref: W5      PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Chairman invited comments on the Planning Applications listed on the F&GP Committee meeting minutes.

Mr Dyas stated that he is horrified by the amount of development that is going ahead before permission is given. The Chairman stated that the Board has been working on this problem particularly with Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council. Cllr Martin shared Mr Dyas's concerns on this especially in rural areas where the infrastructure is lacking and stated that all organisations need to work together to take a firm line to improve the situation.

The Clerk & Engineer reiterated one common problem with planning applications – that of discharges to sewer. If water companies confirm local capacity in their networks, planning authorities are obliged to approve, despite the fact that in most instances the sewers eventually discharge into the river system. The Chairman stated that this is something the Board must continue to point out.

#### Ashford Borough Council

**17/01349** – Phase 1 (Brisley Farm Extension) and strategic SuDS of major development at Chilmington Green, Ashford.

This application (related to outline permission 12/00400) has been **approved** with conditions requiring the separate approval of the strategic SuDS. The Clerk & Engineer reported that this is a case where works have been carried out without the appropriate permissions, Ashford Borough Council called a meeting with the developers, the Board, KCC Officers and some of the residents to try and get all the correct permissions in place.

Mr Dyas reiterated the fact although KCC and District Councils are diligently imposing SuDS conditions/limits there is no independent post-implementation checks, and this should be mandatory. The Clerk & Engineer agreed that this is an ongoing concern which is raised at every opportunity.

The Chairman asked if there is any way that planning authorities can insist that developers employ KCC to conduct checks on implementation and ongoing maintenance, as previously discussed. Cllr Smith replied that

Local Authorities used to carry out these checks but after 1992 building control services had to be offered to approved parties. Most developers now carry out/pay for this, but it is not an independent assessment as it ought to be.

The Vice Chairman agreed with everything said but stated that it is very difficult for Local Authorities as they have had extreme budget cuts resulting in intolerable choices with Planning & Building Control. Cllr Stummer-Schmertzing stated that Thanet District Council's Planning Department has turned down several plans for valid reasons only to be overturned by the Planning Inspectorate under appeal. He further asked if the Board can apply for a Section 106 funding in cases where an enhancement would be beneficial. The Clerk & Engineer replied that IDBs can for things like SuDS but that involves taking on the legal responsibility for future maintenance, as a duty rather than a permissive power.

### Canterbury City Council

**17/02633** – Residential development at Chartham Paper Mill, Station Road, Chartham.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he spoke with KCC about this and they are of the same view that the discharge should be attenuated.

### Ref: W15      Applications for Consent and Enforcement Actions

The Chairman referred to the Applications for Consent listed in the F&GP Committee meeting minutes and invited comments.

#### Ref: 17-ST-15

Location: Southwall Road Dyke, Deal.

Proposed: Construction of a drainage outlet.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that there is still a lot of concern by local residents and stated that Cllr Ovenden had forwarded an email from Cllr Bond, raising concern about flood risk from the Southwall Road Dyke and questioning if it was wise for the Board to approve the “additional discharge into it”. He reminded Members that this site was previously discharging into this watercourse via Southern Water's system which could not cope and caused repeated flooding. The site, including the Brownfield part, was reportedly discharging up to 300 l/s whereas now it discharges at a rate of 2.5 l/s – a considerable reduction. The Clerk & Engineer reported that there has not been any flooding here since the Board took over the watercourse, and asked Members to stress this if questioned by local residents.

### W15/Enf      Unconsented Works

The Clerk & Engineer stated that he will be writing to the landowners with unconsented works, as listed in the F&GP Meeting minutes, requesting them to carry out improvement works and informing them that the Board will remove any unconsented works and will seek to recover costs of doing so.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he sought advice from ADA about the enforceability of removing a structure which has been in place for over 30 years, but he has not yet received a reply. He further added that the Board may need to seek legal advice prior to taking final enforcement action.

FINANCE

Ref: F1-2      Final Internal Audit Inspection of the 2017-2018 Accounts and Accounting Records

The Chairman reported that the Board's Internal Auditor, Mr David Griffiths carried out his inspection of the Board's 2017-2018 accounts and accounting records on 3 May 2018. A copy of the report follows:

THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD  
FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017-18

*I am pleased to report to Members of the Board that I have completed my final internal audit of the Board's records for 2017-2018. I also met with the Members of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Review Team later in the day to discuss my findings from both my interim and this final audit.*

*My work is primarily an independent check on the financial systems and internal controls that are in place. Members should be aware that my work cannot be relied on to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor to disclose breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud which may have taken place, which is the responsibility of Members of the Board to protect against.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Clerk and Engineer to the Board and also the Finance and Rating Officer for the assistance provided to me in order to conduct the audit which took place on 3rd May 2018.*

*Members will be pleased to note that I have not found anything of concern whilst undertaking the financial audit. All of the records I inspected were again found to be of a very good standard. I have noted the Board's approach and review of financial and non-financial risks to be sound. As a result of my Interim and Final Audit and discussions with staff, I have been able to answer 'YES' to all the relevant questions contained in the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2018.*

**FINDINGS THIS VISIT**

*I inspected the cashbook, bank reconciliations, VAT returns, payroll, petty cash records, debtors, creditors and contract payments. My findings are listed below:*

Cashbook

*Good use continues to be made of spreadsheets to record all cashbook entries resulting in the cashbook being accurate and balanced with the correct posting of transactions.*

Bank Reconciliations and Bank Statements

*No unexplained entries were identified in the sample of bank reconciliations tested and bank statements reviewed. All entries on the bank statement were accurately reflected in the cashbook.*

VAT Returns

*All VAT returns tested were found to be accurate and completed and submitted on time to HMRC with the correct repayments being received from HMRC. Amounts due from HMRC as at 31 March were correctly reported in the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018.*

Invoices from suppliers

*All invoices reviewed from suppliers of goods, works and services were found to have been authorised correctly and paid at the correct amounts.*

### Payroll

Payroll was found to have been correctly calculated. All amounts due to HMRC in respect of PAYE, and Kent County Council in respect of pension contributions were found to have been paid across at the correct values and on time.

### Petty Cash

Accurate records are being kept to support all petty cash payments made. Cash recorded as being 'in hand' was correctly recorded. Postage records were accurate, and stamps are being stored securely.

### Rate Debtors

The amount of drainage rate arrears were found to be extremely low, and stood at £189.06 as at year end. This is lower than that in previous years and I therefore remain satisfied that suitable measures continue to be taken to manage arrears on an ongoing basis

### Income

Income in respect of Precepts and Rates and Levies was found to have been correctly calculated and reported in both the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018, and also the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18.

### Expenditure

Expenditure for the year was found to have been correctly calculated and reported for the year ending 31 March 2018 in both the Annual Accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18.

### Creditors

Creditors amounts reported at year end of £29,227.58 were found to be accurate.

### Contract Payments

I inspected a sample of payments made to the contractor. All payments tested were found to have been correctly authorised.

### Valuation of Tangible Assets

I note that the valuation of the Office Premises (34/34A Gordon Road) remains current and has been correctly reported in the end of year accounts.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT:**

#### Preparation for GDPR

I have discussed with staff the measures being taken in preparation for the introduction of new GDPR Regulations on 25 May 2018. I am satisfied that the work planned in the coming weeks will ensure that the Board will be prepared for the GDPR implementation. I will review GDPR again during my interim inspection for 2018/19.

#### Environment Agency Rationalisation Project

I have discussed the Environment Agency Rationalisation Project with the Clerk and Engineer to the Board and remain satisfied that the Board is kept updated on the project, and consequently continues to take suitable action to reduce its exposure to any risks arising from the project.

#### Investments

The Board continues to invest its excess cash reserves in a single different banking institution to its main bank accounts to reduce exposure to the collapse of a single bank. I'm aware that since raising this in my interim audit report, the Finance and Ratings Officer has undertaken some work to identify another banking institution and is awaiting further guidance from the Board in order to proceed with further spreading financial risk. The Board should make a decision as to if it wishes to place its cash reserves into an additional banking institution or not.

#### End of Year Accounts

My review of the final accounts for 2017-18 confirms that the entries recorded in the accounts are complete and accurate.





*David Griffiths  
Independent Internal Auditor*

*4<sup>th</sup> May 2018*

Mr Griffiths' report was discussed by the Members and the Chairman asked if there were any queries or comments. The Chairman stated that a decision will be made at the next set of meetings about Investments. All Members considered the report to be very satisfactory and there were no further comments.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Cllr M Martin and resolved that the Final Internal Audit Report of the 2017-2018 Accounts and Accounting Records be received and approved.

Ref: F.1-2      Review of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements

It was reported that the Board's Internal Audit Team, consisting of Mr Dunn, Cllr Smith and the Deputy Vice Chairman, met with the Board's Internal Auditor and carried out their inspection of the Board's accounts and accounting records for 2017-2018 on 3 May 2018. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Internal Audit Team and to Mr Griffiths for his assistance and advice. A copy of the report follows:

***RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD***

*Internal Audit Review Team's Report on the Board's 2017-2018 Accounts and Accounting Records - May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018*

*Present: Mr. G. R. Steed, Mr. P S. Dunn and Cllr. D. O. Smith*

*In Attendance: Mr. D. Griffiths (Auditor)*

*Mr. Griffiths presented his report on his audit visit, the results of which he considered very good. He went on to discuss in detail a number of issues.*

***RIVER RATIONALISATION***

*DG considered this to be the major issue that the Board had dealt with in the past year and he was satisfied with the work undertaken to date and with the extent of the consultation that had taken place.*

***FINANCIAL RECORDS***

*DG was satisfied with the accuracy of all paperwork. The Board Members considered the Board had been kept fully apprised on the financial issues and commented on the excellent spread sheets being presented to the F & GP Committee and the full Board.*

***GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)***

*DG referred to the forthcoming GDPR and considered work needed to be undertaken to become fully aware of the requirements of this issue which comes into force on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018.*

*A policy needed to be set which he suggested could be undertaken in conjunction with the three adjoining Boards which he also audited.*

*Data needed to be kept only for the purpose set; i.e. ratepayer details could only be used for that statutory purpose.*

*Staff details should be reviewed but this is a minimal risk area as there were only five members of staff. Data kept on external sources such as smart phones needed reviewing. Data stored in the external garage should be kept fully secure. DR recommended that documentation should be kept on what checks had been done and these checks should be reviewed at appropriate intervals.*

#### *PROCEDURE NOTES AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR STAFF*

*DG recommended that these should be established to cover the event of a staff member leaving or going sick; e.g. location of keys and computer access passwords. Once established these should be reviewed at appropriate intervals.*

#### *FINANCIAL BALANCES*

*DG reported that the Board currently had £370K on deposit with NatWest (current / instant access) and £76K with Nationwide (12 month account) DG recommended spreading the funds with other financial institutions as the current maximum level of compensation if a bank should fail was £85K. Money ring fenced for specific works should be reviewed periodically.*

#### *INSURANCE*

*This was satisfactory.*

#### *FLAT UPKEEP*

*The Board need to review the energy saving regulations for rental property to see whether refurbishment was necessary.*

#### *VAT / PAYE / Staff Pensions*

*All these were satisfactory.*

#### *PENSION FUND SHORTFALL*

*DG expressed concern at this and suggested it be reviewed. Cllr. Smith would talk to his authority's accountants about this issue and its implications.*

#### *ASSET*

*The major asset was the building which was valued at £275K. DG recognised that the board was considering the long term future of the building but considered that the current maintenance plan was appropriate.*

#### *EXTENTION OF MAINTENANCE CONTRACT*

*DG was satisfied with the manner in which the contract with Rhino had been reviewed and extended.*

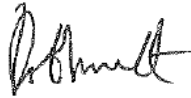
#### *SUCESSION PLANNING / CONTINGENCY PLANNING*

*DG raised succession and contingency planning as an on-going area of concern. He recognised that the board had been pro-active in introducing the post of Deputy Vice-Chair but stated that work needed to be on-going. He also raised contingency planning suggesting that desk instructions for the completion of day to day tasks in the event of long term leave /absence would aid the board in managing routine tasks if such an eventuality should occur.*

Mr P S Dunn



Cllr D Smith



Mr G Steed



The Chairman asked the Members of the Internal Audit Team if they had any comments to add to their report. The Deputy Vice Chairman referred back to last year's report where Members' attendance was flagged for improvement and it has over the last year improved. He added that staff cover was highlighted as a concern as with such a small organisation it is difficult to maintain sufficient cover in the event of unexpected long-term absence. The Clerk & Engineer replied that guides for key tasks will need be developed to help reduce the risks.

Cllr Smith reported that one of the points the Auditor mentioned was the Pension Fund's deficit which currently stands at £415,000. In the early 2000s there was a valuation of the Kent Scheme which found that there were huge profits, leading to the Local Authorities not contributing for a couple of years. After this, investments have not done so well, and this has created a shortfall to be repaid over 20 years which is assumed to be reasonable.

The Vice Chairman stated that this is common amongst all pension funds, due to factors such as people generally living longer, the radical change in taxation regime both for funds and individuals and interest rates in particular. And there is little that can be done about it apart from continue to pay the pension contributions at quite historical high rates until the deficit is cleared. The Vice Chairman stated that the Local Government scheme is not a national one except for the regulations and calculations are made for each employer and they average out higher for larger employers.

The Chairman referred to the paragraph on GDPR where it is suggested that a policy be set up between the 4 Kent IDBs. The Clerk & Engineer stated that a meeting had taken place with the other IDBs to discuss a consistent approach. He added that ADA had indicated that it would provide some guidance on this to all IDBs but unfortunately this has not been received. He and the Finance and Rating Officer, along with the other IDBs, are therefore developing a policy to ensure compliance until further guidance is received from ADA. The internal auditor produced a list of requirements that he wants to see being met by his next visit.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Finance & Rating Officer will be the Board's Data Protection Officer and further reported that Members will be directly consulted on the policy. The Chairman suggested that the whole F&GP Committee be included in this with a view to the documents being formally approved at the next round of meetings.

The Chairman stated that it was also mentioned about the security of documents kept in the garage (moved from the basement due to damp). Cllr Smith stated that was raised as a concern, but it was ascertained that the garage is secure and monthly checks of the locks should be carried out and recorded. The Deputy Vice Chairman added that we also need to ensure that mobile phones and laptops are secure.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Stummer-Schmertzling and resolved that the Internal Audit Team's Report dated 3 May 2018 be received and approved.

The Chairman reported that the Board's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 have been completed and balanced with a Net Operating Surplus of £15,030.60

This surplus resulted from a combination of items: an underspend on the Maintenance Works and across the other expenses, the extra PSCA Works carried out resulted in extra income and there was also an increase in the Consents income due to the Richborough Connection Project.

The Chairman ran through the accounts and enquired if any Members needed any further explanation on any matters within them. With there being no points raised, it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Sims and resolved that the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 be received and approved.

Ref: F1-5 (b)            Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017-18 (AGAR)

The Chairman reported that the AGAR 2017-18 has been completed by the Finance & Rating Officer, the Internal Auditor has signed the Annual Internal Audit Report and the External Auditor requires the Board to approve the Annual Return Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) before Section 2 (Accounting Statements) and as separate Agenda items in the correct order.

Ref: F1-5 (c)            Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017-2018 (AGAR)  
– SECTION 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2017-18)

The Chairman reported that Section 1 of the AGAR requires the Board to carry out a review of effectiveness of the system of internal control. This requirement has been accomplished by the Final Internal Audit carried out by Mr D Griffiths which enabled him to complete page 6 of the AGAR (Annual Internal Audit Report 2017-18) and the review of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements by the Deputy Vice Chairman, Mr Dunn and Cllr Smith, both carried out on 3 May 2018.

The Board considered the findings of this review based on both reports (Final Internal Audit Report and Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements Report) and followed on to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2017-18 by resolution.

It was proposed by Mr Howard, seconded by Mr Wooltorton and resolved that Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) for the year ended 31 March 2018 be received and approved. The Chairman (Mr Tapp) and the Clerk & Engineer (Mr Dowling) signed and dated Section 1- Annual Governance Statement 2017-18 of the AGAR.

Ref: F1-5 (d)            Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017-18 (AGAR)  
– SECTION 2 (Accounting Statements 2017-18)

The Chairman reported that Section 2 of the AGAR is the Accounting Statements 2017-18 which have been prepared, signed and dated by the Finance & Rating Officer – Responsible Financial Officer (Ms Eastwood). The Board considered the Accounting Statements and followed on to approve the Accounting Statements 2017-18 by resolution.

It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Mr Botting and resolved that Section 2 (Accounting Statements) for the year ended 31 March 2018 be received and approved. The Chairman proceeded to sign and date Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017-18 of the AGAR.

Ref: F1-5 (e)            Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Return  
Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2018

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records to be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the Board and including the first 10 working days of July.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice Chairman and resolved that the dates for the period of exercise of public rights be set as follows:

- Commencing on Monday 4 June 2018
- And ending on Friday 13 July 2018

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that the above dates will be announced on 1 June 2018 by publishing them, with all the relevant documents, on the Board's website and on the Board's Outdoor Notice Board.

Ref: F1-6            Financial Risk Assessment

The Chairman presented the Board's Financial Risk Assessment (revised) and invited the Members to query any points.

There being no further points raised it was proposed by the Vice Chairman, seconded by Mr Dyas and resolved that the Financial Risk Assessment dated 17 May 2018 be received and approved.

Ref: F.5-4            Watercourse Maintenance Contract Review

The Chairman reported that following lengthy discussions and analysis of Rhino Plant Hire's proposal the Contracts' Sub-Committee had, with the delegated authority of the Board, extended the Watercourse Maintenance Contract with Rhino Plant Hire by 3 years, from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

Mr Dyas stated that he had been surprised by the level of cost increase. The Chairman agreed that the Committee had initially also been surprised but when considering that the contract has been in place for 4 years and has been extended for another 3 years, the overall increase was not considered to be excessive. The Deputy Vice Chairman added that the Committee had also considered the original tender situation when coming to its decision and is satisfied that the extension provides value for money.

## ADMINISTRATION

Ref: A3-2            Election of Members

The Chairman reported that the Board is required to hold an election of its Members (Members representing Agricultural Ratepayers) this year and it is necessary for the Board to fix the date of the election and to instruct the Clerk of the Board to prepare the Register of Electors. The F & GP Committee recommended that:

- a) Thursday 25 October 2018, or an alternate chosen date, be fixed as the date of the election, and
- b) The Clerk & Engineer of the Board, as Returning Officer, be instructed to prepare the Register of Electors.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved that Thursday 25 October 2018 be fixed as the date of the Election of Members and instructed the Clerk & Engineer of the Board to prepare the Register of Electors.

Ref: A9.1-2 Office Premises – 34 & 34A Gordon Road

The Chairman asked the Clerk & Engineer for an update of planned works. The Clerk & Engineer replied that some minor works have been completed (gas, electrical and plumbing; mainly in the interest of safety) and he had planned further works to improve the external structure of the building. However, a potential structural problem had been identified during the Condition Assessment which required further investigation. He reported that a Structural Inspection has been carried out by Grimsey Gee Partnership Ltd which details a number of structural issues requiring attention. This includes roof-spread, missing roof props and insufficient chimney support. The required works, from the structural inspection and the condition assessment, are to be collated to enable quotes to be obtained.

The Clerk & Engineer further stated that we also must look at the Energy Efficiency Standards for rented properties as highlighted by the Deputy Vice Chairman.

Ref: 1-20.1 Water Environment Grant and Funding Workshop

The Chairman reported that the Board has been asked to support the RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust and Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership in an application for a this recently announced grant. A Memorandum of Understanding has been produced which the Clerk & Engineer signed, in consultation with the Board's Chairmen, supporting the application.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ref: F3-1.8 Policy Statement on Flood Protection & Water Level Management

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the recently received Policy template was supplied by ADA and agreed with Defra. ADA has since stated that this template is the result of numerous discussions so only minor changes are expected, if there is anything that does not apply to the district or anything missing.

Following discussion, it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Wilkinson and resolved that the revised Policy Statement on Flood & Water Level Management be approved and adopted by the Board.

Ref: F6-1 Environment Agency Precept

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he received a draft report from the EA on the Precept which confirms the Board's Precept allocations for 2017-18 with some broad proposals for 2018-19. More details are awaited. The Chairman stated that this item can be reported at the next meeting when more detailed information is available.

MEETING CLOSED

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Cllr Smith for arranging for the meeting to be held at the Swan Centre, then declared the meeting closed and thanked everyone for their attendance.