

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the East Harling Internal Drainage Board held on the 9th February, 2017 at The Pines, 50 Connaught Road, Attleborough, Norfolk at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Mr D Stammers (Chairman)
Mr C D Wright (CEO and Clerk)
Mr A Bingham (Board Engineer)
Mr T Jolly
Mr P Hall
Mr G Ellis (Attleborough Town Council)
Mr P Lee
Mr H Beevor
Mr A Thornton
Mr I Walker
Mr T Charles (Strutt & Parker)

The Chairman welcomed Mr P Hall to the meeting it being his first as a member and wished to have thanks recorded to Peter Drake for all his years of service on the Board.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Mr A Southgate and Mr S Askew

2. Minutes of Meeting of the 2nd November, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the 2nd November, 2016 having been previously circulated were approved and it was proposed by Mr Thornton and Seconded by Mr Beevor that they be accepted as a true account.

3. Matters Arising

A. Developments within the Board

Mr Bingham reported there had been considerable consultation in respect of the Primary School. Norfolk County Council Representatives put a scheme together to which we objected but have now come up with a better scheme. Other sites which are currently being dealt with are the R G Carter and Eastern Tractor Site where there are a number of issues. On the Norwich Road Scheme, there are ongoing discussions and we will continue to have involvement. In respect of the Attleborough Urban Extension this is moving forward and we are actively involved in the discussions. In respect of the Taylor Wimpey Site, the Discharge Consent is now being finalised.

Geoff Ellis said that a pre-application had been receiving for discussion for 50 houses off New Road and for the Grampian Site.

B. Development Charges to Developers

This was raised for two points. Firstly, the Charge for the Consent to Discharge should be increased from £50 to £250 and this was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Thornton and carried unanimously.

On the Schemes where the Board is involved to a greater extent, the Board needs to formalise its principle of charging for the work it does in approving schemes and this was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Ellis and carried unanimously.

C. Norfolk Water Management Partnership

Mr Wright confirmed that he was still attending the meetings although there was not much to report at the current time.

D. Demainment of the River Thet

There had been two drop-in days at the Town Hall and there had been no objections. The position in respect of the River Thet within the Drainage Board area was discussed. The proposal will be before the Norfolk County Council Committee on the 17th March and it has already been before the RFCC who have approved it. If Norfolk County Council agree then consultation will take place June/July.

In respect of the lower part there will be a need to produce a detailed plan in due course, eliminating as much residential property as possible. Currently the Board is receiving £5,000 under the PSCA Agreement so the River should be in reasonable condition before the takeover. No particular works were anticipated but what work is carried out will be targeted work.

E. Changes in Working Methods for River Maintenance

As a result of discussions with the Environment Agency there will need to be some changes in the working methods for River maintenance. Wholesale removal of bed and vegetation is harmful and potentially an offence. The long term target is the restoration of the natural habitat whilst still maintaining a drainage function. Some reed can be treated with herbicide. It was agreed that Mr Bingham would arrange a Board member visit either to the Nar or to the Euston Estate to see the Lark. Mr Jolly said that the Board and ratepayers would need to be educated in the new way of thinking.

F. Public Sector Co-operation Agreements

The Board agreed that such Agreements with Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council would be appropriate and this was proposed by Mr Jolly and seconded by Mr Beevor and carried unanimously.

G. Swangey Fen – Habitat Regulations Assessment

As part of taking over the River Thet it will be important that the SSSI and the SAC meet with Natural England and EA requirements. One particular aspect will be not to flood the Fen with water from the Thet.

H. Poplar Farm Bank Stabilisation

The Board went into action quickly to unblock the Stream. However, the future stabilisation of the banks needs to be looked at. The replacement of the Culvert is not our responsibility. The Stream may be re-modelled as a result of the Attleborough Southern Urban Extension. This will be kept under review.

I. Responses to Planning Applications Outside the Board Area Including Attleborough Drainage Issues

The Clerk and the Engineer currently respond to Planning Applications outside the Board Area which affect the Board with highland water draining through the Board area.

J. Attleborough Southern Urban Extension

The Clerk and Engineer are involved in the discussions on this and it may be that the Board will take over, if appropriate, some areas to maintain and receive income for maintaining those areas. It was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Ellis that this would be a good idea and carried unanimously.

K. Review of IDB By-Laws

It was proposed to submit updated By-Laws to the Board and it this was proposed by Mr Walker and seconded by Mr Thornton. A Sub-Committee Mr Walker, Mr Beevor, the Engineer and the Clerk will consider these in due course and bring back to the Board for approval.

L. Policy Statement

With typos amended it was approved by the Board and this was proposed by Mr Jolly and seconded by Mr Lee and carried unanimously.

M. CamEo Partnership

The Clerk reported that both he and Mr Bingham were attending the meetings and this involved the Little Ouse Catchment Area and was relevant to down stream drainage from the Board Area.

N. GIS Database Transfer of Paper Based Information

It was agreed in principle that this would be a good idea and Mr Bingham will report back to the Board with an estimate of the costs.

4. Conservation Issues

This is covered within the Working Practices of the Board. Mr Thornton asked if the Board could promote the Mink Project. It was agreed that Mr Bingham would put this on the website. Mr Beevor said that the works that the Board do should be put on the website for publicity purposes.

5. Board Member Reports

Mr Jolly said the Roudham stretch was not too bad at the moment. Mr Thornton said that his area was ok. Some issues will arise when The Thet is taken on. There were some trees that needed to be dealt with but these were landowners responsibility.

Mr Walker said that all was ok within his area. He raised a question in respect of a pipe to the East of Crows Hall Lane near Crows Hall Bridge and Mr Bingham said he would check this.

Mr Beevor said all was ok within his area.

Mr Lee said that most of his area was through woodland the worst section from Quidenham Road to Eccles/Snetterton Road. Mr Bingham said he would have a look and work out what work was needed to be carried out.

Mr Southgate's area. Mr Stammers reported there were no problems on the Swangey section.

Mr Stammers said there were a few trees down but not blocking the water. Some work needed behind Larling Church.

6. Election of Officers

Chairman - Mr Dudley Stammers, he was proposed by Mr Walker and seconded by Mr Beevor and carried unanimously.

Vice Chairman – Mr Alan Southgate, proposed by Mr Ellis and seconded by Mr Walker and carried unanimously.

7. Approval of the Payment of Accounts

The Board members considered the payments made and income received over the last year. They considered the outstanding rates and it was noted that Mr Lewin was still a problem. Mr Stammers said he would have a further word with Mr Lewin but thought that he may be holding out until work was carried out on the section behind Larling Church. After discussion, it was proposed by Mr Walker and seconded by Mr Lee that the payment of accounts be approved.

8. Write Offs Under £5

It was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Thornton that the accounts less than £5 be written off, a total of £95.54

9. Financial Position of the Board

The Clerk reported the current financial position of the Board. Board members had received details of the accounts and budgets. The position was healthy and the income and expenditure budgets were balancing.

10. Wages and Salaries

The Clerk and the Engineer left the meeting. On their return it was agreed that there would be a 2% increase and this was proposed by Mr Jolly and seconded by Mr Thornton and carried unanimously.

11. Fixing of the Rate

The financial position of the Board was discussed going forward and it was proposed by Mr Ellis and seconded by Mr Lee that the rate be fixed at 13 pence in the pound and this was carried unanimously.

12. Advertising the Rate

It was proposed by Mr Walker and seconded by Mr Thornton and carried unanimously that the rate be advertised. It was proposed by Mr Jolly and seconded by Mr Walker that the special levy be served on Breckland Council.

13. Any Other Business

- (a) It was agreed that Simeon Mally would be involved in the Site visits and that it was noted that he is having a meeting with the Environment Agency.
- (b) Mr Bingham raised the question of whether there should be a Data Protection Policy and this will be considered further.
- (c) Next years AGM was fixed for 10 am on the 8th February, 2018.
- (d) The Chairman asked that the Boards thanks to Mr Bingham and Mr Wright be recorded for the work they had done during the past year.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting.