

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the East Harling Internal Drainage Board held on 6th February 2012 at The Pines, 50 Connaught Road, Attleborough, Norfolk at 11.00am.

Present:

Mr D Stammers (Chairman)	Mr C D Wright (CEO and Clerk)
Mr R Thornton	Mr J Salter
Mr P Drake	Mr J Nelstrop
Mr P Lee	Mr H Beevor
Mr S Askew (late)	Mr A Southgate
Mr J Cantrill (Strutt & Parker)	Mrs E Jolly (Breckland District Councillor)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Southgate and Mr A Bingham.
2. Minutes of the meeting of the 28th June 2011 having been previously circulated, were approved and this was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Cantrill.

3. Matters arising
Developments within the Board

- a) Mr Wright reported that in principal a commuted lump sum payment had been agreed with Norfolk Homes Limited for their development off Carvers Lane. The commuted sum payment amounts to £11,660.00 and an agreement is in the process of being agreed with the developer.

Mr Wright reported that there have been continuing discussions about the development off Attleborough and that he and Mr Bingham wished to see drainage of the whole area considered and not dealt with piecemeal. Currently there is a good relationship with Mr Grimley the Environmental Health Officer at Breckland Council.

Mrs Jolly said that Phil Camomile of the Norfolk Water Authority had spoken to Breckland District Councillors who now realised the importance of the Internal Drainage Boards in the planning process and although not a statutory consultee would consult with Drainage Boards in future. She said that she would do all she could to foster a good relationship between Breckland District Council Officers and the Board.

Amalgamation of Board

- b) The threat to Drainage Boards as it was under the last Government has changed and whilst Boards are being urged to amalgamate or form consortia where appropriate it does not appear that there will be any forced amalgamations at present. Mr Wright said good relationships were still ongoing with both the Ely group of Boards and the Downham group of Boards, our catchment neighbours. When required he represented both Boards at the Norfolk Water Partnership.

Enmainment of the River Thet

- c) Mr Wright explained that the Environment Agency was trialling with some Boards the Enmainment of rivers. He had pressed for the River Thet to be one of the trials but the Environment Agency had not chosen it. It was agreed that the survey of the Thet which Mr Bingham had been asked to carry out needs to be done by the next Annual General Meeting and Mr Wright said that he would speak to him about this.

4. Conservation Issues

Mr Bingham in his written report said that the impact of maintenance works on badgers, newts, voles etc need to be considered and guidance issued to any contractors.

5. Board Member Reports

James Nelstrop

The water courses are flowing but it would look better if there was some water in them. One land owner has been putting grass cuttings in the ditch and Mr Nelstrop said that he would have another look to see if a letter was required from the Clerk.

Roger Thornton

There are low flows at present but the water courses are flowing well.

Philip Lee

The water is flowing. However, on the North end of the Mere Fen there is a large tree down and there will be problems with the branches. Simon O'Malley will be able to deal with this. There are bits and pieces down stream from Quidenham Church but the problem is caused really by the low flows. He did make the point that Notice of Works must be given to land owners as he had not been given notice when contractors had come on his land.

Hugh Beevor

There are no significant problems along his stretch of the water course.

Peter Drake

Peter Hall has complained about the amount of weed at Caston and this would need a machine to clear it. Mr Bingham will be asked to inspect this. There is a tree limb down on Martin Gulliver's land. This would need to be dealt with before there are any significant water flows and Simon O'Malley will be able to deal with this. At Breckles there is a growth of alder etc on the bank and once again Simon O'Malley can deal with this.

Jack Salter

The water courses in his area are free as far as he is aware.

Alan Southgate

Alan Southgate wrote to say that the water course running through his land is running clear thanks to Simon O'Malley.

Dudley Stammers

There is an Ash Tree behind Richard Johnson's Carr Wood which needs to be removed by Simon O'Malley otherwise the water courses are OK. A digger is probably required next to Richard Johnson's meadows and Mr Bingham will need to inspect this.

Andrew Bingham

Leys Lane - I have checked the stream at Mrs Illman's and there are no maintenance problems. There is a new property (Pixie Palace! I think) just down stream (where Hafland had his caravan). We agreed various works on the stream before they built the house, and I have not inspected since. I tried to visit the other day but was deterred by a number of large dogs. I propose to arrange a time with the owners to visit and inspect the stream. Mr Ulrych did clearing work at Quidenham Mere at East Harling Common (Overa Cottages)

Steven Askew

There has been some fly tipping near the sewer bridge off Leys Lane and there is a tree in the river near Stacksford which Simon O'Malley will be able to remove.

6. Election of Officers

- 1) Chairman - Mr D Stammers, proposed by Mr J Nelstrop and seconded by Mr P Lee and carried unanimously.
- 2) Vice Chairman - Mr A Southgate, proposed by Mr P Drake and seconded by Mr J Nelstrop and carried unanimously.

7. Approval of Payment of Accounts

- 1) After the Accounts have been circulated and the opportunity had been given to Board members to raise any questions it was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Lee that the payment of accounts be approved, this was carried unanimously.
- 2) It was proposed by Mr Thornton and seconded Mr Salter that the write off of small accounts under £5.00 be approved and this was approved unanimously.
- 3) Mr Nelstrop proposed and Mr Drake seconded that all rate payers who's rates had been written off received a letter informing them of their potential liability and a copy of the newsletter and this was agreed unanimously.

8. Financial Position of the Board

The Clerk gave a review of the current position and discussed with the Board the budget for the coming year. It was noted the deteriorating position of the interest on the Boards' deposit monies and that these no longer made up any shortfall in rates. Mr Beevor commented that it might be better to have a gradual rise in rates so that the position did not worsen, rather than a large impact on rate payers at a later date. It was noted that expenses had been higher this year because Mr O'Malley had his Land Rover stolen and it had been expensive to hire a Land Rover to cover the period he was without one.

The Board had assisted Mr O'Malley with his VAT on his new Land Rover and now that he had received this back he would be repaying it to the board.

9. Wages & Salaries

- 1) After a discussion it was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Drake that Mr O'Malley be awarded a 3.5% increase and this was carried unanimously.
- 2) In the absence of Mr Wright it was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Drake that his salary be increased by 3%.
- 3) Subject to checking with Mr Bingham that his fee's were still based on the original charging rates as increased, then if this was so, it was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Lee that he be given a 3% rise. Otherwise, this would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 4) It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Salter that the Chairman's expenses be increased by 3%.

10. Fixing the Rate

After discussion it was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Nelstrop that the rates be increased by one penny in the pound and this was carried unanimously.

11. Advertising the Rate

It was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Cantrill and carried unanimously that the rate be advertised. It was also proposed by Beevor and seconded by Mr Cantrill that the special levy be raised on Breckland Council and this was carried unanimously.

12. Any other Business

- 1) Mr Bingham had written to all Board Members about The Policy Statement and the need to review it. After consideration it was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Beevor that the current Policy Statement be adopted for the next period.
- 2) Website – the website is currently up-to-date with recent minutes etc added. However, the revamp as previously discussed with the Board has not been done. Andrew Bingham discussed this with Liftshare, particularly with the view of Bingham Hall Associates having access to enable us to keep the content up-to-date, post current mapping, add a news page etc. However, Liftshare are not set up to be able to alter the website to do this. I propose that we use another firm (KLG Online) to make the necessary alterations to the website and they can set it up to allow Bingham Hall Associates access to manage the content. The cost for them to adjust the set up to give us access will probably be about £100.00. For KLG to host the site will be around £70.00 per year (I don't know how much Liftshare charge but probably a similar amount) The previous budget for Liftshare to add additional pages etc was previously £770.00. I anticipate that KLG can make the same amendments within a similar budget.

After consideration it was agreed that there should be a change of provider but specific quotes need to be obtained before a decision to change is made and this was left for the Clerk to consider further.

- 3) Mr Bingham's Report said there is the possibility of funding for the Quidenham Mere Scheme and he will be arranging a meeting with the Environment Agency to progress this.
- 4) Mr Nelstrop said that he understood some Attenuation Schemes are not working because they have not been correctly installed and inspected. It is essential with Schemes in our area that our Board Engineer satisfies himself during installation that they are properly installed.
- 5) Mr Salter said that he wished to retire from the Board and had found a successor in Ian Walker who he proposed should replace him. It was proposed by Mr Drake and seconded by Mr Thornton and carried unanimously that Mr Ian Walker be co-opted onto the Board in place of Mr Salter. Both Mr Wright and Mr Stammers gave a vote of thanks to Mr Salter for his many years of service on the Board, both as Chairman and as Board Member.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting.