

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the East Harling Internal Drainage Board held on the Tuesday 6th February 2007 at The Pines, Connaught Road, Attleborough, Norfolk at 8.30am.

Present: Mr D Stammers (Chairman) Mr P Drake
Mr C D Wright (Clerk) Mr A Southgate
Mr A Bingham (Engineer) Mr R Kemp
Mr P Lee Mr J Cracknell
Ms M Hecks Mr R Thornton
Mr J Salter

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Askew and Mr J Evans.
2. Minutes of the meeting of the 19th September 2006 were approved and this was proposed by Mr Southgate and seconded by Mr Kemp and carried unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

a) *Developments within the Board*

It was noted that now the new bypass has been substantially completed the land between the bypass and Carvers lane may be developed.

b) *The Dualling of the A11*

Construction has largely been completed and the official opening will be in two days. The drainage issues have been agreed and a draft Agreement has been sent to the Highways Agency for approval. This includes a proposal to take over the maintenance of some streams and to receive a commuted sum. Mr Salter said the works on his land appeared to be satisfactory. It was noted however that the stream between the A11 and the old A11 needs trimming.

c) *Extension of the Board*

Mr Bingham said that he had been chasing the Environment Agency. The e-mail recently received from the Environment Agency was read and it was noted that they are preparing a final submission to the Minister.

d) *Banham & Kenninghall Fens and Quidenham Mere*

It was noted that Defra had run out of money. We are therefore currently awaiting agreement and funding and this has been extended to 2008-9. Defra cannot approve the works without the funding. Some works have been done so far to relieve some of the flooding problem in winter although it has been worse this winter because the weather has been wetter. Ms Hecks said that she was not aware of any particular problems and Mr P Lee said he was also unaware of any problems.

4. Conservation Issues

No further works are being carried out on Banham and Kenninghall fens at present and there are no other conservation issues to raise at present.

5. Board Member Reports

The chairman said that the storms have created a lot of extra work for Simon O'Malley.

Mr Lee reported that there some areas in his remit which required some work and passed the details to the Board Engineer.

Mr Salter reported that all was okay except as mentioned earlier.

Mr Drake said there was a tree in the river at Caston which will need to be removed. There is a dead tree between Dove and Pilkington and there are a couple of other trees that need to be dealt with.

Mr Nelstrop said that in his area all was in order before the storms and there had been no complaints since.

Mr Southgate said that he had removed two trees with a digger when he had a digger on site but otherwise his area was okay.

Mr Cracknell said that there were no problems at present although there may be a need to cut some reeds after harvest.

Mr Thornton said there were several trees in his area which need to be dealt and access may be a problem. Mr O'Malley has dealt with some of them.

Mr Stammers said a digger was needed on some of the low meadows at Illington. A big tree had come down and that had been dealt with.

It was noted that the Overa Farm poultry unit is a potential pollution problem. There has been some dumping at the site. It was agreed that to stop paying rates the buildings would need to be dismantled completely.

Nothing further has been heard from the Environment Agency about taking over maintenance of the River Thet.

6. Election of Officers

Chairman – Mr Thornton proposed and Mr Salter seconded Mr D Stammers and this was carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman – Mr Kemp proposed and Mr Salter seconded Mr Nelstrop and this was carried unanimously.

7. Approval of Payment of Accounts

The Clerk outlined the situation in respect of payment of accounts. The Clerk reported that the outstanding rates amounted to £5,185.60. The majority of

the outstanding rates related to Overa Farm and E H Lewin & Son. Once again it was anticipated that all of these rates would be collected and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman said that they would make visits if required.

It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Cracknell that the payment of accounts be approved and this was carried unanimously. It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Thornton that the rates under £5.00 be written off in accordance with the Schedule attached to these Minutes.

8. Financial Position of the Board

The clerk outlined the financial position of the Board and said that with the reserves in hand the Board's position was very healthy. The Clerk said that he felt the issue of computerisation of the Board should be addressed again. It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Drake that a first stage budget of £3,000.00 be set up to move to computerisation.

A sub-committee of Mr Nelstrop, Mr Stammers and the Clerk were appointed to approve computerisation and if it exceeds the budget to report back to the Board.

The Chairman was given authority to authorise work during the coming year up to the maintenance figure set out in the budget and this was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Southgate and carried unanimously.

9. Wages and Salaries

The position of the Board's employee was discussed and it was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Drake that a 5% increase be given.

In the absence of the Clerk and the Engineer it was proposed by Mr Kemp and seconded by Mr Cracknell that their fees be increased by 3%.

It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Kemp that the Chairman's expenses be increased by 3%.

It was also agreed that the Chairman would keep Board members updated on the progress of Mr O'Malley when he was in their area.

10. Fixing the Rate

The Board discussed the budgeted figures set out before them. After careful consideration it was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Lee that the rate be reduced to 12 pence in the pound. It was agreed that a further letter should be written to non-rate payers who fell below the £5.00 a year to say that their liability existed but at present would not be collected. This was proposed by Mr Drake and seconded by Mr Southgate.

The amount to be raised by rates being levied at 12 pence in the pound is a total of £24,453.66 which is split as to £17,789.58 for general rates and £6,664.08 in respect of the special levy raised on Breckland Council.

11. Advertising the Rate

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

12. Any Other Business

1. Mr Kemp raised the question of the road bridge over the stream at Roudham on its way to Harling Road crossing. It was agreed to write to the Highways Agency to express concerns about the strength of the bridge.
2. It was agreed that if development at Roudham should be forthcoming that any surface water run-off should be attenuated properly.
3. It was noted that Mr O'Malley has purchased a winch and this needs to be checked and assessed for health and safety purposes and risk.
4. Mr Kemp said that this would be his last meeting as he was standing down from Breckland Council and wished the Board well for the future.
5. The Board agreed the September meeting would take place on the 25th September 2007 at 8.30am and that the Annual General Meeting would take place on the 5th February 2008 at 10.30am.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting.