

Minutes of the AGM of the East Harling Internal Drainage Board held on 4th February 2014 at The Pines, 50 Connaught Road, Attleborough, Norfolk at 11.00am.

Present:	Mr D Stammers (Chairman)	Mr C D Wright (CEO and Clerk)
	Mr A Bingham (Engineer)	Mr P Drake
	Mr A Thornton	Mrs E Jolly District – District Councillor
	Mr S Askew	Miss E Plumb (Quidenham Estate)
	Mr P Lee	
	Mr J Nelstrop	

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr I Walker, Mr H Beevor and Mr A Southgate
2. Minutes of the meeting of the 17th June 2013 were approved and this was proposed by Mr Thornton and seconded by Mr Lee.
3. **Matters arising**

a) Developments within the Board

No developments within the Board have been completed and payments paid during the last year. There are various sites within the Board area and adjoining the Board area which may be developed over the coming year. There is the caravan site at Norwich Road Attleborough, the Wimpey site at London Road Attleborough, the site at New Road Attleborough and the Stepford Homes site at Hall Farm Norwich Road Attleborough. In addition, the Banham Poultry Bunn Bank site may be developed for commercial purposes. Mr Nelstrop asked how flows could be attenuated in a flood plain and the engineer explained this to him.

b) Norfolk Water Management Partnership

The Clerk updated the Board on the position in respect of the Water Management Partnership and said that he would continue to attend meetings and that one proposal was for Internal Drainage Boards to take over all aspects of drainage within the Highland catchment areas of their Board. This would considerably increase the area of the Drainage Board and mean that the Drainage Board would be a consultee for planning applications and for drainage approvals. The Clerk reported that this would only proceed if the Boards were being indemnified for the cost of doing this work.

c) De-enmainment of the River Thet

The engineer produced a condition report on the River Thet which had already been circulated to members and was congratulated by the Board for the thoroughness of the report. He reported that the Environment Agency are now keen for the de-enmainment to happen. The Clerk and the engineer are

attending a meeting with the Environment Agency on the 2nd February and in addition to the matters that the Environment Agency wish to discuss, the report and de-enmainment of the Thet would be raised with them. It was noted that the costings seemed reasonable. However, it was also noted that the Board must consider the effect of any works done on the river downstream. Discussions ensued on the benefits of taking on responsibility for the river and the possible liabilities if the Board did. It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Askew that in principle the Board would proceed with de-enmainment or with a Public Service Corporation Agreement with the Environment Agency. It was agreed that the report could be produced to the Environment Agency with the costings omitted.

4. Conservation issues

The Clerk expressed disappointment at the lack of attendance at Board meetings by Natural England and the Board agreed. It was felt that the interest of Natural England should be represented at Board meetings and that a letter should be written by the Clerk to them expressing concerns that they did not attend. It was felt that a copy of the survey report on the Thet should also be sent to them. The engineer reported a meeting with Graham Brown of the Norfolk Water Management Partnership with himself and the Clerk and said that a database was being compiled of all drainage assets within Norfolk. Both the engineer and Clerk expressed disappointment that Breckland was still not taking the IDBs views seriously enough. Mrs Jolly said that she would write a report to Breckland Council and find out the Council's policy. She said she would set up a meeting with the Planning Officers, herself and the Board engineer and Clerk to discuss matters further. It was noted that the consideration of animals and plants need to be taken into account when dealing with works within the Board area and in particular the need to consider water quality.

5. Board Member reports

Mr Askew reported there was a minor problem in Stacksford which could be dealt with by the Board employee.

Mr Nelstrop reported that Network Rail are about the re-clinker the railway. The engineer reported that Network Rail had been notified of the Board's wish to clear out under the railway and as no response had been received, the work had been done. Mr Nelstrop said that work needed to be done within his area where gardens had been landscaped but this was the landowners' problems because the Board's By-Laws enable the Board to carry out these works.

Mrs E Plumb reported that Quidenham Estate are clearing one ditch at the moment and that the Mere had been very high but otherwise there were no problems.

Mr P Lee reported that there is small debris in the streams from the recent high winds and this should be able to be cleared by the Board's employee. The stream is flowing well. He reported that some trees had been felled near the stream in East Harling and the tops were in the river. It was agreed that the Board's employees would have a look at this and let us know what is required.

Mr P Drake reported that Lee Pilkington did not like what had been done on Mr Hall's land and through his woods. Mr Bingham said he would write a letter to Mr Pilkington. He also agreed to look at another piece of stream by Watton Road. It would appear that some bushes need to be cut back but otherwise there were no further problems.

Mr Thornton said that there were some big trees across the river but above the water line otherwise he had not heard of any other problems.

Mr Stammers said that most of the required dredging works in his area had been carried out and all was now ok.

Mr Beevor had reported that there were no problems in his area.

The engineer said that there were no problems in the Attleborough Hall area as works had been done there. Mr Southgate had also indicated there were no problems in his area.

6. Election of officers

It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Askew and carried unanimously that Mr Stammers be elected Chairman for the coming year.

It was proposed by Mr Thornton and seconded by Mr Drake that Mr Southgate continue as Vice Chairman for the coming year. Both appointments were unanimously agreed.

7. Approval of payment of accounts

The Clerk circulated details of the payment of all accounts for the last year and the current arrears were outlined. It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and seconded by Mr Lee that the payment of accounts be approved.

8. Financial position of the Board

The Clerk outlined the current financial position of the Board setting out the expenditure on the year to date and projected expenditure to the end of the year and also the budgeting position for the next year. After due consideration it was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Thornton that the write offs of assessments less than £5 be made and that the write off for Pent Limited be confirmed in respect of part of their rates.

9. Wages and salaries

Simon O'Malley – Mr Nelstrop raised queries about how Mr O'Malley's working practices were supervised and it was felt that he should notify the Clerk in advance of holidays. It was agreed that there was a need for him to complete timesheets with details of his work done and hours to carry it out. This was carried for both lone working arrangements and to satisfy the Board's insurance requirements. The details of his hours worked were required for audit purposes. It was agreed that a plan of work should be prepared for him and that he should meet with the Clerk, Chairman and engineer for further discussion.

After consideration it was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Drake that he receives no increase in salary this year and it was carried unanimously.

After consideration in the absence of the Clerk and Board engineer, it was proposed by Mr Lee and seconded by Mr Nelstrop that they should each receive a 3% increase in their salary. It was also agreed that the Chairman's expenses should be increased by 3% and this was carried unanimously.

10. Fixing the rate

It was proposed by Mr Nelstrop and Mr Drake that the current rate be continued as 12p in the pound for the coming year.

11. It was proposed by Mr Askew and seconded by Mr Thornton that the rate be advertised and the special levy on Breckland Council be issued.

12. Review of financial regulations and standard orders

It was agreed that the financial regulations should be amended to incorporate reporting requirements by the Board employees for audit purposes. It was agreed the Clerk would draft the amendments for approval at the next Board meeting. It was agreed that there was no requirement to amend the standing orders and this was proposed by Mr Drake and seconded by Mr Lee.

13. Any other Business

The Clerk reported that he had today received a letter from Mike Brown requesting that he could fence along his stream. It was agreed that he could do so subject to the Board's policy and bye-laws which it was agreed the Clerk would write to Mr Brown to explain.

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