

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the East Harling Internal Drainage Board held on the 4th February, 2021 held by a Zoom Meeting at 10.30 a.m.

Present: **Mr I Walker (Chairman)**
 Mr C D Wright (CEO and Clerk)
 Mr A Bingham (Board Engineer)
 Mr H Beevor
 Mr P Hall
 Mr A Thornton
 Mr T Jolly
 Mr S Askew

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Mr A Southgate, Mr D Stammers, and Mr P Lee.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the 12th June 2020

The minutes of the meeting of the 12th June, 2020 having been previously circulated were approved and signed (at a later date) by the Chairman, proposed by H Beevor and seconded by P Hall.

3. Matters Arising

A. Attleborough Southern Urban Extension

Outline consent has now been granted and the parties are going through the S. 106 Agreement. There has been a lot of contact with Attleborough Town Council, but no further progress has been made.

B. Developments within the Board

Mr Bingham reported that he was finalising the agreement and commuted sum payment with Taylor Wimpey. The sale of Mr Walker's land has completed and the new owners are Clarion Housing Group. Mr Bingham has been in contact with the Company's engineer in respect of our drainage requirements. Other new planning developments within the Board Area the land on Hargham Road owned by Norfolk County Council will need agreement from the Board and there is some development on Leys Lane which will need consent.

C. Development Charges

It was proposed by A Thornton and seconded by T Jolly that the Board current charges remain the same and this was carried unanimously.

D. Norfolk Water Management Partnership

There have been no meetings this year but the Clerk will attend any called in the next year.

E. Maintenance of the river Thet.

Mr Bingham reported that there had been some flooding in East Harling, Kenninghall, Mill Road Besthorpe and Caston. He said it is important for the Board to be seen to be helpful and he had been giving guidance even where the problems occurred outside the Board area. We can do work to ensure water passes through the Board area as we receive our Highland Water payment in respect of this water. He has started putting information on the website to show how the Board can be of assistance. The Chairman agreed and said what we did at Roudham was on a stream within the Board area but not a maintained stream. Mr Jolly asked how much of the flooding was down to the excessive water or due to lack of maintenance. Mr Askew said that the first port of call was the Council, but the excessive rain on the 23rd December meant the system could not cope. Some work needs to be done by riparian owners. The Environment Agency remains silent. Mr Bingham said that he had useful discussions with the clerk to Kenninghall Parish Council although the village was outside the Board area. Mr Beevor said there is a lot of confusion with the general public about who is responsible for the maintenance of ditches. Mr Bingham said it is a very complex area, and most problems occur through lack of maintenance. He felt there is a need for education and there are opportunities for the Board to help even if some of the cost has to be recharged. We need to have a PSCA with Breckland Council. They used to have a Drainage Officer but this is now part of Public Health and has no time or money on it. Mr Askew thanked Mr Bingham for his work on the culvert at Old Buckenham. Mr Bingham said the Board can react quicker than other agencies. Mr Jolly asked if we could have guidance notes on the website to assist Parish Councils, and others, to inform what we can do and what are their responsibilities. Mr Bingham agreed to do so.

F. CAMEO Partnership

Mr Bingham is involved with a sub group, The Little Ouse and Thetford Partnership. This has been quiet through lockdown.

E. GIS Database

It was agreed that Mr Bingham would need a consultant to make progress. He will discuss with the Water Management Partnership and report back at the next meeting. He will also investigate the cost.

4. Conservation Issues

All Drainage Board work has been done in accordance with the Policy Statement and carried out environmentally sensitively. However Mr Bingham reported that there have been no particular issues. He will get more information on the website. The clerk agreed to approach the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to see if it would put a representative on the Board.

5. Board Member Reports

Mr Jolly reported there were no problems in his area, just the excessive wet. He had managed to placate Mr Emms.

Mr P Hall said there had been flooding of land at Breckles. Mr Bingham said that Simon had carried out work further upstream and did notice flooding. The blockage is under the road and the land owner needs to unblock his land drains. Otherwise all OK.

Mr I Walker reported that there was still a tree in the stream 150 meters from the Hingham Road. There was also some smaller ones nearer the Hall. Mr Bingham said he had looked at the works carried out by the Highways Agency and the water seemed to be flowing well. Mr Walker said he thought they had got the levels wrong. Mr Bingham said he would look again and get back to the Highways Agency. He felt Mr Watling had reasonable grounds to not to pay rates as a result of this, and it was unanimously agreed to write off the arrears.

Mr Askew said there were not too many problems, but some in Stacksford. These works need to be done when possible. Also a bridge has been put across the watercourse which needs to be looked at.

Mr Beevor reported that the flooding down Hargham Road was quite extreme. There are a couple of trees down, but not really blocked. Water levels remain high and he had not been down to Swangey Fen yet..

Mr Thornton said his area was fairly clear until the lakes area, where there are quite a few trees down causing blockages. Whilst it is the Main River and EA responsibility, we should do the work and recharge the cost under the PSCA. Mr C Garrod has done quite a lot of work on the ditch. Mr Thornton will take some photos and forward to Mr Bingham.

Mr Stammers reported through the Chair that there were a few blockages through Larling which Simon needs to check.

Mr Lee sent a written report saying that the stretch between Quidenham Mere and the Eccles Road bridge was bad with trees down making access difficult. There do not seem to be problems from Eccles Road to the Thet.

Mr Southgate reported through the Clerk that from Fettlebridge to Manor Farm Larling the river was blocked and silted on the Hargham side.

The Clerk said he felt the Board needed to take on some more active maintenance. Mr Walker said he was concerned that the light touch is too light. Mr Bingham said it depends on where the work is carried out as to how much is done to clear. It is a question of getting the balance right.

6. Election of Officers

- a) It was proposed by Mr Askew and seconded by Mr Beevor that Mr Ian Walker be chairman and this was carried unanimously.
- b) It was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Thornton that Mr Philip Lee be Vice Chairman and this was carried unanimously.

7. Approval of the Payment of Accounts

The Board members considered the payments made and income received over the last year and considered the position in respect of outstanding rates. After due consideration and discussion, it was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Hall that the accounts be approved.

8. Write Offs of Rates Under £5

It was proposed by Mr Thornton and seconded by Mr Beevor that the accounts less than £5 be written off.

9. Financial Position of the Board

The Clerk reported the current financial position of the Board. The Board members had received details of the accounts to date and budgets for the coming year. The accounts are healthy at the present time and after discussion there were no further questions raised. It was agreed that extra maintenance should be carried out.

10. Wages and Salaries

it was agreed that there would be no increases for the next year and both the Clerk and Mr Bingham agreed with this.

11. Fixing of the Rate

The financial position of the Board was discussed going forward and it was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Hall that the rate for the coming year be fixed at 10 pence in the pound and this was carried unanimously.

12. Advertising of the Rate and Service of the Special Levy

It was proposed by Mr Beevor and seconded by Mr Jolly that the special levy be served on Breckland Council and it was proposed by Mr Jolly and seconded by Mr Hall that the rate be advertised.

13. Any Other Business

(a) Mr Thornton said he had no idea where Simon was working. Could it be put on a map so the Board could see where work has been carried out? Mr Bingham agreed to do this. This would be ideal for the GIS system. Mr Bingham said he would mark up a plan and circulate quarterly to Board members.

- (b) Mr Beevor asked if the map could be kept centrally. Mr Bingham said yes, if we were on GIS. Mr Beevor said what about Google Maps and Mr Bingham said he would investigate.
- (c) Mr Askew asked who was responsible for the Dambrigg at New Buckenham as there had been problems with the excessive rain. Mr Bingham explained that the problem was no a maintenance issue, but hydrological. The only answer is for the County Council to remove the dip in the road.
- (d) Mr Bingham said he was working on bringing the website up to date with new photos and correct contact details.
- (e) Byelaws. DEFRA are updating the model byelaws.
- (f) Mr Beevor said the website looked fantastic and asked whether it was possible to connect to a plan to see if it was in the Board area and who to contact. Mr Bingham said he would investigate this.
- (g) The Clerk reported he had completed a Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey.
- (h) Mr Jolly said it was not surprising the EA was not doing a lot as it had only just started taking water samples and had not opened post for six months.
- (i) There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting.