

**ROMNEY MARSHES AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

A meeting of the Board was held at Appledore Village Hall on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 2.30 pm.

**PRESENT.**

Elected Members:

A Clifton Esq., A Clifton-Holt Esq., L Cooke Esq., Mrs H Langrish, J Langrish Esq., D Wheeler Esq., A Wellsted Esq. S Wright Esq. and M Wrouth Esq.

Appointed Members:

C Body Esq., Cllr P Carey, Cllr P Coe, Cllr Mrs C Creaser, Cllr C Hoggart, D Lovejoy Esq. (Chairman), D Oliver Esq., Cllr P Osborne, Mrs C Solly and Cllr D Wimble.

Staff:

N. Botting (Clerk/Engineer to the Board), Mrs D Chalcroft (Financial Officer).

**871. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed those attending and introduced new member Cllr P Carey from New Romney Town Council to the Board. The Clerk then read out the list of apologies.

Apologies were received from:

Elected Members.

S Body Esq., D Furnival Esq., E Langrish Esq. and E Lovejoy Esq.

Appointed Members;

Cllr G Allison, A Cragg Esq., Cllr A Mier, Cllr Mrs S Prochak, Cllr K Rye and Cllr S Scoffham.

**872. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June - 2024, having previously been circulated to members prior to the meeting, were taken as read. The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the previous meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

**873. MATTERS ARISING**

870- Any Other Business – The Vice-Chairman gave a brief report on the Lydd Ranges Sea Defence Scheme Ceremony which had been attended by a number of Board members and staff. The Clerk/Engineer explained that the EA's policy of tracking through standing crop when carrying weedcutting had been tested. Where this had been unavoidable, compensation had been paid swiftly to those who had claimed for crop loss.

**874. ENGINEER'S REPORT**

The Clerk/Engineer read through and elaborated on the previously distributed report. The Vice-Chairman update the Board on issues with the Brede Sluice, the Rother Eastern Walls scheme and the successful commissioning of the replacement pump at Warehorne, all EA assets. Cllr C Hoggart stated that the communication between the EA and residents affected by the works on the Brede Sluice had been poor. The Clerk/Engineer updated the members on the progress of the annual weedcutting programme, the Chairman asked that the endeavours of the Water Bailiff, ensuring the continuous operation of heavy plant, be recorded.

### **875. CONSENTS ISSUED**

The Clerk/Engineer read through the updated list of land drainage consents issued in recent months, there were no issues raised.

### **876. APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.**

The approved minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee recent meetings were taken as read.

### **877. EXTERNAL AUDITORS CERTIFICATE & OPINION**

The Financial Officer reported that External Auditor's report had been received with no matters required for attention. The Chairman thanked the officer for her proficient work.

### **878. ACCOUNTS VOUCHERS**

The Vice-Chairman stated that the list of vouchers had been rigorously studied by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and asked if any members had queries on the list of payments, there were no questions raised.

### **879. INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

The Finance Officer presented the income and expenditure statement to date, there were no issues raised.

### **880. SOFTWARE CHANGES TO THE DRAINAGE RATING SYSTEM**

The Clerk/Engineer and the Finance Officer gave a detailed breakdown on the distributed report regarding software improvements and the costs involved to the Board's current drainage rating system (DRS) for agricultural accounts.

They explained that the initial costs proposed by the current provider of the software were considered too high by the F&GP Committee who had requested that staff investigate potential alternatives or negotiate a significant reduction. The stated costs amounted to a £10,000 per site set up fee and £5000.00 per annum support going forward. The Clerk reported that he and the Finance Officer had met with other local IDBs to discuss whether local Boards could be considered as a solitary site by the provider to spread the costs. The Clerk was asked by the other Boards to approach the DRS provider to ascertain if the local Boards could be considered as a single site albeit with separate passwords to prevent data being shared. The Clerk and Finance Officer reported that the DRS provider had stated this would be possible at a cost of £4000.00 for the initial set up and annual support fees reduced to £1350.00 per Board. After consultation with the other Boards this proposal was agreed based on all Boards signing for a five year agreement.

It was subsequently requested that the Board approve the move to the new software for 2025; after brief deliberation it was PROPOSED by Cllr P Osborne, SECONDED by A Clifton-Holt Esq . and unanimously agreed that the new software be purchased.

### **881. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next Main Board meeting would be held at 230pm on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025, venue to be confirmed.

### **882. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 1530 hrs.