

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Telephone: DD (01354) 602003
Fax: (01354) 659619
E-mail: enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
www.middlelevel.gov.uk

Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
MARCH
Cams
PE15 0AH

16 December 2020

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen

Meeting of the Board
7th January 2021

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices at 4.00 pm on Thursday the 7th January 2021.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING PLEASE DESTROY YOUR COPY OF THE PAPERS OR RETURN THEM TO THE OFFICE TO BE DESTROYED.

Please telephone or e-mail to confirm your attendance as soon as possible.

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests relating to the agenda.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 14th May 2020.

(Copy pages 11-22)

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. Appointment of Chairman

To appoint the Chairman of the Board
(Present Chairman – A C Roberts Esq)

6. Appointment of Vice Chairman

To appoint the Vice Chairman of the Board
(Present Vice Chairman – R Blackhurst Esq)

7. Board Membership

Further to minute B.1208, the Clerk will report that Mr Andrew Lensen has accepted the invitation to become a Member of the Board.

8. Election of Board Members

The Clerk will report that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (twelve), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2020, viz:-

BEDFORD Stuart

BEDFORD Thomas

BLACKHURST, Richard

BUTLER, Ashley

CLARKE, Jeffrey

EDWARDS, Jason

LENSEN, Andrew

PICKARD, Charles

ROBERTS, Andrew

WAGSTAFFE, Andrew

WILKINSON Christopher

(NB) - Councillors J R Clarke and S J Corney are also Members of the Board as the nominees of Huntingdonshire District Council under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

The Clerk will also report that Mr R Lambert did not seek re-election to the Board and that a letter of thanks on behalf of the Board had been sent to him.

9. Vacancy in Membership

To consider the filling of the vacancy in the membership of the Board caused by the resignation of Mr Lambert.

10. Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.1125, the Clerk will advise that although the running of the remainder of the Anglia Farmers electricity contract has continued to be monitored it has been difficult to address some of the issues due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19.

In view of this, the Middle Level Commissioners' resolved to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30th September 2021 and to continue to monitor the performance of Anglia Farmers over the new contract period.

The Clerk will report that in addition it was proposed that quotes for 'green energy' be included, with a view to moving over to this form of power supply if the cost differential is marginal. The Clerk will further report that the need to show that IDBs carbon footprint is being actively managed over future years is expected to increase with the Environment Agency setting themselves the target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Board are asked to confirm whether they wish to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30th September 2021 and are agreeable to obtaining quotations for 'green energy'

11. Damage to Bank Close to Point 54

Further to minute B.1209, the Clerk to report.

12. Use of Drovers Claimed by the Board

Further to minute B.1210, the Chairman to report.

13. Drain Adjacent to Tesco's at Point 28

Further to minute B.1211, the Clerk to report.

14. Cadent Gas

Further to minute B.1212, the Clerk to report.

15. Development at Ramsey Business Park, St Mary's Road, Ramsey (MLC Ref Nos, MLC 225, 278, 354, 357 & 359)

Further to minute B.1214, the Clerk to report.

16. Contravention of Byelaws and access for maintenance – Grasmere, Chapel Road, Ramsey Heights

Further to minute B.1215, the Clerk to report.

17. Abbey Farm

Further to minute B.1216, the Clerk to report.

18. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a sixth Chair's Meeting was held virtually on the 26th November 2020.

Topics discussed included the Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Executive giving; an update on COVID-19 actions and responses, the change of MLC Chairman from Marc Heading to Jonathan Brown, updates on the Technical Services Department review (which aims to address the delays in responding to planning and consenting matters) and an update on the work of WRE. He also advised that Defra had commented positively on the Good Governance Guide published by ADA and that on the back of this feedback ADA were currently working on a Environmental Good Governance Guide. It was also noted at this meeting that Agricultural and Environmental Bills were passing through Parliament, the later including clauses benefitting IDBs, allowing them to expand their boundaries or for entirely new IDBs to be created, which was welcomed by the Chairmen as a positive step forward. Paul Burrows spoke on the work of the Environment Agency covering topics such as carbon baselining, national strategies, the tactical plans (which are securing much needed grant allocation for the area) and the need to continue to grow partnership working. He also spoke for Brian Stewart, the RFCC Chairman, who unfortunately was suffering from a poor broadband connection. On behalf of Brian, he advised that following the re-shaping of the local RFCC, there were two extra EA nominated positions available and that in this respect he wanted to propose that an Ex-officio seat be created for the incumbent Chair of the Great Ouse branch of ADA. This is likely to be Marc Heading who is expected to take over from Harry Raby in the spring. The new post will inject a direct link to farming which is of course the major business sector covered by this

RFCC. The meeting finally turned to the future amalgamation of IDBs which it was generally agreed are likely to increase over time as succession planning has to be addressed.

ii) Applications for byelaw consent

That the following applications for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses have been approved and granted since the last general meeting of the Board:-

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
Cadent Gas Limited	Installation of a 25.5 metre long 900mm dia pipe through highway Culvert. Outfall safety grilles Piling and fencing – Point 3 at Junction of Ugg Mere Court Road and Chapel Road	2 nd June 2020
Minnie Smith	Construction of new access culvert private watercourse adjacent to Harpers Drove	16 th June 2020
John Allen	Construction of new access culvert Merevard, Harpers Drove	21 st July 2020

iii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 83rd Annual Conference of the Association was held virtually on Wednesday the 11th November 2020.

The conference this year was held in two distinct and separate parts, with the morning session comprising of key speakers and questions and the afternoon the AGM.

Key speakers in the morning were;

David Cooper, Deputy Director for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Policy (Defra) – who first thanked the IDBs for the work they do and then endorsed the efforts being made to improve governance through the publication of the ‘Good Governance Guide’ and the work in hand on ‘Good Environmental Governance’. He then went on to speak about the ambitious aims of government, the record investment agreed by treasury for the next six year funding cycle and the Agriculture Bill that if passed will facilitate the creation of new IDBs and allow existing IDBs to expand districts. He finished by stating that the key was to educate people and to work together to share good practice.

Chris Stoate, Head of Research (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) – who spoke about the Allerton Project which was a carefully implemented scheme to directly measure the impacts of controlling headwaters using measures such as leaky dams. This work consisted of schemes on similar upland sub-catchments where a direct comparison could be made between interventions and non-interventions. The results were very promising with downstream peak flows being reduced by around a quarter where the most effective measures were installed. Chris accepted that there were challenges surrounding maintenance and that the choice of natural materials and design was key. He also noted that in the locations chosen any failed leaky

dam materials would get caught on stream bends well before any risk of being washed downstream into urban areas.

Toby Willson, Executive Director of Operations (Environment Agency) – who is soon to leave the EA reflected on the target to be carbon neutral in less than a decade and in doing this noted that the equivalent carbon release linked to pumping alone from the February event this year was equivalent to that of 1200 houses. He went on to point out that the onus is on us to act now and that if we fail to do so it will be our children and grandchildren who will face the consequences.. He acknowledged the hugely influential role of ADA’s voice in the development of national strategies and the work being done in partnership with IDBs to be more resilient. He finished by setting out three challenges.

- 1) To develop true partnerships where all organisations are working unified towards the same goals.
- 2) To achieve net zero carbon emissions, asking specifically what the IDBs were doing towards this?
- 3) To develop and implement strategies to attract young people into the industry.

Questions were taken from the floor and were wide ranging from asking why there was so little information being shared on the development of ELMs to why it was necessary in one location for the EA to undertake an environmental check before removing a dead tree from across a watercourse.

A more formal question and answer session ended the morning, the panel being made up from, Julia Beeden from Cambridgeshire County Council, Emily Clarke from Anglian Water, John Cutin from Environment Agency, David Jenkins from Wessex RFCC, Innes Thompson from ADA and David Thomas from the Middle Level Commissioners. When asked a question David Thomas, your Clerk, took the opportunity to advise of the importance and value of the work being undertaken by WRE and also to point out to Toby Wilson that he absolutely agreed with the sentiments of partnership working and also the key aims of the EA but noted that true partnership working was a two way street and that there were still areas of policy development that ADA were not being involved with sufficiently. Toby accepted that the EA were not perfect and that more work needed to be done on this.

The AGM in the afternoon followed the usual format of recording appointments and electing office holders. It was noted that Robert Caudwell would be coming to the end of the normal Chair’s term of office and that this would be reviewed next year. The formalities over a lively question and answer session followed which seemed to work very well and may influence how future conferences are arranged.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 10th November 2021.

c) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 2nd March 2021.

d) Floodex 2021

That Floodex 2021 will be held at The Peterborough Arena on the 7th and 8th April 2021.

iv) Capital Funding Projects

That at the spring 2020 budget it was announced that government would provide the Environment Agency with a settlement of £5.2bn for capital funding projects over the next 6 years, from April 2021 to March 2027, to better protect 336,000 properties. This includes both homes and non-residential properties and this presents a significant increase over the current 6-year programme. It is noted that the definition of non-residential properties includes shops, businesses, industrial sites, schools, hospitals, etc. and the new arrangements also facilitate funded improvements to habitat and the environment.

In response to this the Environment Agency have issued new partnership funding rules which go alongside this increased funding programme. The new rules are considered critical to delivering the called for better protection to the target of 336,000 properties, but will also allow:

- updated payments which will now account for inflation and be based on new evidence on the overall impacts of flooding, such as mental health
- increased payments for flood protection schemes which also create a range of environmental benefits
- more funding for flood protection schemes which also protect properties that will later become at risk of flooding due to climate change
- a new risk category which will enable schemes that prevent surface water flooding to qualify for more funding

v) What is Good Governance

That Defra have provided a summary of “What is Good Governance?”:-

- Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It’s not about making ‘correct’ decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions - and therefore good governance, share several characteristics. All have a positive effect on various aspects of Boards including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, officers’ conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.
- Boards should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community – and try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner. A community’s wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by Boards in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.
- People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice and consultation Boards considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) Boards followed. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of the Acts.
- Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways –

community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process.

- Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Boards have an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.

vi) Smart Level System/District Wide Telemetry Bid

That a Local Levy Bid has been submitted that, if successful, will offer a contribution of half the cost of installing telemetry at pumping station sites. This will allow early warnings of pump or weedscreen failure and remote operation.

The Board are asked if they would wish for costings to be provided for the next meeting.

19. Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers

(Copy pages 23-44)

20. District Officer's Report

To consider the Report of the District Officer.

21. Conservation Officer's Newsletter

The Clerk to refer to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, previously circulated to members.

22. Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

The Clerk will report that claims for contributions totalling £7,522.66 (inclusive of supervision) have been submitted (£10,729.63 less £8,140.42 paid on account for the financial year 2019/2020 and the sum of £4,933.45 in respect of 80% of the Boards estimated expenditure for the financial year 2020/2021) and on communications from the Environment Agency concerning payment of the claims.

23. Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that subscriptions for 2021 will remain unchanged at £565.

24. Determination of annual values for rating purposes

The Clerk will submit the recommendations for the determination of annual values for rating purposes.

(See Confidential Papers – Page 1)

25. Rate arrears

To consider writing off rate arrears.

(See Confidential Papers – Page 1)

26. Contribution from Developer

The Clerk will report that a contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume has been received.

(See Confidential Papers- Page 2)

27. Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1227, the Chairman to report and will refer to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 17th November 2020.

(Copy pages 45-48)

28. Special Circumstance Policy on Tendering

The Clerk will advise Members that there have been issues for some IDBs during the COVID-19 pandemic in respect to meeting their normal policy on numbers of valid tenders or quotations. To deal with this the policy (Copy page 49) has been produced. It is intended that this policy will only apply in special conditions such as these and that to invoke the policy the Chairman will need to record what the special circumstance is before it can be used.

The Board are asked to consider this policy and if it feels appropriate to formally adopt it.

29. Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2019/2020

a) To consider the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

(Copy pages 50-53)

b) To consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

(Copy pages 54-64)

30. Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk will refer to the completed IDB1 form for 2019/2020.

(Copy pages 65-73)

31. Financial Position

a) The Clerk will advise the Board of how estimated expenditure for 2020/2021 compares with actual expenditure to date.

(Schedule page 74)

b) Board's cash balances at 30th November 2020.

Clients Premium Account - £249,844.91

32. Date of next Meeting

The Clerk will remind Members that the next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 13th May 2021.

33. Any other business