

## THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held at 14:00 on Thursday 4 November 2021 at Godmersham & Crundale Village Hall, Canterbury Road, Godmersham, CT4 7DR and via Zoom

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### PRESENT

Mr D M Botting, Cllr M J Burgess, Cllr M D Conolly, Mr P S Dunn, Ms N H Dyas, Mr D J Fuller (via Zoom), Mr P N Howard, Cllr P D Jull, Ms A G Lynch, Cllr M Ovenden, Cllr G B Sparks, Mr G R Steed, Cllr D O Smith, Mr M P Wilkinson, Mr L Wooltorton and Mrs G Wyant (via Zoom).

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P Dowling (Clerk & Engineer), Mr J Dilnot (Engineering Assistant), Ms A Eastwood (Finance & Rating Officer), Mr S Revell (Water Level Controller) and Mr J Williamson (Technical Assistant).

### WELCOME

Mr Steed welcomed Ms A Lynch to her first meeting and he also welcomed Mr M Thomas (KSCP), Mr I Nunn (FCRM Operations Manager for KSL, EA) and Mr D Godden (Rhino Plant Hire).

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Buchanan, Cllr D Crow-Brown, Cllr M Sole, and Mr P Williams.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest.

### ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2024

In accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Board's Rules and Standing Orders there is a requirement for the Board to elect a Chairman for the ensuing 3 years. Cllr M J Burgess nominated Mr G R Steed, this nomination was seconded by Cllr G Sparks and there being no other nominations, it was resolved that Mr G R Steed be elected to the post of Chairman for the period ending November 2024, all present agreed.

### ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2024

The Chairman stated that in accordance with the Board's Rules and Standing Orders, there is a requirement for the Board to elect a Vice Chairman for the ensuing 3 years and he nominated Cllr M J Burgess for the post, this nomination was seconded by Cllr P Jull and there being no other nominations, it was resolved that Cllr M J Burgess be elected to the post of Vice Chairman for the period ending November 2024, all present agreed.

### ELECTION OF A DEPUTY VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2024

The Chairman stated that the position of Deputy Vice Chairman is a recent appointed position which he considers very useful, and he asked if there were any nominations for this position. The Chairman nominated Cllr D Crow-Brown in his absence, this was seconded by Cllr M D Conolly and there being no other nominations, it was resolved that Cllr D Crow-Brown be elected Deputy Vice Chairman for the period ending November 2024, all present agreed.

### ELECTION OF A FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES AND WORKS COMMITTEE FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2022

The Chairman stated that the Board's Rules and Standing Orders also require the Board to elect a Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee for the ensuing year. The Chairman stated that the last Committee consisted of himself, Cllr M J Burgess, Cllr D Crow-Brown, Mr P S Dunn, Cllr P D Jull, Cllr D O Smith and Mr M P Wilkinson. This committee normally comprises of 9 members – 5 Appointed and 4 Elected – but the retirement of Mr M J G Tapp and Mr A D Linfoot, who were both part of this committee, left a gap, therefore the F&GP Committee had proposed that Cllr M Sole join the Committee as the Canterbury City Council's representative and that another Elected member be appointed. There being no further proposals, it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr M P Wilkinson and resolved that the Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee for the year ending November 2022 be composed of the Chairman (Mr G R Steed), the Vice Chairman (Cllr M J Burgess – ABC), the Deputy Vice Chairman (Cllr D Crow-Brown – TDC), Mr P S Dunn (Ash Level), Cllr P D Jull (DDC), Cllr D O Smith (ABC), Cllr M Sole (CCC) and Mr M P Wilkinson (Chislet). It was further decided that an additional Elected member be appointed to this committee at a later meeting. This was agreed by all present.

### APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2022

The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Board to appoint/re-appoint an Internal Auditor for the ensuing year. It was proposed by Cllr M J Burgess, seconded by Cllr D O Smith and resolved that Mr D Griffiths of D G Consultancy, the current Board's Internal Auditor, be re-appointed as the Board's Internal Auditor for the period ending November 2022. This is the third year of three as agreed by the Board at its meeting on 1 August 2019.

### ELECTION OF AN INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW TEAM FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2021

The Chairman stated that the Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Board to review its Internal Audit arrangements annually. This review is carried out by the Board's Internal Audit Review Team which consists of three Board Members. The current Internal Audit Review Team consists of Cllr M J Burgess, Cllr P D Jull and Mr M P Wilkinson. It was proposed to replace Cllr M J Burgess on the Internal Audit Review Team due to him having been on the committee the longest (run on a 3-year rotation). The Chairman thanked Cllr M J Burgess for his assistance and asked for a volunteer to join the team. Mr P S Dunn volunteered to join as the third member of the team. It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr M P Wilkinson and resolved that Mr P S Dunn, Cllr P D Jull and Mr M P Wilkinson be elected as the Board's Internal Audit Review Team for 2021-2022.

PRESENTATION BY MR MARTIN THOMAS (KSCP) ON THE BOARD'S BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP) PROGRESS

The Chairman invited Mr Thomas to give the Board an update on the BAP progress. Mr Thomas reported that the 2021-2025 Biodiversity Action Plan was approved by the Board and the main points to note are:

- It meets the requirements of the Association of Drainage Authorities' new template and guidance
- Simpler structure making it more user friendly
- Significant changes were made to:
  - Biodiversity Audit due to changes in conservation status of certain species and habitats
  - List of priority actions
  - Implementation section which provides information to all parties implementing the plan
- Changes in legislation demand a greater requirement for quantitative data when reporting against actions
- Greater focus in partnership working which will enable access to different sources of funding
- Greater focus on promoting the actions undertaken by the IDB to enhance biodiversity and environmental protection
- Shorter set of Objectives & Actions for each Habitat & Species
- Species Action Plans updated considering survey data obtained since 2010
- White-clawed Crayfish Action Plan (benefiting from information obtained through partnership working with KSCP, Natural England and Wingham Wildlife Park)
- New Species Action Plans for Otter and Water Fern (Invasive)
- Procedural Action Plan for IDB Staff to embed environmental protection and biodiversity considerations in the daily work
- Plan to create a prioritisation system for watercourse enhancement based on watercourses' current condition and their potential for improvement, using a simple set of measurables. The Clerk & Engineer emphasised that the river system needs to be considered as a whole and he referred to the current problem with the invasive weed azolla.

Mr Thomas summarised the BAP's actions as follows:

- Field Surveys – annual programme, one-off surveys, enhancement monitoring
- Review Management – management sheets, BAP review, best practice
- Enhancement of Watercourses – one-off projects, prioritisation system
- Engaging with external partners – sharing data, collaborating on partner projects
- Communication and Training – promote work on biodiversity internally and externally, training for IDB staff

Mr Thomas summarised his work over the last few months:

- Surveyed all the de-mained watercourses and created the management sheets
- Continued with the Buxford Stream enhancements
- Parrots Feather project - using drone footage to help monitor the spread
- Working with Partner Organisations (aiding KSCP with work carried out under the white-clawed Crayfish Strategy and doing visual and drone surveys for Azolla on the Hacklinge Marshes)
- External funding for watercourse enhancements
- Future Projects:

- Create new system for prioritising watercourses for enhancement
- Enhancement projects at IDB7 Pig Brook and IDB25 Buxford Stream
- Develop projects with likely funding from AONB
- Azolla management at Hacklinge Marsh

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 5 AUGUST 2021

The minutes of the Board held on Thursday 5 August 2021 were received. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr M P Wilkinson, and resolved that the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings at that meeting.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

##### Ref: A3-6                      Health & Safety (H&S)

The Clerk & Engineer asked if there has been a final report on the EA Thames Region's fatal accident. Mr Nunn replied that there is no final report yet but there is an action plan to review all activities. He proposed to ask the review team to share key recommendations with IDBs. All agreed that this would be helpful.

##### Ref: W7G                      Environment Agency Works

The Chairman asked if there were any developments regarding the application for Public Rights of Way at Hacklinge. Mr Nunn reported that nothing has been received formally, but KCC will make their decision in due course. He further reported that a complaint letter was received by the EA about disabled access along the track and commented that this is a difficult balance.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Kingfisher Sluice was completed and the more substantial repairs to the Mile Feed Penstock will be evaluated by the EA and the EKEP in due course.

Mrs Wyant asked if work at Lampen Sluice had started. Mr Nunn replied that works have not started due to unforeseen problems, but there is a provisional start date of 15 November. Mr Woollorton confirmed that the EKEP will be delivering this project and hoped that it will be completed before Christmas.

Mrs Wyant further asked about the works on the Little Stour and Nailbourne. Mr Nunn replied that the options were evaluated and shortlisted, these have been taken forward to produce a business case, but it will take time and he is hopeful that works will start next year. Mr Woollorton commented that some improvements to structures on the Little Stour Flood Relief Channel should also go ahead in the coming weeks.

Mr Nunn reported that the EA's contractors have not been able to deliver the weed cutting programme as planned, therefore it is running behind, but it is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of the year with weekend working. The Clerk & Engineer reported that discussions had taken place to deliver all weed cutting for low-category systems under the PSCA. The Engineering Assistant commented that this would be straightforward provided we are given adequate notice to plan the works. Mr Godden commented that previously only the more difficult sections of Main River had been included, with restricted/difficult access, so complete systems would be an improvement.

Ref: A8-1                      Keeping our Rivers Flowing Summit

The Chairman asked if the recording of this meeting is available. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he will check on this.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### Azolla Project – Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP)

The Chairman reported that KSCP has been seeking funding for the Azolla project. At the last meeting the Board agreed to contribute an initial £2,500 this financial year with additional annual contributions of £2,500 over the ensuing three years if good results were reported. Due to higher set-up costs the Board has been asked by KSCP if it could confirm its commitment for 2 years (2021-22 and 2022-23). The Chairman asked which watercourses are to be targeted first. The Clerk & Engineer replied that it is planned to start on the southern arms of the North and South Streams and onto the wider Hacklinge Marshes, but also the Sarre Penn and Chislet Marshes area. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Botting and resolved that the Board commit to contributing the £2,500 for this financial year and also the £2,500 for the next financial year. The Chairman stated that there is a time constraint on ordering the weevils. Mr Thomas stated that they must be released in the spring so he will check on this.

The Clerk & Engineer commented that this is a worthwhile project and hoped that others would contribute. Mr Nunn agreed that this issue must be addressed and committed to a £5,000 contribution from the EA for 2021-22, and possibly for the remaining 3 years.

#### Nutrient Neutrality for new developments in the Stodmarsh area

Cllr Jull stated that Natural England's report on the effects of upstream developments on the Stodmarsh NNR, which has halted developments, is being applied across the whole area. He asked if there is a hydrological connection between the Little Stour and the NNR, as he didn't consider this to be the case. The Clerk & Engineer replied that there is no direct connection, other than in a flood event (if water from the Little Stour backed-up through the Grove Marshes), although the Little Stour does discharge into the River Stour, which is tidal (so contaminated flows could be transferred upstream). Cllr Jull stated that DDC has engaged consultants to look into this aspect. The Clerk & Engineer commented that he would be happy to liaise with them on this matter if required.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 18 OCTOBER 2021

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr M P Wilkinson and resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes and Works Committee held on Monday 18 October be received.

### MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

Ref: W5                      Planning Applications

**Dover District Council**

**19/01178** – Construction of access road and two dyke crossings on land south of Ash Road, Sandwich (part retrospective)

The Technical Assistant reported that he has written to the site owner requesting that an application for consent be progressed without further delay. No reply has been received yet, but this will be pursued.

### Canterbury City Council

The Clerk & Engineer referred to Cllr Sole's comment about Canterbury City Council's plans to purchase land to create wetlands and he asked Mr Woollorton if he had any further information. Mr Woollorton replied that he had not been informed of this, but he will enquire and report back.

Ref: A9-1.2                      Office Premises – 34 & 34A Gordon Road

The Chairman reported that renovation work has been completed in the office and most of it in the flat. However, due to the extremely poor state of the walls a lot more work was involved in the flat's decoration than was expected and this year's budget has been spent. The original plan was to renew and decorate the flat's bathroom, landing and stairway in 2022, but a leak has occurred which needs to be addressed. The Chairman opined that it would be a waste of resources to do a patch up now only to do further works in a few months and proposed that the Building & Maintenance budget be increased. The Clerk & Engineer reported that he is still attempting to obtain quotes for the work, so an exact cost is unknown, but it would suffice to settle on a £10,000 increase. The Chairman asked if this would potentially reduce the amount budgeted for next year. The Clerk & Engineer stated that is correct as we are bringing the work forward. It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr M J Burgess and agreed by all that the Building & Maintenance budget be increased by £10,000 to accommodate the completion of the building works in the flat.

The Chairman stated that due to the disruption experienced by the tenant, for what will be at least a full year, the F&GP Committee recommended to the Board that one month's rent (i.e. £725.00) be refunded to the tenant as a good will gesture. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr M D Conolly and resolved that one month's rent be refunded to the tenant, but to also advise him that the previously postponed rent review will take place on completion of the works.

### Minster Pumping Station

Mr Nunn reported that funding is in place to install a fish-friendly pump at Minster Pumping Station, but the installation is not likely to take place for 12-18 months. Therefore, the existing problem of eel deaths at the pumps still needs to be managed, by maximising gravity discharges through Kingfisher Outfall to reduce the amount of pumping required. Mr Nunn reported that a meeting was held to discuss the EA's proposal to explore the possibility of raising water levels across the marsh. The Clerk & Engineer stated that it is important that all risks and impacts of this be assessed and that all affected parties must be consulted and a letter to all local landowners is to be sent shortly. It will be important to document all decisions and actions to ensure that risks are understood and agreed.

Ms Dyas declared an interest in this matter as she farms the affected land. She proceeded to show photographs taken last year which showed the extent of flooding in the area. She stated that upland water runoff and spring flows must be considered, in addition to direct rainfall. She added that unnecessary flooding not only damages crops but also some wildlife.

Ms Dyas explained that because this area is farmland, the EA considers it low-priority but in fact the marshes are the first line of defence for the villages and it obviously has a substantial impact on farmers' livelihoods. She further reported, with the aid of photographs, that last February on the EA's website there was a red warning across the marshes warning of danger to life and property. She concluded by saying that a sensible balance needs to be found, so that eels are protected but also that flooding is avoided where possible.

Mr Nunn agreed with Ms Dyas' comments and stated that making more use of the gravity outfall will encourage eels to go the other way, allowing the pumps to be run more often when needed. Ms Dyas further stated that by raising the water levels, capacity will be reduced for when there is an extreme event. Mr Nunn acknowledged this but stated the reason for raising the levels is to enable a gravity discharge at Kingfisher Sluice and in the longer term enable more running of the pumps. He restated that he agreed that a difficult compromise must be struck until the fish-friendly pump is installed within 12 to 18 months.

Mr Botting asked if the fish-friendly pump will be adequate for the job and how will the new developments affect this situation. Mr Nunn replied that the fish-friendly pump will be of greater capacity and efficiency than the existing pumps, and any new development must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that local flood risk will not be worsened.

The Chairman stated that this is a very difficult situation where there is no easy solution, but he asked if there are processes in place to quickly alleviate the water if needed. Mr Nunn replied that they will have to revert to previous processes, such as running the pump at night with the net in place, for prolonged heavy rainfall events. He added that the current efforts to reduce the risk to eels will strengthen the case for pumping when needed. Mr Nunn offered to visit the area to view particular issues of concern. Ms Dyas welcomed this offer and thanked Mr Nunn for his efforts.

The Clerk & Engineer reiterated that residents and landowners should raise any issues or concerns upon receipt of the EA's letter, as this matter will promote discussion and aid understanding of the issues of concern.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Ref: A8-1.7    Board's Website

The Technical Assistant reported that the Board's website is visited approx. 300 times a month. He further stated that he will try to obtain the figures for new and repeat visits.

### **Joint Report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2021**

Ref: A3-6        Health & Safety

The Chairman reported that the Board's Health & Safety Policy and Health & Safety Manual have been reviewed by the H&S Committee and the F&GP Committee had recommended that these be received and approved. It had also been recommended that the Health & Safety Committee be made permanent, appointed annually at the Board's meeting in May, as this will allow closer Board involvement in issues as they arise, such as accidents or near miss incidents.

The current Committee comprises of the three Chairmen and Cllr Ledger (no longer a Board Member). The Chairman asked for a volunteer to join this important Committee. It was then

proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr N Ovenden and resolved that Cllr G Sparks be appointed to the Health & Safety Committee and that this Committee be permanent and reviewed annually at the May/June meeting.

It was further proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Ms A Lynch and resolved that the Health & Safety Policy and Health & Safety Manual be received and approved.

#### Ref: W4/WSR    Rainfall & River Flow Data

The Chairman referred to the rainfall information stating that the variation of rainfall across the catchment is highly apparent.

#### W1-8 Flooding in Deal

Cllr Jull asked if he could be sent a copy of KCC's report. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he will forward it to all the Board members when finalised and made available. The Chairman stated that it is important to highlight the fact that despite all KCC's findings it has no authority to enforce its recommendations. Cllr Jull commented that this report will help to inform the public.

The Clerk & Engineer stated that he met with KCC and DDC and it was agreed Southern Water should carry out a condition and capacity assessment of the pipe from Albert Road to Mathews Close Dyke and also to consider installing a lightweight flap-valve.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Southern Water has agreed to give a presentation to the Board at its next meeting, about discharges to rivers in general (not specifically Albert Road).

#### Ref: W7        IDB Programme of Works (Including works carried out under PSCA)

#### Weed Cutting

The Engineering Assistant reported that the weed cutting programme is slightly behind, but it should be completed just a few days behind schedule, and he feels that it has otherwise gone well this season. He further reported that the weed cutting under the PSCA on behalf of the EA is nearly completed with just some loose ends to finish off.

Mathews Close Dyke in Deal was cut in July and in October on behalf of Dover District Council but Ropewalk is unlikely to be cut this year (DDC monitoring and will instruct).

#### De-silting

The Engineering Assistant reported that the IDB de-silting programme is due to start on the Gosshall Marshes and will continue until mid-February.

Mr Nunn reported that a 5-year de-silting plan is being developed for Main Rivers, based on the ongoing silt surveys.

#### Tree & Shrub Maintenance

The Engineering Assistant reported that this year's tree maintenance programme is very comprehensive due to some works being carried over from last year. There is also a considerable amount of work being considered on Main Rivers under the PSCA (Sarre Penn, Whitewater Dyke



and nearly the complete length of the Ruckinge Dyke). This work will be completed by the end of February.

### Structures Maintenance

The Engineering Assistant reported that Marvier Stop on South Poulders Main Stream (IDB170) is finished and this work was done by AMS Engineering in cooperation with EKEP. This should help greatly to maintain the levels through the Delf. Details of other minor repairs to various water level management structures are being worked on.

### Water Level Control

The Water Level Controller reported that most water levels are now down to winter levels to allow for winter rainfall.

Mr Godden asked if the Water Level Controller knew why it was so wet at Newlands Farm, who replied that he took the last boards out on Wednesday and noted that ground conditions are boggy. The Clerk & Engineer reported that proposals had been discussed to retain higher levels within the marsh, but no consents have yet been received.

Mr Nunn reported that there is still a temporary electric submersible pump at Cooper Street Pumping Station, which is more efficient than the previous pump and weather permitting the pumping station will be back in operation before the end of the year.

Mr Nunn reported that no funding has been found for the repair of the leaking Boiling Spot Stop on the South Stream (Main River) at Hacklinge and he will discuss options with the Clerk & Engineer after the meeting.

### Ref: W7G      Environment Agency Works

The Engineering Assistant asked if the New North Stream by the Sandwich-Deal railway line had been weed cut. Mr Nunn replied that he will check because there have been some problems with this year's programme. The Engineering Assistant stressed the importance of this feed channel.

Mr Nunn reported that the new trash screen at Brewery Sluice should be installed Spring 2022 and final drawings are still awaited for the flap with an estimated installation of Summer 2022.

Mr Nunn reported capital reconditioning programme has been increased from £250,000 to £500,000 and projects within this budget are the Minster Pump replacement, the Brooksend Outfall culvert extension, Northern Sea Wall remedial works and the Little Stour Flood Relief Channel. He further added that the EA's bid for 2022-24 was also successful, so the following works are planned to start next year:

- Reculver Pumping Station – replacement of the motor control centre
- Hacklinge Pumping Station – pumps 1 and 2
- Improvements at Aldington and Hothfield reservoirs
- Black Sluice Pumping Station – replacement of the eel pass pump
- Stonar Cut and Ash Levels boat ramps

Mr Nunn stated that the weed boat has still not arrived due to general delays experienced across the country, once this is received it will enable the EA to do some weed cutting on the tidal Stour.

Ref: W5            Planning Applications

The Technical Assistant invited comments on the Planning Applications as listed on the F&GP Committee meeting minutes.

**Ashford Borough Council**

19/00025/AS – Land between railway line and Willesborough Road, Kennington, Kent – Major Hybrid proposal.

Cllr Jull queried the details of this proposal and its terminology. The Technical Assistant replied that only a general proposal has been made at this stage, so further details are still awaited. He further commented that the Board may need to consider whether it requests a Surface Water Development Contribution for proposals such as this. The Clerk & Engineer commented that as this proposal is to improve water quality and biodiversity, he would not expect to charge a SWDC, but this can be considered when further details are made available.

**Canterbury City Council**

CA/21/01657 – Land at The Hill Littlebourne Canterbury Kent – Outline planning application for up to 115 residential dwellings.

Cllr Sole had previously reported that this application was **refused** and the Technical Assistant commented that whilst this site is outside of the IDD it does have the potential to affect it and CCC have acknowledged this.

**Dover District Council**

20/01447 – Land at North Poulders, Ash Road, Sandwich, Kent – Development of aqua park.

The Technical Assistant reported that he has a meeting soon with the consultants to discuss the Board's Consent requirements.

**Ref: W15**            **Applications for Consent**

The Technical Assistant reported on the Applications for Consent listed on the F&GP Committee meeting minutes. There were no further queries or comments

**Ref: W15**            **Enforcement issues**

The Technical Assistant reported that most enforcement issues detailed on the F&GP Committee meeting minutes have been dealt with, but the issues at Chitty Lane, Chislet and IDB218 Minster Station Lead Dyke are still ongoing.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the time limit on IDB consents is three years and not one year as previously reported.

FINANCE

DRAINAGE RATES INCOME

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that the total of outstanding drainage rates is currently £2,076.

### LEVIES INCOME

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that all Local Authorities, except Canterbury City Council, have paid the second instalment of the Special Levy.

#### Ref: F1-2                      Interim Audit of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2022

The Internal Auditor's report for the Board's accounts and accounting documentation Interim Audit for the year ending 31 March 2022, which took place on 13 October 2021, was discussed. There being no matters to address or recommendations it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr P Howard and resolved that this report be received and approved.

#### Ref: F.1-5                      Conclusion of Audit – Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Chairman reported that the Board's external auditors (PKF Littlejohn LLP) completed their review of the Board's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2021. The external auditor's certificate and report is given at Section 3 on page 6 of the AGAR and details any matters arising from the review. There were no recommendations or actions required and the completed AGAR, which the Board is required to approve, has been published on the Board's website and noticeboard outside its office, and a copy is attached.

There being no comments it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr G Sparks and resolved that AGAR for the year ended 31 March 2021 be received and approved.

#### Ref: F2                              IDB Annual Reports to DEFRA

The Chairman reported that the IDB Annual Report (IDB1 form) for year ended 31 March 2021, was submitted to Defra, Environment Agency, County and District Councils and in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the transparency code for smaller authorities, the completed IDB1 form was published on the Board's website and noticeboard outside its office.

#### Ref: F.5-4                      Watercourse Maintenance Contract

The Chairman reported that the contract commencing on 1 April 2022 and running for four years with a possible three-year extension was awarded to Rhino Plant Hire. The Chairman stated that the Board very much values Rhino's experience and continued high standard of work.

The Chairman stated that the considerable increase to fuel costs will have to be addressed when setting future budgets as it will make a substantial difference to overall costs.

#### Ref: F14                              Banking Arrangements

The Chairman reported that following the retirement of Mr M J G Tapp BEM and Mr A D Linfoot OBE, who were both bank signatories, there is a need to remove them from the authorised signatories of all the Board's banking institutions and to add one new signatory to the Board's bank

accounts. These two actions need to be proposed and approved by the Board. The current valid signatories are Mr G Steed, Mr P Dowling and Ms A Eastwood.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr G Sparks and resolved that Mr M J G Tapp and Mr A D Linfoot be removed as signatories from the Board's accounts and Cllr M J Burgess be added to the same as a new/additional signatory.

The Finance & Rating Officer reported that it has proved impossible to open an investment account with HSBC, therefore other institutions will be researched and presented to the Board when the information is gathered.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Ref: A.1-1                      Dates for 2022 Meetings

The Chairman stated that the following dates were suggested for meetings of the Finance Committee and the full Board in 2022:

<u>Finance Meetings (10:30 Venues tbc)</u>	<u>Board Meetings (14:00 – Venues tbc)</u>
Mon 24 January 2022	Thurs 10 Feb 2022 DDC Offices
Mon 23 May 2022	Thurs 9 June 2022 Godmersham Village Hall
Mon 25 Jul 2022	Thurs 11 Aug 2022 ABC Offices
Mon 24 Oct 2022	Thurs 10 Nov 2022 CCC Offices

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr M P Wilkinson and resolved that the above meeting dates be set for the 2022 meetings. The venues are still to be confirmed.

### Ref: A8-1.1                      ADA South East Branch

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Mr L Cooke will not be seeking to be re-elected next year as Chairman of the ADA South East Branch, therefore nominations will be welcomed to fill this post as well as the Vice Chairman's post which remains vacant. Ms Priscilla Hazelhurst was reappointed as SE Branch representative on the ADA Board, and Mr P Dowling was appointed as SE Branch Secretary.

### Ref: A10-21                      Beavers

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he will circulate the IDB's response to the Government's Consultation on the Reintroduction of Beavers in England which will close 17 November 2021. The Consultation clearly states that Defra will not make payment for any necessary repair or mitigation works, and it will be the responsibility of riparian landowners. The Clerk & Engineer stated that there is a need for sensible control measures, and appropriate funding for them. The Chairman stated that there is an interesting article in the ADA Gazette about how the Dutch manage beavers. Ms Dyas commented the Scottish Government now has licensed beaver control officers.

## MEETING CLOSED

There being no other business the Chairman thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.