

## THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Meeting of the Board held on Thursday 5 June 2025 at 2.00pm  
at Godmersham & Crundale Village Hall, Canterbury Road, Godmersham Kent CT4 7DR

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### PRESENT

Cllr W Scobie (Deputy Vice Chair), Cllr R Carnac, Mr P Dunn, Mr D Fuller, Cllr C Hallett, Mr G Holdstock, Mr P Howard, Cllr D Ledger, Ms A Lynch, Cllr R McGeever, Cllr G Meaden, Mr T Pont, Mr M Wilkinson, Mr L Wooltorton and Cllr L Wright.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P Cackett (Operations Assistant), Mr J Dilnot (Operations Officer), Mr P Dowling (Clerk & Engineer), Ms A Eastwood (Finance & Rating Officer) and Mr J Williamson (Technical Officer).

### WELCOME

Cllr Scobie advised that he has been asked to chair this meeting due to both the Chair and Vice Chair being unable to attend. He welcomed the following EA Officers: Dr D Price (Technical Advisor) and Mr W Purnell (Water, Land & Biodiversity Team Leader). He further welcomed Ms A Thurgarland (KSCP), Mr A Hope (Member of the Public) and Mr R Butson (Southern Water).

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Steed (Chair), Cllr A Hicks (Vice Chair), Ms N Dyas, Mr T Quested and Mr P Williams. An apology was also received from Mr I Nunn (EA Operations Manager).

### ABSENT

Cllr D Parks.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Dunn declared an interest on Land Drainage Consent 25 ST 02.

### SOUTHERN WATER (SW) PRESENTATION – Mr R Butson

The Chair welcomed Mr Butson and invited him to give his update, summarised as follows:

#### **1. Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) 2024 Review**

Pollution incidents rose 15% in 2024 due to heavy rainfall and high groundwater which caused network failures; Repeat pollution sites decreased from 25% to 15%; Key 2024 projects included wastewater pumping station resilience, effluent early warning models, rising main calming strategy (to reduce pollution incidents caused by burst rising mains), sewer level monitors and the RAID (Rapid Analytical Intervention Desk) team which improved pollution avoidance.

#### **2. Plans for PIRP 2025**

Focus on asset condition visibility, power resilience, rising main capital works, risk-based sewer maintenance and enhanced people, processes and systems to maximise improvements.

#### **3. Case Study – Condition based and proactive maintenance**

A £23million investment in condition based and proactive maintenance between 2020 and 2025 prevented 61 pollution incidents through the installation of sewer level

monitors, implementation of the Sentrix monitoring system, the launch of the RAID team and the addition of strategic sewer level monitors.

#### 4. Bathing water quality improvement plan

SW collaborates with the Environment Agency and local authorities to improve bathing water quality, focussing on leaking assets, blockages, illegal connections and storm overflow releases. Preparations for the 2025 bathing season include health checks at wastewater sites and increased team resources for agile responses to water quality issues.

#### 5. Clean seas and rivers update

Over 400 storm overflow releases have been prevented in 2025, managing 150,000m<sup>2</sup> of impermeable area. Misconnections are being rectified, permits changed, installation of slow-drain water butts and initiation of highway sustainable drainage schemes to reduce runoff.

#### 6. Rivers and Seas Watch service – replaces Beachbuoy

This provides near real time alerts on storm overflow releases to inform public beach visits. Improvements include a new scientifically validated tidal model for accurate impact predictions and the addition of bathing water area shapes on the map to better reflect actual usage areas.

### QUESTIONS

- Mr Fuller asked for the total of storm overflow releases this year. Mr Butson stated that he will relay that information once he knows. **Action: RB to update.**
- Cllr Meaden asked how bathing water quality differs from water quality for marine life. Mr Butson stated that the aim is to protect the environment and nullify the effect the network has on it, and this includes not having a negative impact on the marine life. Cllr Meaden stated that marine life has completely changed from what it was a few years ago and asked if there are records reflecting this. Mr Butson stated that not for this region, but this will change in the future especially where local communities can get involved and request meters to check water quality. He further stated that there is a consultation which is firming up this plan and new legislation will also trigger analysis, sampling and investment to improve water quality.
- Cllr Hallett asked if the sewers' monitoring is solar or batteries and whether vandalism is a problem. Mr Butson stated that it is batteries attached underneath the manhole which safeguards against vandalism.
- Cllr McGeever stated that he acknowledges SW's progressive maintenance geared towards development and asked for more information on their plans to accommodate the substantial development occurring in Ashford. He further stated that there is an aging treatment works requiring refurbishment which will cost millions, and he believes that mini sewage plants dotted around development spaces are not a healthy long-term solution. Mr Butson replied that the pumping stations serve an important purpose as they connect the flow to the treatment works through rising mains. Ashford's growth is integrated in SW's plans, and they are obligated to accommodate it.
- Mr Dunn asked how often the quality of the sea water is tested. Mr Butson replied that the EA carry out the monitoring weekly through the bathing season and all the information is available online. Cllr Meaden stated that the EA only take one sample a week, but the samples can vary enormously as they are dependent on so many factors and he opined that the figures are therefore statistically unreliable.
- The Clerk & Engineer referred to the work that SW are doing to slow the flow and added that the IDB are also looking at this on the upper reaches of the catchment and intend to install leaky dams to this effect and asked if SW would be interested in a joint project.

Mr Butson stated that he will pass details onto the Kent and East Sussex Project Managers.

With there being no further questions, the Chair thanked Mr Butson for his presentation and stated that future updates will be welcomed.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY  
6 FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 6 February 2025 were received. It was proposed by Cllr Carnac, seconded by Cllr Ledger and resolved that the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chair of the meeting as a true record of the proceedings at that meeting.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES AND WORKS  
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 19 MAY 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee held on Monday 19 May 2025 were received. It was proposed by Cllr Scobie, seconded by Cllr Ledger and resolved that these minutes be received.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Ref: F1-2a      Final Internal Audit Inspection of the 2024-25 Accounts**

It was reported that the Board's Internal Auditor, Mr David Griffiths, carried out his inspection of the Board's 2024-25 accounts and accounting records on 13 May 2025 and there being no comments it was proposed by the Mr Fuller, seconded by Cllr Carnac and resolved that Final Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2025 be received and approved. All present agreed.

**Ref: F1-2b      Review of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements 2024-25**

Cllr Scobie reported that the Board's Internal Audit Review Team for 2024-25, consisting of Cllr Carnac, Mr Holdstock and himself, carried out its review of the Board's accounts and accounting records for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 on 13 May, with Mr Griffiths assisting. He further reported that the meeting attendance has slightly increased over the past year and that the Internal Audit Review Team was satisfied with the internal auditor's work and the IDB's financial position.

There being no further comments, it was proposed by Cllr Ledger, seconded by Mr Fuller, and resolved that the Internal Audit Team's Report be received and approved. All present agreed.

**Ref: F1-5a      Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024-25 (AGAR)**

It was reported that the AGAR 2024-25 was completed with 3 documents to be received and approved by the Board in the correct sequence. The first one of these being the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024-25 (page 3 of the AGAR) which was completed and signed by the Internal Auditor. There being no comments it was proposed by Ms Lynch, seconded by Cllr McGeever and resolved that the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024-25 be noted, received and approved. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5b      Accounts for Financial Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

The Responsible Finance Officer presented for the Board's consideration the certified and signed Board's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025. There being no queries it was proposed by Mr Wilkinson, seconded by Cllr Carnac and resolved that the accounts for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2025 be received, approved and signed by 3 Board Members. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5c      Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – SECTION 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2024-25)

Cllr Scobie reported that the requirement to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control as per Section 1 of the AGAR (page 4) was accomplished by the Final Internal Audit carried out by Mr D Griffiths which enabled him to complete page 3 of the AGAR (Annual Internal Audit Report 2024-25) and the review of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements by the Internal Audit Team, both carried out on 13 May 2025. This section (page 4 of the AGAR) was completed by the Clerk & Engineer to the Board and considered by the Board. There being no comments it was proposed by Cllr McGeever, seconded by Ms Lynch and resolved that the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25 be received and approved by the Board and signed by the Clerk & Engineer and the meeting Chair. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5d      Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – SECTION 2 (Accounting Statement 2024-25)

Section 2 of the AGAR (page 5), the Accounting Statements 2024-25 was prepared, signed and dated by the Finance & Rating Officer – Responsible Financial Officer – and checked by the Internal Auditor. This document was considered by the Board and it was proposed by Cllr McGeever, seconded by Mr Wilkinson and resolved that the Accounting Statements 2024-25 be approved and signed by the Chair of this meeting. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5e      Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Return Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records to be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the Board. It was proposed that the dates for the period of exercise of public rights be set as follows:

- Commencing on Monday 9 June 2025
- Ending on Friday 18 July 2025

It was proposed by Ms Lynch, seconded by Cllr McGeever and resolved that the above dates be set as the period for the Exercise of Public Rights and published on the Board's website and on the Board's outdoor noticeboard. All present agreed.

Ref: F6-1      Environment Agency Precept

Cllr Scobie stated that due to a reduction in the funds received by the EA for the current year, they will be unable to complete the full weed cutting programme. It is in the IDB's interest to complete these works, so the FGP&W Committee discussed a proposal for the IDB to fund this year's shortfall for the EA's weed cutting programme, using SWDCs funds.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Mr I Nunn has informed that due to reduced funding for river maintenance, the EA will be allocating £85,901 of the IDB precept paid to the EA (totalling £103,706) to support the EA's weed cutting programme, which will still leave a shortfall of approximately £40k if the programme is to be completed.

The IDB precept is normally largely used to contribute towards minor structure works, but this will not be possible this year, as the precept has been fully earmarked to fund the weed cutting, WLC contribution and shingle recycling on the Northern Sea Wall.

Dr Price provided an update on EA funding, noting a slight increase overall. However, this uplift has been directed towards previously unfunded critical infrastructure projects, such as repairs to the Monkton Engine and the Hacklinge weed screen.

The Clerk & Engineer observed a shift in funding strategy: whereas the precept had historically supported one-off projects and the EA covered routine maintenance, this pattern appears to have reversed and asked whether this change reflects a broader policy decision or simply an easier route to securing project-specific funding. Dr Price confirmed that the change is a deliberate decision for the current year, the additional £200 million (nationally) has been allocated with a clear emphasis on maintenance. These funds have been reallocated from capital budgets, with the local share amounting to approximately £300,000. This funding is subject to conditions, requiring it to be spent on flood defence and maintenance of high-priority watercourses – this new figure is to be a new baseline for future, however in real terms is still a reduction in funding due to higher inflation rates. Dr Price acknowledged the Board's concerns about setting a precedent for topping up the EA's funding and is hopeful that future allocations will be sufficient to fully support the maintenance programme.

Cllr Wright suggested that the IDB might ask KCC Members for a joint Members contribution from their Community Grant Scheme, she further explained that each KCC Cllr has access to a sum for community use and they can combine their contributions if they are willing and it is needed. The Clerk & Engineer stated that he was unaware of this fund but will keep this in mind for future.

Cllr Scobie stated that it was a difficult discussion by the FGP&W Committee as it is considered unsustainable to subsidise the EA on an annual basis. However, it was recommended to do so this year as a one-off, if necessary, so that the full weed cutting programme can take place. He added that if the Board agrees, the Committee's recommendation still stands, even in the knowledge that the EA have been awarded further funds. Dr Price stated that the EA had not sought this contribution, but they appreciate the Board's consideration, as without it there will be a reduction in maintenance.

Cllr Carnac asked what the SWDC fund would normally be used for and why is it okay to use it to fund this work. She further stated that it is important to involve MPs as they will be able to put pressure on government and she also speculated that there may be a lack of knowledge in government about the importance of watercourse maintenance. She concluded to say that this must be a one-off and we need to avoid difficulties from the EA placing additional pressure on the Board as discussed by the Internal Audit Team.

The Clerk & Engineer replied that SWDCs are made by developers as a general contribution to IDB activities, to enable it to help manage additional flow rates or volumes resulting from developments. The Board aims to use this fund on watercourses which wouldn't otherwise be maintained. In the event of reduced EA funding next year, the Board may need to review its own maintenance programme, but any reduced maintenance will have an impact locally.

Cllr Scobie added that it is important to note that the IDB's financial position has been transformed by the government grants received in the last couple of years, which is a credit to the staff and contractors who have made it achievable. Therefore, the Board is in a good position to fund this work, and the proposal is for the one-off funding to come from the SWDC fund which is not a cost passed onto rate payers and Councils.

There being no further comments it was proposed by Cllr McGeever, seconded by Mr Fuller and resolved that the EA's weed cutting programme for the current financial year be completed and any shortfall be funded by the SWDC fund. Furthermore, it was agreed that any changes in the EA's funding can be addressed by the Chairs to make a change to this decision if needed. All present agreed.

### ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

Ref: A1-1

Board Meetings 2026

The following dates and venues have been suggested for next year's meetings:

Finance Meetings (10:30)

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
Littlebourne War Memorial Hall

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026  
Littlebourne War Memorial Hall

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2026  
Littlebourne War Memorial Hall

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2026  
Littlebourne War Memorial Hall

Board Meetings (14:00)

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026  
Chartham Village Hall

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
Godmersham & Crundale V Hall

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2026  
To be confirmed

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2026  
To be confirmed

It was proposed by Ms Lynch, seconded by Cllr McGeever and agreed that the above dates be set as 2026 meeting dates. **Action: All to note dates.**

Ref: A3-4

Council Appointed Members

The Clerk & Engineer reported that Dover District Council has re-appointed Cllr Daniel Parks to the Board. He added that it had been highlighted to DDC that Cllr Parks had found it very difficult to attend meetings (only able to attend one meeting out of eight, Board and FGP&W Committee meetings) but DDC stated that they have a limited number of Councillors.

The Clerk Engineer stated that nonattendance does not serve the Board or the Council well and he has suggested to DDC that they may wish to consider a Parish/Town Councillor or Flood Group member. Cllr Wright suggested Mr T Hills as someone who would possibly be interested and may fit the criteria to fill this position, but unfortunately he is not a Dover Councillor.

Cllr Scobie noted that low attendance has been flagged in the last couple of years and he referenced the Association of Drainage Authorities Good Governance Guide, which states that any Member failing to attend meetings for six consecutive months automatically ceases to be a member. Although this has not been actively enforced, Cllr Scobie emphasised the importance of upholding it to preserve accountability and he suggested that the Board adopt a firmer approach. He requested that this matter be formally added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. **Action: C&E to add to next agenda.**

Ref: W7/MR    Monkton Engine

The Clerk & Engineer reported that following immediate concerns with the leak at Minster & Monkton Marshes, meetings were held with the EA and it was agreed with the Chair, under the emergency rules, that a contribution would be offered: £20k (the estimate to repair and improve the structure properly being £40k via the East Kent Engineering Partnership). It was decided that this will be funded from the SWDCs fund and confirmation has been received that works should get underway in July.

Ref: W15/Enf    Enforcement Issues & Updates

**IDB175, Stourmouth:**

The Clerk & Engineer summarised the situation to date: a landowner removed a dam and culvert with flap from the Stourmouth Stream, to lower water levels. Unfortunately, this did not have the desired effect; with upstream water levels reducing but downstream levels increasing. The Technical Officer has since been working with the landowner to replace the structure. The landowner applied to install a dam without a control structure, but this was refused by the Board due to negative effects. Discussions have continued and a revised application is to be made, which will include a larger culvert to be installed by the landowner and a water level control structure to be installed by the Board, which will improve its ability to manage flows and levels.

Cllr Scobie stated that this has been a complicated issue and thanked the Technical Officer and the rest of the team for reaching a good solution and he asked for any further comments. There being no comments it was proposed by Cllr Ledger, seconded by Cllr McGeever and decided that the feed control structure at IDB175 be funded and installed by the Board using the Structures Reserve. All present agreed.

**Report for the period February to May 2025**

Ref: W4/WSR    Rainfall & River Flow Data

It was reported that rainfall across the Stour catchment in January ranged from 62.6mm at Broadstairs to 107.0mm at Barham and averaged 88.6mm (30% above the Long-Term Average). February ranged from 36.8mm at Broadstairs to 67.2mm at Barham, averaging 88.6mm (9% above the LTA). March was extremely dry with rainfall ranging from just 3.4mm at Broadstairs to 6.2mm at Barham (only 11% of the LTA). The dry spell continued into April with 14.0mm at Broadstairs to 26.0mm at Barham, averaging 20mm (40% of the LTA) and the figures so far for May indicate 20% of the LTA.

Due to the dry period, ground conditions are naturally also very dry. River flows are now categorised as below normal. On 28 April, constraints were imposed on abstractors with licences linked to Wye gauging station and these remained in effect for the rest of the month. Groundwater levels remain healthy but decreasing. Reservoir stocks are also reported to be healthy, with Bewl being at 86% capacity on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

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

Weed Cutting

It was reported that this year's weed cutting programme is scheduled to commence in mid-July as usual. Joint IDB EA land entry notices have been issued to all landowners/occupiers. Details of works to be carried out on behalf of the EA and DDC under PSCAs have been reviewed and currently the work being planned is the same as last year. Again, this will enable more efficient working and will also allow the EA Operations Team to focus on high-risk systems and assets. DDC has requested that Mathews Close Dyke in Deal is again cut twice this year.

### De-silting

It was reported that the 2024-25 de-silting programme, after some alterations, totalled 18km. This included works on IDB8 Whitfield Road Dyke, IDB22 Withersdane Dyke, IDB47 Wickham Main Stream, IDB50 Monkton Main Stream East, IDB85 Lower Newnham Stream, IDB110 Blackhole Dyke, IDB123 May Drove Dyke, IDB170 South Poulders Main Stream, IDB195 Snipe Dyke, IDB208 Goldstone Lead Dyke, IDB210 Chandler's Dyke, IDB212 Horseshoe West, IDB300 Redsell's Dyke, IDB311 Richborough Stream, IDB316 Norman Road Dyke\*, IDB319 Blackhole Dyke Middle\*, IDB320 Minster Crossing Dyke\*. (\*watercourses adopted in 2024).

The 2025-26 de-silting programme, approx. 20km of IDB watercourses, will be checked and confirmed over the summer.

Another section of the Delf Stream in Sandwich, 60m in length, was narrowed and deepened to help improve flows. Brushwood faggots were installed, which will help to protect the riverbank from erosion and will provide space for the placement of silts in future. Another section was planned to be completed next winter, funded by IDB Precept, but this will now likely be delayed unless further EA funding is obtained.

There are no Main Rivers planned to be de-silted under the PSCA this year.

### Tree & Shrub Maintenance

It was reported that a substantial amount of work was carried out again over the winter, with works completed on the following watercourses: IDB8 Whitfield Sewer, IDB14 Aldington Dyke, IDB25 Buxford Dyke, IDB48 Upper Wickham Stream, IDB81 Hatfields Dyke, IDB114 Wademarsh Stream, IDB115 Brooksend Stream, IDB170 South Poulders Main Stream, IDB195 Snipe Dyke, IDB315 Church Lane Dyke\*, IDB316 Norman Road Dyke\*, IDB317 Blackwall Road Dyke\*, IDB319 Blackhole Middle Dyke\*, IDB320 Minster Crossing Dyke\*, IDB321 Brook Street Dyke\*. (\*watercourses adopted in 2024).

Under the EA-IDB PSCA, work was completed on the Delf Stream, North Stream at Sandwich and East Stour at Sellindge.

### Structures Maintenance

It was reported that the following structures were replaced, funded by the Asset Improvement Grant:

IDB47 Harrisons Stop	IDB133 Reculver Stop
IDB85 Grove Road Stop (delayed)	IDB185 TV Stop
IDB90 Straight Length Stop	IDB266 Penfield Stop

Minor repairs and improvements were also completed on a number of structures, including: IDB86 English Nature Stop\*, IDB110 Superton Feed\*, IDB279 Sandhills Feed\*, IDB307 Hogwell Siphon, IDB310 Ebbsfleet Stop, IDB314 Worth Minnis Stop and IDB314 Jubilee Stop. Several remote water level monitors have been installed, funded by the Asset Improvement Grant. (\*beaver damage repairs).

### Water Level Control

It was reported that the prolonged dry period has resulted in a high demand for abstraction and general water supply. Fortunately, this was pre-empted, and water levels were raised early to help accommodate demand. Currently there are no problems, but summer restrictions are becoming increasingly likely.

Gosshall feed flap has fallen off, which prevents automatic gravity feeding and therefore increases the need for pumped feeding onto the Gosshall Marshes. This will in turn put additional pressure on the abstraction licence, which is limited to 300,000 cubic metres per year. The EA's Resources Team is intending to replace this by the end of June.

Problems are being experienced with the Mile Pump, which abstracts water from the tidal Stour to maintain water levels on the Chislet Marshes. It is thought that this pump is nearing the end of life and should be renewed. Mr Purnell reported that two mobile pumps have been installed at the site for the foreseeable future, with plans for an upgrade once the stretched Project Management Team is able to plan the works. Mr Purnell confirmed that re-furnishement of the Mile will include the gravity door and they are also aiming to improve fish passage.

The previously reported problem at Yule's Arch, Hacklinge, where the bank of the high-level South Stream had been breached and was leaking into the lower North Stream system, has been repaired by the EA's Field Team using sheet piles.

The automatic weed-rake at Hacklinge Pumping Station failed on 3 December and is yet to be repaired (awaiting parts). The weed-screen is therefore having to be cleared manually but the EA is arranging for an excavator to be stationed there for the weed cutting season to remove weed accumulations.

#### Ref: W7-1      Natural England Assent

It was reported that an updated Site Management Statement has been agreed with Natural England, for the Board's routine maintenance activities in or affecting SSSIs, which gives assent for the next 5 years (until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030).

#### Ref: A10-21    Beaver Activity

It was reported that the Board's Operations Officer, James Dilnot, has joined the National Beaver Forum's Infrastructure and Practitioners Group, which meets quarterly and aims to share experience and develop best practice for managing beaver activity.

More repairs have been completed to various water level management structures, including the dams at the LAPSIP site, again using a natural approach. We are now monitoring the repairs and the beaver's interaction with the dams via trail cameras.

No further damming at Cuckold's Stop but this will continue to be monitored.

The Rubery Drove access track, which is used by the Board's Water Level Controller and contractors, is still being assessed for repair. It has been agreed in principle that the IDB will provide an excavator, and the landowner will provide the materials to complete the repair. The Beaver Trust's Senior Field Officer, Mr Morris, is leading this work and providing landowner guidance.

Multiple Beaver burrows are near Grove Road Stop, which is to be replaced in the coming months (recently delayed). Further investigation is needed to be confident that the works can proceed with minimal disturbance. This work is likely to be completed under licence, so we are working closely with the Beaver Trust.

The Operations Officer stated that we are unable to repair every damage caused by beavers, but we focus on tracks used by machinery, cattle and the water level controller. This is a problem that has the potential to increase in the future and the repairs have been carried out through partnership working. Mr Holdstock stated that he is aware of all the work being done on this.

The Operations Officer stated that they try to find natural ways to encourage the beavers to use places we want them to rather than discouraging them from where they habit.

Ref: A4-3      Biodiversity

It was reported that the Board's advisor, KSCP, has produced a 5-year BAP report summarising work completed under the BAP for the last 5 years and recommending actions for the future. Ms Thurgarland stated that they intend to continue with the surveys trying to set baselines to gauge against in the future, continue meeting with contractors and endeavour to maintain what is there and extend habitats where possible. There will be a drive on enhancements through any available government funding.

Cllr McGeever referred to the phragmites' impact on the environment and the use of them in reed beds to help achieve Nutrient Neutrality. Ms Thurgarland stated that this reed has been used for a long time and is great when planted in the right place, but it needs managing.

It was proposed by Cllr McGeever, seconded by Cllr C Hallet and resolved that the 5-year BAP Report be received and approved.

The BAP document is due to be reviewed this year; therefore the Board appointed a Sub-Committee to conduct this review. It was proposed by Cllr Scobie, seconded by Cllr Hallet and resolved that the BAP Sub-Committee will comprise of Mr G Steed (Chair), Cllr Carnac, Mr Dunn, Cllr Ledger, Ms Lynch, Mr T Pont, and Mr P Williams.

Ref: W7G      Environment Agency Works

Dr Price commented on the following EA activities:

Work delivered February to May 2025

Reservoir embankment grass cutting.

Routine structure checks.

Tree pioneering – various locations including the Great Stour from Conningbrook to Olantigh, Chartham to Canterbury, and Fordwich to Gosshall.

Monkton Engine Feed temporary repair – more permanent repair being arranged.

Yules Arch piling and fence repairs.

Moles Hole road bridge culvert survey – no obvious blockages or asset concerns and it was reiterated to KCC that they are responsible for this culvert.

Seaton Weir – repair conducted, further repairs being discussed.

2025-26 Planned Works

Resource maintenance works:

Meica asset maintenance / PPMs (Planned Preventative Maintenance).

Annual in-channel maintenance programme (undertaken by Stour field team and Stour IDB).

Reservoir and flood embankment grass cutting.

Tree pioneering – watercourses to be determined.

Ashford FSR embankment repairs.

Monkton Engine Feed – leak repairs (completion expected late summer 2025. Project is 50% funded by EA, 50% funded by Stour IDB).

Pumping station emergency lighting installation.

Hacklinge PS – weed rake repairs are planned.

Black Sluice PS – weed rake outfall flap repairs.

Vigo Sluice – outfall flap repairs.

Capital Maintenance projects:

Northern Sea Wall beach management – annual shingle recycling.

Minster PS – eel friendly pump replacement and elver pass installation (completion expected winter 2025).

Stourmouth PS – eel friendly pump works and elver pass installation (multi-year project started in 2024/25 – continuation of options appraisal and business case preparation).

Capital Reconditioning projects:

Ash Level PS – basement columns repair (investigation results expected autumn 2025).

Black Sluice PS – eel pass and pump replacement (completion expected by spring 2026).

Black Sluice PS – motor refurbishment, VSD installation, screw bearings replacement (completion expected by spring 2026).

NSW Groyne replacement (completion expected by spring 2026).

Aldington FSR – minor leak repairs (completion expected by winter 2026).

Brewery Sluice – works being carried out to make the site safe as unable to proceed with re-opening this structure.

The list of planned works is subject to change during the year, depending on staff resource, contractor availability, incident response activities, flood risk priorities and budget position. Dr Price reported that Defra launched a 8-week consultation on the new proposed funding laws for capital projects aiming to simplify the process – reform to the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Partnership Funding policy. The three headline principles are:

- **Contribution-Free Allowance:** The first £3 million of any FCERM project would be fully funded by Grant-in-Aid (GiA), requiring no additional partnership contributions.
- **Flat Rate of Funding:** Any project costs above £3 million would be eligible for 90% GiA funding.
- **Full Funding for Refurbishment:** Projects that refurbish or maintain existing FCERM assets would be fully funded by GiA, recognising the critical role of upkeep in resilience.

Dr Price stated that the latter principle is particularly relevant for the EA because it is often where it struggles to secure funding. There is an expectation that the new Government is prioritising maintenance of existent assets, and the changes are to come in April 2026. It is still unknown how the new rules will transpire into the funding, more projects will be fully funded but competition between projects will be greater.

2025-26 Funding Position

It was reported that the 2025-26 budgets are less than bid for and will not cover all the work planned. All the projects across Kent, South London and East Sussex have been reviewed and works in construction, works with a statutory obligation to be undertaken and those which reduce the risk of flooding to the greatest number of residential properties have been prioritised.

The final resource maintenance budget was increased from the indicative allocation but is still not sufficient to fund the full programme of work. The additional funding has been steered towards limited project work, which was previously unlikely to be completed. The works now funded are primarily Meica asset repairs and health and safety improvements. These projects are listed above and include 50% of the costs for the permanent repairs at Monkton Engine Feed.

The funding for Capital programmes is primarily targeted at projects already in progress. Several major projects in the Stour catchment were bid for but have not received funding. Bids will continue for all work required across the catchment to demonstrate our funding requirements to Defra.

### Staff Changes

Dr Darryl Price has returned to the Stour & Swale Asset Performance team as the Stour Technical Advisor following a temporary assignment over the past year.

Ref: W5      Planning Applications

Cllr McGeever thanked the Technical Officer for picking up all the applications that surface within Ashford Borough Council as well as its involvement with KCC. Cllr Carnac was also appreciative of the Technical Officer's support on the issues within Canterbury City Council's area. All agreed that early input is helpful.

### Ashford Borough Council

#### **22/00616/AS**

**Land rear of Charing Motors Ltd, Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road, Charing Reserved Matters application pursuant to planning permission 17/01926/AS for 12 dwellings**

We support the **objection** raised by KCC as LLFA and emphasise our own concerns regarding the proposed surface water runoff rate, which has been calculated in conjunction with an adjacent development, resulting in a combined rate of 3.59 l/s (4.5 times the greenfield runoff rate - QBar). This approach is unsustainable, as it relies on the approval and implementation of another development to function effectively. Without guarantees or supporting evidence that the adjacent site will proceed, we cannot endorse this strategy.

Each development must be capable of managing its own runoff independently. We therefore register an **additional objection** on these grounds and remind the applicant that our Land Drainage Consent (LDC) will be required for any increased discharge into our Drainage District. Early engagement is advised to discuss alternative drainage solutions.

#### **PA/2024/1357**

**Land at Cheesemans Green, Cheesemans Green Lane, Kingsnorth, Ashford Construction of Waterbrook Link Road and Bridge**

The site lies within our Drainage District, and the proposed attenuated discharge to the East Stour requires our LDC.

- The applicant must demonstrate that the receiving network can accommodate increased flows.
- Early engagement is essential to discuss contributions and ensure compliance with Byelaw 3.
- A detailed drainage design must be submitted to Discharge any associated Condition.

We urge the applicant to contact us promptly to avoid delays.

#### **PA/2025/0186**

**Land West by Northwest of Meadow Court, Ashford Road, Kingsnorth, Ashford Outline planning permission for residential development for up to 36 dwellings, associated landscaping and infrastructure, with all matters reserved**

We echo KCC's **objection** regarding the proposed discharge rates (totalling 11.3 l/s), which far exceed greenfield runoff rates (3.3–3.94 l/s for QBar and 1-year events). The strategy conflicts with Local Policy ENV9, which recommends limiting off-site discharge to 4 l/s/ha.

- A formal objection until a revised, sustainable drainage solution is provided.
- Early engagement to discuss LDC and Surface Water Development Contribution (SWDC) requirements.

- Evidence that the receiving network can handle increased flows without exacerbating flood risk.

#### **OTH/2025/0652**

#### **Parcel A, Waterbrook Park, Waterbrook Avenue, Sevington Submission pursuant to Condition 12 (Surface Water Drainage)**

The proposed commercial site lies partially within our Drainage District, and the proposed attenuated discharge to the south must comply with Byelaw 3, which requires our consent for any increase in runoff rates or volumes. We highlight the need for:

- Confirmation that the receiving watercourse has sufficient capacity.
- Early engagement to assess network constraints and ensure compliance.
- Submission of a detailed drainage strategy for review prior to approval.

Failure to address these points may result in withholding consent.

#### **OTH/2025/0817**

#### **Land between railway line and, Willesborough Road, Kennington Details submitted pursuant to Condition 21 (Surface Water Drainage Scheme) of Planning Application 19/00025/AS**

This proposed residential development site lies entirely within our Drainage District, and we have significant concerns regarding the proposed drainage strategy:

- The discharge rate of 8 l/s/ha substantially exceeds permissible levels and contradicts KCC's earlier recommendations.
- Phase One proposes pumping surface water directly to a watercourse without attenuation, raising flood risk concerns during construction.
- No justification has been provided for the high discharge rate or the omission of attenuation for Phase One.

We request a formal **objection** pending clarification and revision of the drainage strategy.

#### **Canterbury City Council**

#### **CA/22/01584**

#### **Hoplands Farm, Island Road, Hersden, Canterbury Erection of 59 dwellings with associated access**

Although outside our Drainage District, surface water will discharge into our District via a ditch and culvert beneath the railway. Key concerns:

- The proposed 5 l/s/ha rate exceeds Canterbury's SFRA recommendation of 0.5 l/s/ha for Drainage Zone 4.
- The applicant must confirm that all off-site infrastructure (including third-party culverts) can accommodate additional flows.
- LDC and SWDC will be required for both surface water and treated effluent discharges.

We recommend adding an informative to any Decision Notice to reflect these requirements.

#### **CA/23/01743**

#### **Land North of Popes Lane, Sturry Outline application for up to 120 residential dwellings (all matters reserved except access)**

Any increase in surface water or treated effluent discharge into our Drainage District will require our formal consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and RSIDB Byelaws. This applies to both attenuated flows and direct discharges.

The applicant should contact us at the earliest opportunity to discuss:

- The proposed drainage strategy
- Surface Water Development Contribution (SWDC)
- Treated Effluent Development Contribution (TEDC)

**CA/24/02241**

**Land At Hillborough, Sweechbridge Road, Herne Bay**

**Non-material amendment to planning permission CA/17/01866/FOS for mixed-use development (up to 900 dwellings)**

Following constructive discussions with Taylor Wimpey (Developer) and LDE/RSK (Consultant), we withdrew our objection to the Phase 2C Planning Application. This decision is based on the following binding commitments:

- Taylor Wimpey will seek LDC for all additional water discharges into our Drainage District.
- A phased approach to LDC submissions will ensure:
- Each development phase obtains separate consent.
- Future developers inherit LDC obligations for their parcels.

**Financial Contributions**

- Surface Water Development Contribution (SWDC)
- Treated Effluent Development Contribution (TEDC).

Future phases remain subject to standard RSIDB scrutiny.

**CA/25/00309**

**Land Off Cockering Road, Thanington Without**

**Discharge of Conditions 9 (Highway details) and 14 (Drainage) for planning permission**

**CA/18/00346/VAR**

Building on our previous representations, we emphasise:

Our LDC must be obtained prior to commencement of any surface water or treated effluent discharges from this site. The applicant must discuss with us:

- SWDC for increased surface water runoff
- TEDC for treated effluent discharge

These are one-off payments to manage the impact of additional flows in our District.

**CA/25/00570**

**Land South of Marley Lane, Hoath, Canterbury, Kent CT3 4JY**

**Installation of a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System**

While solar farms are not considered to be completely impermeable, we advise a precautionary approach to runoff management:

- Incorporate toe-drains and attenuation swales to intercept and slow runoff.
- Design drainage systems to handle 1-in-100-year events + climate change allowances.
- Ensure electrical infrastructure is elevated above flood levels (max depth + 0.3m freeboard).
- 

LDC will be required for any works affecting watercourses in our District.

**Dover District Council**

**23/01363**

**Goshall Valley, East Street, Ash**

**Construction of a solar farm with associated access and infrastructure**

We acknowledge the submitted FRA/Drainage Strategy and support the conditions recommended by KCC as LLFA. If permission is granted, we wish to be reconsulted on any information submitted to discharge these conditions. We require a minimum 5m buffer from any IDB-maintained watercourse for maintenance access. Any works within 8m, or in/over/under a watercourse, will need DC.

#### **24/00370**

##### **Meadow Cottage, Preston**

##### **Erection of 15 dwellings + 1 replacement dwelling with associated works**

We note the content of the latest drainage submission, which now opts to utilise both soakaways and an offsite discharge to the west of the site. As per our previous response, we would wish to see evidence that the receiving watercourse forms part of a wider, contiguous network that can accommodate the flow without exacerbating local flood risk. If this is a blind-ditch with no onward connectivity, this should not form part of the drainage strategy without an assessment of its capacity and permeability.

#### **25/00472**

##### **Archers Low Farm, Sandown Road, Sandwich**

##### **Erection of 35 residential dwellings**

We oppose the reliance on pumped drainage (limited to 2 l/s) into a ditch of uncertain connectivity. Key issues:

- The system lacks sustainability and environmental benefits expected of SuDS.
- No evidence confirms the ditch's capacity or onward connectivity to our District.
- Pumping should be a last resort; alternatives must be explored.

We support KCC's holding **objection** and request a revised strategy. LDC and SWDC will apply if flows enter our District.

#### **Thanet District Council**

##### **Summary of the Kent aspect of the Sea Link Project:**

The Sea Link Project involves the development of a major electrical transmission infrastructure by National Grid comprising the following elements once the cable reaches Kent:

- **An offshore HVDC cable**, approximately 130 km in length, extending from the Suffolk coast to Pegwell Bay on the Kent coast.
- **A second converter station**, within 5 km of the existing Richborough Substation.
- **An HVAC connection**, approximately 1 km in length, from the second converter station to the existing overhead line at Richborough.

The Planning Inspectorate has accepted the application for a Development Consent Order. We have registered to provide further comments on this project. We will ensure that the Board's interests are duly considered throughout the development process. Furthermore, we will continue to request that Land Drainage Consenting obligations are not disapplied under any circumstances, and these requirements should be explicitly acknowledged and maintained in the project's planning and delivery phases.

#### **Folkestone & Hythe, Maidstone District Councils**

No applications affecting IDB interests for this period.

## KCC

### **KCC/FH/0020/2025 Land at Otterpool Park Development, Sellindge Erection of a wastewater treatment works**

We object due to unassessed impacts of permanent additional baseflow (~13 l/s) from the wetland into the East Stour. This exceeds the site's agreed outfall rate for extreme rainfall (11.482 l/s) and could dominate flow during dry periods.

Requirements:

- Full assessment of the wetland's hydrological impact.
- Land Drainage Consent and Treated Effluent Development Contribution (TEDC).
- Revised strategy to mitigate downstream effects.

Ref: W15      Applications for Land Drainage Consent

## **25 ST 01**

**Location: Land off Santon Lane, Stourmouth**

**Proposed: Retrospective application for LDC for the infilling of a section of watercourse following removal of culvert and flow control structure**

We have received an application for the retention of an obstruction to flow in IDB 175 (Stourmouth Stream). After careful consideration of the application and the associated documentation, the Board decided to refuse the application for the following reasons:

**Loss of Control:** The unauthorised removal of this structure has resulted in the loss of the Board's ability to manage water levels effectively in the Stourmouth Stream system. The temporary infilling is not a suitable substitute for the removed structure, and the Board cannot support its permanent retention, which would result in the loss of our ability to control water levels.

**Lack of Independent Verification:** The assertion that the removal of the structure has caused no material change to water management has not been supported by independent verification. Robust evidence, such as a professional hydrological assessment and an environmental impact assessment, would be required to substantiate this claim.

**Potential for Negative Impacts:** The long-term or cumulative impacts of the infilling and the loss of the flow control flap on flood risk, drainage, and the environment remain unknown. The Board must ensure that any changes to the watercourse do not exacerbate risks to the surrounding area.

## **25 ST 02**

**Proposed: Replacement of Two Timber Farm Crossings with Two 2 x 1m Precast Concrete Culverts - OWC & IDB 212**

**Location: Chandler & Dunn, Lower Goldstone**

The Board approved the application for the replacement of two existing timber and steel crossings, which had reached the end of their working life (the existing timber sleepers were rotten and no longer fit for purpose). The applicant proposed their removal and replacement with two 2 x 1m precast concrete culverts to improve structural integrity, safety and longevity. The 2 x 1m precast concrete culverts were left over from the Richborough Connection scheme and were repurposed for this project which has been completed. These culverts include integrated mammal runs to support local wildlife.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Ref: A1-1      IDB Members – Attendance at Board Meetings

In an effort to improve meeting attendance levels, it has been agreed to report the percentage attendance for the previous four Board meetings:

6 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	53%
8 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	58%
7 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	58%
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	68%    Annual average – 59%

It is reported that Thanet District Council has appointed Cllr Linda Wright to the Board, to replace Cllr Joanne Bright. The Chair previously asked for the Board's thanks to be passed on to Cllr Bright.

### Ref: A1-3      Review of Internal Drainage District Boundary

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the consultation on the Board's proposed extension of its Internal Drainage District to the full catchment area has started and is ongoing. To date, discussions have been had with Defra, Environment Agency and Kent County Council. An information/consultation document has been issued to all ratepayers and it is intended to consult more widely over the coming months, with District Councils, local MPs, Water Companies, Southern Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, ADA and others.

### Ref: A2-3      Annual Inspection

It was reported that this year's site visit for members has been set to take place on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, starting at Reculver, visiting Stonar Cut and sites at Deal before a visit to the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot site. Further details will be issued in advance.

### Ref: A2-2.1    Scheme of Delegation

The Board's Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed and updated for the Board's consideration and approval. There being no further comments it was proposed by Cllr McGeever, seconded by Cllr Carnac and agreed that the Scheme of Delegation be received and approved.

### Ref: A3-1      Register of Member's Interests Forms

The Register of Member's Interests Forms have been sent to all Members for completion and return to the Board's office.

### Ref: A3-6      Health & Safety

Mental Health is increasingly being recognised as a key issue for employers and employees, with half of all work-related ill-health being due to stress, anxiety or depression. The Board's staff have all recently attended an online Mental Health Awareness course, aimed to provide an understanding of common mental health problems, give tools to self-assess mental health, including when and how it might present itself and what can be done to help. Refresher training is also to be arranged for Confined Space working, Water Safety, Health & Safety for Employees and Manual Handling Awareness.

The Board's Operations Officer and Operations Assistant have also attended a 3-day First Aid at Work Training with British Red Cross.

The Clerk & Engineer reported that the Operations Assistant wishes to pursue an engineering qualification. Courses starting in September are still being reviewed, and approval from the Board is sought for the Chairs to finalise Mr Cackett's enrolment once all the details are confirmed. All present agreed.

Ref: A3-14    Waste Regulations – Exemptions Reform

It was reported that the environmental permitting regime, set out in the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016, requires regulators in England and Wales to supervise activities which could harm the environment. The regime aims to protect the environment so that statutory and government policy environmental targets and outcomes are achieved and operate effectively and efficiently in a way that provides increased clarity and minimises the administrative burden on both regulators and operators. IDBs can currently register for exemptions for their activities (for weed and spoil placement). Defra is consulting on changes to this permitting process.

The Association of Drainage Authorities will be responding to the consultation on behalf of IDBs and has stated that it is supportive of granting the Environment Agency the ability to exempt and exclude certain activities under EPR more easily than under the current regime, as these are poorly suited to such activities that need to be routinely undertaken by statutory bodies across a linear network of watercourses and assets rather than at a discrete number of sites or facilities. The regulatory approach poorly grasps the flood, water management, and environmental hazards associated with not undertaking such activities within a timely manner, nor the competency of the public bodies undertaking the work.

ADA has therefore proposed that risk management authorities and navigation authorities (and most specifically IDBs) should be excluded from a host of exemption and consenting requirements under EPR across waste operations, mobile plant, flood risk activities, and water discharge activities where these related to routine watercourse and asset management operations. Where liaison around high consequence assets is still required this should be under a straightforward 28-day notice period between risk management authorities to avoid excessive delays (21 weeks in cases currently).

One option ADA has suggested is for the replacement of this approach with a single 'Code of Conduct' for public authorities managing watercourses and related assets (e.g. IDBs, EA, NRW). This would cover the types of activities needing to be undertaken related to EPR and thus serve as a mechanism to exclude those authorities that are party to the Code of Conduct from the need for exemptions and permits. A similar approach is used by Water Boards in the Netherlands to streamline their approach to protected species and habitats regulations.

A summary of responses will be published on the government website and will be reviewed and considered in future policy development.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr Hope thanked the Board for their welcome and referred to the central government's single-tier proposals and its potential impact on Kent and the Board, whether it be funding arrangements, elected representation, or division of responsibilities and suggested that these developments may warrant inclusion on the Risk Register. Cllr Scobie replied that this has been discussed by the Board and added that there will be a

government submission by the end of this year setting out parameters, which will provide more detail enabling a more detailed discussion.

- Cllr Meaden thanked the staff for the comprehensive set of notes, but stated that he finds it difficult to keep track of the various documents during the meetings, He therefore asked if documents could be more clearly referenced. **Action: C&E.**

**MEETING CLOSED**

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