THE RIVER STOUR (KENT) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on Thursday 4 June 2026 at 2.00pm
at Godmersham & Crundale Village Hall, Canterbury Road, Godmersham Kent CT4 7DR

PRESENT

Mr G Steed (Chair,) Cllr R Carnac, Mr P Dunn, Mr D Fuller, Cllr C Hallett, Cllr A Hicks (Vice Chair), Mr A Hope, Mr P Howard, Cllr D Ledger, Ms A Lynch, Cllr R McGeever, Cllr G Meaden, Cllr W Scobie (Deputy Vice Chair), Mr P Williams and Mr L Wooltorton.

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

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Dr D Price (EA Technical Advisor) and Mr G Wooltorton (East Kent Engineering Partnership).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms N Dyas, Mr G Holdstock, Mr T Pont, Mr M Wilkinson and Cllr L Wright. An apology was also received from Ms G Mitri-Renner (EA).

CONDOLENCES

A moment of reflection was observed in honour of Mr N Botting (Clerk to the Romney Marsh IDB), acknowledging his contribution to local flood risk management and expressing condolences.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Fuller declared an interest on Planning Application OL/TH/21/0761. Cllr Hicks declared she is a member of the Benenden Healthcare.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 5 February 2026 were received. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hicks 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 18 MAY 2026

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance, General Purposes & Works Committee held on Monday 18 May 2026 were received. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Mr Fuller and resolved that these minutes be received.

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

FGP&W Committee Report for the period January to April 2026

Ref: F2 Insurance

The quote received from Zurich to insure the recently upgraded structures and installed Water Level Monitors (WLMs), indicated average annual premiums of £252 per structure and £25 per WLM. The Finance Committee recommended not insuring at this time, as the annual cost outweighs the level of risk, and advised that insurance could be reconsidered in future should issues arise. It was therefore proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hicks, and resolved to accept the risk at this time.

Ref: F1-2a Final Internal Audit Inspection of the 2025-26 Accounts

The Board's Internal Auditor, Mr D. Griffiths, carried out his inspection of the Board's 2025–26 accounts and accounting records on 26 May 2026. He reported that the accounting records were maintained to a high standard, with no actions required and all matters found to be in order. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Scobie, and resolved that the Internal Auditor's Final Report for the year ended 31 March 2026 be received and approved. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-2b Internal Control Review & Internal Audit Arrangements 2025-26

The Internal Audit Team for 2025–26 (Cllrs Carnac, Hallet and Scobie) received the Internal Auditor's statement of independence and considered and agreed the proposed audit plan prior to the audit carried out on 26 May. This plan provided assurance across all key areas of financial management, governance and compliance and the scope of work is designed to identify and address the principal risks to the Board. The Internal Audit Team undertook their review on 1 June with Mr D Griffiths in attendance.

The Team reported no concerns, noting only the implications of the forthcoming local government reorganisation for future Board membership and the timing of the first special levy instalment in May 2028. An announcement is due in July regarding which proposal is to be taken forward. It was therefore recommended and agreed that this matter should be discussed further at the Board's August meeting, when more details should be available. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Mr Dunn, and resolved that the Internal Audit Review Team's Report be received and approved. All present agreed.

The Chair noted that the Internal Audit Team holds delegated authority to review the Internal Auditor's statement of independence and agree the audit plan and sought the Board's reaffirmation of this arrangement. The Board agreed, following a proposal by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hicks, with all members concurring.

Ref: F1-5a Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26

The completed AGAR 2025–26 was issued to the Board, comprising three documents to be received and approved by the Board. With the first one being the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025-26 (page 3 of the AGAR) completed and signed by the Internal Auditor following his audit on 26 May. There being no comments it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr McGeever and resolved that the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025-26 be noted, received and approved. All present, agreed.

Ref: F1-5b Accounts for Financial Year Ended 31 March 2026

The Board considered the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 and it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Mr Fuller and resolved that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 be received and approved. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5c Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – SECTION 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2025-26)

The requirement to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control, as set out in Section 1 of the AGAR, was met through the Final Internal Audit undertaken by Mr Griffiths on 26 May 2026, enabling him to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report (page 3), and through the Internal Audit Team's review of the Internal Control and Internal Audit Arrangements on 1 June 2026. Section 1 (page 4) was completed by the Clerk & Engineer and considered by the Board. There being no comments, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hicks, and resolved that the Annual Governance Statement 2025–26 be received and approved, and signed by the Clerk & Engineer and the Chair. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5d Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – SECTION 2 (Accounting Statement 2025-26)

Section 2 of the AGAR (page 5), the Accounting Statements 2025-26 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 Scobie, seconded by Cllr Hicks and resolved that the Accounting Statements 2025-26 be approved and signed by the Chair. All present agreed.

Ref: F1-5e Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Return Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2026

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Board to make its accounting records and supporting documents available for public inspection for a 30-working-day period, which must be announced on the Board's website and outdoor noticeboard. It was proposed that the period for the exercise of public rights be set as follows:

- Commencing on 8 June 2026
- Ending on 17 July 2026

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Ledger and resolved that the above dates be set for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights.

Ref: F6-1 Environment Agency (EA) Precept

The EA's Annual Precept Report for 2025–26 was presented, confirming final allocations for 2025–26 and proposed allocations for 2026–27. The 2026–27 Precept is £106,817, with £16,363 being allocated to Water Level Control and £90,454 to the weed-cutting programme delivered by the IDB under the PSCA. The EA's FDGiA allocation for routine maintenance has recently been increased to £45,000, giving a total maintenance fund of £135,454, which is expected to cover most PSCA works without drawing on the previously agreed shortfall fund. The Clerk & Engineer noted that the full precept is now required for routine maintenance, leaving no capacity to support additional one-off projects, as in the past. The Chair agreed that the continued reliance on the precept for routine maintenance leaves no available funds for other priority works within the district and this will no doubt become more of a problem over time.

Ref: F8-6 Surface Water/Treated Effluent Contributions – Schedule of fees updates/amendments

Approval was sought to align the SWDC and TEDC fee-schedule review cycle with the WMA's annual process, removing the need for separate Board consultation on minor updates while retaining notification of any changes. The Technical Officer explained that the underlying

policy principles and methodologies will remain unchanged, and that this change was intended to avoid delays in implementation of updated fees. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Scobie, and resolved that future updates and amendments to the fee schedules follow the WMA timetable and be reported to the Board at its next meeting. **Action: Technical Officer to implement.**

Ref: F14 Banking Arrangements – Investment Policy

To formalise the Board's approach to managing and safeguarding its financial assets and to ensure clarity, consistency and alignment with good governance principles – an Investment Policy was presented to the Board. Following review, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Ledger, and resolved that the Investment Policy be approved.

Ref: W15/Enf Enforcement Issues & Updates

Ordinary Watercourse at Nethergong, Upstreet:
The Technical Officer reported that the planning application related to this site remains undetermined. The Board's concerns and recommendation have been reiterated, including the need for foul-sewer connection. The delay in determination is thought to be related to highway concerns.

Ref: A7-1 Employment of Staff – Health Insurance

The Board considered the FGP&W Committee's recommendation arising from the recent review of the Health & Safety Policy, regarding the introduction of health insurance support for staff. The Chair reported that several options were explored and that Benenden Health Care offered a viable and cost-effective solution. The Board noted the annual cost of £1,080 for six employees, plus approximately £162 in Class 1A National Insurance contributions (total £1,242). Following discussion, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Scobie and resolved that the provision of Benenden Health Care be available to all staff, with the associated costs met from the Board's budget. All present agreed. **Action: F&RO to implement.**

Board Report for the period February to April 2026

Actions from previous meeting:

Ref:A1-1 – C&E to write to two non-attending Members – done, update in report.

Ref: A1-3 – C&E to submit IDD extension request to EA – update in report.

Ref: A3-6 – Dr Price to share information on overhead cable strike when possible – to be updated at the next meeting.

Ref: A4-3 – C&E to publish finalised BAP – done.

Ref: F2 – F&RO to submit and publish annual return to Defra (IDB1 form) – done.

Ref: W1-45 – C&E to enquire about LGR process in North Yorkshire – update in report.

Ref: W2-1 – C&E and F&RO to publish Rates & Levies documents and issue to local authorities – done.

Ref: W4/WSR Rainfall & River Flow Data

Rainfall across the catchment was highly variable, with January significantly above average and February–April progressively drier; despite April being the sixth driest on record, river flows and groundwater levels remain within normal ranges, soil moisture deficits have increased, and Bewl Reservoir stood at 99% capacity at the end of April.

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

Weed Cutting

The weed-cutting programme will begin mid-July, with joint IDB–EA land entry notices issued and PSCA works mirroring last year's programme; this will again free EA resources for high-risk systems. DDC has requested two cuts of Mathews Close Dyke again this year.

De-silting

The 2025-26 de-silting programme, after some alterations, totalled 18km and included works on:

IDB52 Preston & Deerson Main Stream (Dog & Duck section)
IDB111 Port Rill
IDB114 Wademarsh Stream (River Wantsum to Wagtail Farm)
IDB170 South Poulders Main Stream (Upstream reaches to Ash Road)
IDB199 Santon Lead Dyke
IDB200 Stourmouth Lead Dyke
IDB204 Corner Drove Lead Dyke
IDB207 Ash Level Feed Dyke (Grip Feed to Goldstone Drove)
IDB222 Clapper Hill Lead Dyke
IDB223 Brook Lane Lead Dyke
IDB276 Pole Bay East Lead Dyke
IDB277 Pole Bay West Lead Dyke
IDB311 Richborough Stream (Potts Farm to Westmarsh Drove Farm)
IDB321 Brook Street Dyke Upper reach and d/s of A256)

The 2026-27 de-silting programme, approx. 20km of IDB watercourses, will be confirmed over the summer. The Sevenscore Dyke (Main River) was de-silted during 2025-26 on behalf of the EA, which will aid summer feeding onto the Chislet Marshes. No Main Rivers are planned to be de-silted under the PSCA this year.

Tree & Shrub Maintenance

A substantial amount of work was carried out again over the winter, with works completed on:

IDB3 Swallow Mill Stream
IDB27 Waterbrook Dyke
IDB52 Preston & Deerson Main Stream
IDB84 Stourmouth Valley Dyke
IDB85 Lower Newnham Stream
IDB114 Wademarsh Stream
IDB173 Stonelees Stream
IDB189 Butterfly Cottage Lead Dyke
IDB196 Ware Lead Dyke
IDB200 Stourmouth Lead Dyke
IDB302 Upper Great Stour

Structures Maintenance

Twelve structures were renewed in 2025-26, funded by the Asset Improvement Grant (as detailed in the FGP&W Committee meeting minutes). This included three additional structures, funded by a late grant increase.

The following structures are to be renewed/upgraded in 2026-27, using the Structures Reserve:

IDB172 Kelseys Stop
IDB175 Santon Feed
IDB306 General Valley Stop
IDB306 General Valley Stop Screen
IDB310 Ebbsfleet Stop

Water Level Control

Water levels have been raised to normal summer levels, to support the local environment and allow for irrigation.

At Moles Hole culvert, a blockage caused by two large timbers resulted in very high-water levels. The EA is investigating the cause and options for removal, though no funding is currently available; if the timbers form part of a deteriorating structure, full replacement may be required. The Water Level Controller has installed an upstream screen to reduce further blockages. The Clerk & Engineer noted that failure of the structure would drain the higher-level South Stream into the North Stream, with environmental implications to this SSSI site. The EA advised that the site is a low priority for funding due to limited property-risk numbers, and that any highway-related risk would fall to KCC. Members discussed the wider issue of reduced EA maintenance funding and the potential need for political engagement to secure resources. It was noted that previous financial contributions by the Board, such as for the repair to Monkton Engine, have helped unlock EA funding. Cllr Scobie emphasised that while the Board should retain autonomy, it has benefited from central government grants and may need to consider supporting EA works where there is clear local benefit.

A further leak at Yules Arch continues to affect water-level stability in the South and North Streams at Hacklinge. Tumble Bay Stop is being regularly dammed by beavers and requires frequent clearance, while longer-term options are explored. Temporary pumps have again been installed at Gosshall Feed and the Mile, as the Mile Irrigation Pump remains out of action; this is essential for maintaining levels across the Chislet Marshes, with Cut End Feed providing only partial support. The automatic weed rake at Hacklinge Pumping Station also remains out of service, with weed removal being undertaken manually.

Ref: A4-3 Biodiversity

The Board's Biodiversity Action Plan was updated and published on the website. Work started on this year's watercourse surveys, which are to include IDBs 34, 38, 47, 48, 52, 53, 54, 65, 83, 84, 85, 90, 91, 109, 110. Each survey will include a general ecological assessment of each watercourse and its wider network, with recommendations for future maintenance.

Current Enhancement Works – to be delivered during 2026-27, report to be provided by February 2027 outlining progress made:

IDB10 Cowlees Dyke – creation of an offline pond to store excess water during high-flow events, reducing downstream flood risk and trapping sediment. The wetter conditions will expand wet woodland habitat and support a more diverse range of flora and fauna.

IDB111 Port Rill – channel enhancements are planned, including check dams to slow flows and retain water on site, improving both flood-risk reduction and drought resilience. A secondary channel will be enlarged and reconnected downstream to ensure surrounding land is not adversely affected. The scheme will also enhance habitat diversity and is similar in approach to the LASIP site at Northbourne.

Enhancement Proposals to be developed in 2026 – for delivery during 2027-28, subject to Board Approval:

IDB25 Buxford Dyke – extension of previous enhancement works, including permanent fencing upstream sections and creating scrapes and cattle drinks to prevent poaching and reduce silt and pollutant inputs. Works will be undertaken in cooperation with Godinton Estate.

IDB302 Upper Great Stour – a substantial proposal involving the installation of large check-dams on the main channel and selected side-channels to slow flows, increase storage during high-flow events, and improve drought resilience. The scheme will also enhance ecological diversity, and a detailed site survey will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Ref: A10-21 Beaver Activity

Over a dozen sites require small-scale repairs due to beaver activity, with works scheduled to begin shortly, subject to crop-related access constraints. Forty tonnes of clay were purchased to support these repairs, and access routes will be created to reduce future bank damage. The Operations Officer reported that some burrows are being filled in illegally; as this is a licensable activity, landowners are encouraged to seek advice from the East Kent Beaver Advisory Group (of which the IDB is a member).

The combined beaver and eel pass developed by the Operations Officer, in cooperation with the local Beaver Trust Officer, is proving highly successful, with beavers now routinely using the structure; and with a minor adjustment to the design, supported by consultation with fish-passage specialists, the system is expected to function effectively as an eel-pass as well. Five additional units are planned for deployment, and the project is attracting national interest as a potential model for best practice for all Flood Risk Management authorities and conservation groups.

The Clerk & Engineer noted that beaver use of the new pass should significantly reduce damage to structures and banks. In response to a query from Mr Dunn, the Chair confirmed that current expenditure is being met from the BAP budget and suggested exploring whether the pass design could be patented and shared with other interested parties.

The Operations Officer reported that at a recent Beaver Conference in Newcastle, Defra representatives appeared to believe there are no beaver issues in Kent. He added that there are in fact some significant risks to water level management structures and costs are rising. Essentially the current situation is not sustainable without appropriate support. The government wants coexistence, but RMAs must be given the ability and funding to manage these risks.

Landowners are encouraged to report sightings to help assess population size, as the district hosts the largest beaver population in the UK. Cllr Scobie suggested that the Board's footage of beavers using the pass might be of interest to local media, highlighting the proactive work and investment being undertaken to find solutions.

Ref: W7G Environment Agency Works

Dr D Price provided the following summary of EA activities:

Work delivered January to April 2026
Routine structure checks; tree pioneering across various locations including the Great Stour between Conningbrook and Olantigh, between Fordwich and Grove Ferry and between Richborough and Gosshall, Wantsum; reservoir embankment grass cutting; Northern Sea Wall expansion joints replacement; Worth Minnis PS leak repairs as hoping to fully replace it over

the next few years; Black Sluice weed rake outfall flap repairs; Northern Sea Wall beach management and Northern Sea Wall terminal groyne modification.

2026-27 Project list – Resource funded works
Meica asset maintenance / PPMs (Planned Preventative Maintenance); Water Level Control, via IDB PSCA; Annual in-channel maintenance programme, via Field Team and IDB PSCA; reservoir and flood embankment grass cutting; tree pioneering – watercourses to be determined; reservoir structures desilting; Hothfield FSR toe drain repairs and Stonar Cut silt removal.

Capital maintenance funded projects
Northern Sea Wall beach management – shingle recycling
Minster PS – elver pass installation (expected summer 2026)
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 funded projects
Hacklinge PS – weed rake repairs (expected summer 2026)
Brewery Sluice – site safety works (expected summer 2026)
Ash Level PS –basement columns repair (expected summer 2026)
Black Sluice PS – gearbox repairs and elver pass (expected winter 2026)

The list of projects is subject to change during the year, depending on staff resource, contractor availability, incident response activities, flood risk priorities and budget position.

2026-27 Funding update
The 2026/27 maintenance programme allocation was confirmed, including an increased budget for external weed cutting, which has risen to £45,000 (from £18,700). Together with £90,617 of Precept, the total budget is £135,617, and no direct IDB funding is expected to be required to deliver the full programme.

Cllr Scobie asked about the EA's funding timetable. Dr Price explained that the EA operates on an annual cycle which is challenging to plan around. He noted that bidding for maintenance works for 2027–28 has already begun, with the deadline for submissions being in the summer. Allocation decisions are usually issued around January or February, although in some years the final position is not confirmed until well into the financial year. As a result, there is a full year in which no additional bids can be put forward for emerging maintenance needs. He added that capital funding is more straightforward, operating on a multi-year basis with annual reviews.

Cllr Scobie queried the intended use of the funds originally earmarked for the EA's maintenance programme shortfall. The Chair confirmed that no decision has yet been made. Cllr Scobie suggested the Board may need to retain the funds for the same purpose next year, depending on the EA's 2027–28 allocation. The Chair noted that several potential uses have been discussed, including possible future repairs at Moles Hole, and agreed that the funds are available, but the Board must determine how they should be used.

Incident response
Aldington FSR impounded between 09/01/26–18/01/26, 27/01/26–14/02/26, 19/02/26–20/02/26 Hothfield FSR impounded between 09/01/26 – 19/01/26, 27/01/26 – 31/01/26. Staff from the Stour Asset Performance team inspected the embankments at both reservoirs each day during impounding events.

Stonar Cut was operated between 17/01/26–18/01/26 (four tides), 23/01/26–24/01/26 (two tides), 29/01/26–30/01/26 (two tides), 01/02/26–09/02/26 (16 tides), 17/02/26–18/02/26 (three tides), 20/02/26–22/02/26 (five tides)

The Little Stour Flood Relief Channel was operated between 20/02/26–23/03/26

Flood alerts / warnings issued
Upper River Stour Flood Alert in force between 08/01/26–12/01/26, 14/01/26–18/01/26, 27/01/26–04/02/26, 05/02/26–08/02/26; Lower River Stour Flood Alert in force between 08/01/26–12/01/26, 16/01/26–18/01/26, 27/01/26–04/02/26, 06/02/26– 8/02/26; Tidal River Stour Flood Alert in force between 03/02/26–04/02/26, 19/02/26–20/02/26; East Kent Groundwater Flood Alert in force between 13/02/26–10/04/26. No Flood Warnings were issued during this period

A **Stour Field Team Training Day** is to be held on Wednesday 17 June 2026 at Plucks Gutter Depot, The Street, East Stourmouth CT3 1JB. Plant & equipment demonstrations are scheduled to start at 10am and finish at 12pm – which includes the IDB pump – with river rescue practice between 12pm and 2pm.

Ref: W5 Planning Applications

Ashford Borough Council

PA/2025/0186
Land West by Northwest of Meadow Court, Ashford Road, Kingsnorth
Outline application for up to 28 dwellings
We have no objection in principle, consistent with KCC's position. Technical discrepancies regarding inclusion of all developable areas must be resolved at Reserved Matters stage, and the final design must reflect the latest upper-end climate change allowances with discharge limited to 4.4 l/s. Detailed design should follow the SuDS hierarchy, prioritising source control measures. Conditions for a comprehensive drainage scheme and pre-occupation verification report are requested. Byelaw 3 applies.

OTH/2025/0817
Land between railway line and Willesborough Road, Kennington
Condition 21 discharge. Phase 1 surface water drainage
We reviewed updated information from WSP and RSK regarding outstanding drainage matters. We are now satisfied that the attenuation basins in cascading configuration, with a combined maximum discharge of 68.1 l/s from two outfalls, remain effective in 1:100+40% climate change events even without infiltration. We withdraw our objection to the discharge of Condition 21. Byelaw 3 applies.

PA/2025/1745
Ashford College, Elwick Road, Ashford
Three-storey extension to the college, 1,710 sqm
We have reviewed the Drainage Strategy (Rev P02) and are satisfied with the approach: surface water discharged via two outfalls into the existing private network, with Outfall 1 restricted to 13.5 l/s via a hydro-brake, and attenuation from Phases 1 and 2 sized to accommodate Phase 3 flows. The hydraulic modelling demonstrates containment without on-site flooding up to a 1:100-year event. We note the peak wastewater flow of 4.90 l/s connecting to the public sewer. Byelaw 3 applies.

PA/2026/0084
Prima Recycling Ltd, Ninn Lane, Great Chart
Three commercial buildings, B2/B8/Class E
The site lies just outside our Drainage District, but surface water will discharge into a ditch draining into our network. The applicant should demonstrate the discharge outfalls into a contiguous drainage system rather than a blind ditch. The foul water package treatment plant

replaces an existing septic tank, and the discharge point for treated effluent must be clearly identified, as this represents an additional volume entering the network. Although the proposed peak surface water discharge rate of 5 l/s is a significant reduction from the existing 117 l/s, it remains above the greenfield rate of 2.9 l/s, and the applicant should demonstrate all reasonable measures to reduce it further. Land Drainage Consent from KCC will be required for any works affecting a watercourse. Byelaw 3 applies.

OTH/2026/0541
Conningbrook, Willesborough Road, Kennington
Conditions 22, 23 & 25. Construction of 300 dwelling residential development with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Car Park Drainage
We echo KCC's technical concerns about the drainage appraisal. The proposed minimum discharge rate of 2 l/s is five times the calculated greenfield QBAR of 0.4 l/s, and further justification is required as to why a lower rate cannot be achieved using vortex flow controls or additional storage. Evidence of downstream network capacity is required, including the final outfall to Conningbrook Lakes. Given the site's location above a Principal Aquifer, robust pollution mitigation is required. Confirmation of long-term maintenance responsibility for the SuDS components (246.2 m^3 storage) is needed. We maintain a holding objection pending resolution of KCC's concerns. Byelaw 3 applies.

PA/2026/0171
Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford
Mixed-use redevelopment
We acknowledge the proposed discharge cap of 64.1 l/s as a reduction from existing brownfield rates but remain concerned about cumulative impacts on the Aylesford Stream and East Stour River. As the site sits on impermeable Weald Clay, it relies entirely on structural SuDS; we support KCC's request for updated hydraulic modelling. A robust maintenance plan for silt traps and petrol separators is required to protect the Stour catchment's ecological health. We support KCC's holding objection and require the modelling discrepancies to be addressed before the application progresses. Byelaw 3 applies.

Canterbury City Council

CA/26/00344 / 00345 / 00346 / 00347
Land at Sturry/Broad Oak, Sturry
Up to 630 dwellings and community infrastructure
Although outside our Drainage District, the proposed off-site discharge via a culvert beneath the railway line to the south has the potential to affect our downstream interests. We generally support the principle of mimicking greenfield rates but note that increased impermeable area and the package treatment plant will result in higher runoff volumes. The condition of the receiving watercourse and culvert should be assessed to confirm it forms part of a contiguous network. We recommend KCC's holding objection concerns are addressed. Byelaw 3 applies.

CA/26/00495
Rosemary Lane Car Park, Canterbury
146 co-living units
Although outside our Drainage District, the proposals may impact the downstream network. We acknowledge the site is already impermeable and welcome the proposed reduction in discharge rate (capped at 2.8 l/s). However, we recommend a gravity-led, non-pumped solution to reduce the risk of mechanical failure. We remain concerned about cumulative volumetric impacts on the River Stour and note that a Treated Effluent Development Contribution (TEDC) will be required. Byelaw 3 applies.

CA/26/00496
Car Park, St John's Lane, Canterbury
20 co-living units
Although outside our Drainage District, the proposals may impact the downstream network. We welcome the proposed use of infiltration to reduce surface water discharge from the already-impermeable site, but support KCC's holding objection pending clarification on the location and methodology of infiltration testing. We remain concerned about cumulative volumetric impacts on the River Stour, and a TEDC will be required for treated effluent. Byelaw 3 applies.

CA/26/00583
Land at Junction with May Street/Sweechbridge Road, Herne Bay
Condition 22 drainage details - Erection of industrial/commercial units to provide employment floor space, for use within Use Class B2, B8 and E
Although outside our Drainage District, increased runoff from this site is likely to discharge into our network. We echo KCC's concerns about the omission of key considerations and support their objection pending a revised and detailed drainage strategy. Byelaw 3 applies.

Dover District Council

25/00934
Land on the West Side of Lower Street, Eastry
Outline application for up to 99 dwellings
We raised significant concerns. Southern Water has confirmed insufficient foul sewer capacity to accommodate this development alongside the Former Eastry Hospital development, with approximately 73 units from the latter heading in the same direction. We also raised concerns about cumulative volumetric impacts on the River Stour catchment, the lack of comprehensive infiltration testing, and the absence of groundwater depth data. The 2014 local flooding is cited as evidence of the area's drainage sensitivity. A TEDC will be required for treated effluent. We cannot support the application in its current form and request deferral or refusal until a viable, consented drainage strategy has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of KCC, Southern Water, and ourselves. Byelaw 3 applies.

26/00227
Land South of Staple Road, Wingham
19 dwellings
Although outside our Drainage District, the proposals may impact the downstream network. We note the intention to use infiltration for surface water disposal and request to be consulted on the detailed drainage design if permission is granted. Should infiltration prove unviable, an offsite discharge would need to be evaluated. Wider cumulative impacts on the River Stour catchment are noted, and a TEDC will be required for treated effluent. Byelaw 3 applies.

Thanet District Council

F/TH/25/0697
Foxhunter Caravan Park, Monkton
Extension for 55 caravans
We are generally content with the updated site layout and access arrangements for IDB watercourse 081. Concerns remain regarding the proposed 5m buffer strip and enhanced hedgerow around the north, east, and south boundaries, which may inhibit the riparian owner's access for maintenance. If permission is granted, we request a condition to ensure foul and surface water flows are managed and discharged at a maximum rate of 1 l/s, in accordance with the submitted FRA. Land Drainage Consent will be required for surface water and treated effluent discharges, and for any works within 8m of any on-site watercourse. Byelaw 3 applies.

Sea Link Project Update

Kent Onshore Scheme: Background and Flood Risk Overview:

The Sea Link Project is a nationally significant infrastructure scheme being developed by the National Grid Electricity, forming part of the 'Great Grid Upgrade'. It involves the construction of a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) link between the proposed Friston substation in Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400kV overhead line in Kent. This project is now at the recommendation stage.

The Kent Onshore Scheme element includes new overhead line works requiring the installation of new pylons in the vicinity of the River Stour fluvial floodplain, together with a converter station and substation at Minster. Should any development platforms associated with these permanent structures require land raising, the Board will require assurance that all fill material is uncontaminated and presents no leachable risk to water quality or ecology, and that Environment Agency consent is obtained. Whilst the original Flood Risk Assessment assumed the floodplain in this location to be tidally dominated, the Environment Agency subsequently confirmed that areas within the Order Limits are also fluvially influenced, necessitating a supplementary fluvial assessment.

National Grid's assessment concludes that the impact on the River Stour fluvial floodplain is very minor. During construction, one temporary drainage attenuation basin falls within the flood extent. During operation, four new pylons are to be located within the 20-yr fluvial flood extent, rising to five within the 100yr extent. Given the proposed design of the pylon structures, the above-ground footprint of each pylon is just 4m², and calculated floodplain storage losses are negligible, with consequential water level increases of less than 1mm. Floodplain compensation will nonetheless be provided on a volume-for-volume basis within the Order Limits, secured through commitment in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments.

Statement of Common Ground (Version A) – Board Response Summary

The Board, acting as a statutory Land Drainage Authority for the Stour Catchment, has reviewed Draft SoCG Version A and confirmed that several unresolved technical matters must be addressed before the document can be elevated to fully agreed status. This is a Statement of Common Ground between the National Grid and the RSIDB.

On surface water discharge, the Board will not accept any increase in peak runoff rates into any watercourse. All permanent onshore infrastructure, including the Minster converter station and substation, must be attenuated to greenfield/QBAR rates, designed to a 1-in-100-year event with a 45% climate change allowance. Complete drainage strategy documentation and hydraulic calculations, promised at the September 2025 meeting, remain outstanding and must be provided before this matter can be resolved.

Regarding culvert design, National Grid must demonstrate that all temporary crossings have capacity at least equal to the relevant channel before any requirement for localised hydraulic modelling may be waived. Where capacity is affected, temporary culverts must be shown not to cause backwater effects or flooding during a 1-in-30-year event. All permanent culvert inverts must be set a minimum of 150mm below natural bed level. Continuous mammal ledges must also be provided on both banks of all new culverts, positioned 150mm above the 1-in-2-year high flow level, constructed from solid non-slip material and fitted with safe approach ramps.

The Board additionally requires formal SoCG commitment that no crossing structures or fencing will obstruct routine watercourse maintenance, and that any land raising utilises uncontaminated fill material with EA consent obtained.

National Grid is requested to provide the full drainage strategy, sustainable drainage calculations, site-specific channel capacity assessments, and structural drawings confirming mammal ledge provision. Adoption of the SoCG remains contingent upon receipt and verification of this information.

Ref: W15 Applications for Land Drainage Consent (LDC)

APPLICATIONS FOR LAND DRAINAGE CONSENT
26 ST 01 Sturry Link Road, Sturry, Canterbury
Culverting of Sturry Road Dyke and discharge of attenuated surface water
An application was received from Kent County Council for the Board's LDC regarding the construction of the Sturry Link Road (A28/A291). The permanent highway works involve culverting an 87-metre section of the RSIDB-maintained Sturry Dyke using a 450-millimetre diameter HDPE pipe, alongside installing a surface water drainage system with northern and southern attenuation ponds, oversized pipes, and a cellular attenuation tank to manage an additional 14,566 square metres of impermeable area. The controlled discharge rates to local watercourses and the River Great Stour have been limited to existing greenfield runoff rates, including climate change allowances, and early enabling works have already been agreed regarding an 18-metre temporary culvert and emergency repair works on an existing brick culvert. Ecological assessments found the dyke unsuitable for water voles and great crested newts, though relevant licences and habitat compensation via attenuation ponds and a wetland mitigation area are in place. A £30,879.92 SWDC is applicable.

The Technical Officer advised that the IDB will no longer maintain that section. The Chair asked whether the Board should formally un-adopt it. The Clerk & Engineer agreed that this would be appropriate and noted that several other sections may also warrant consideration. He will compile a list of these and present them to the Board for approval. **Action: Clerk & Engineer to produce a list of watercourses to be adopted/un-adopted.**

26 ST 02 Land to the south of Chart Leacon Depot, Leacon Road, Ashford
Discharge of surface water to the RSIDB Drainage District via an existing outfall to the River Stour
An application was received for LDC under Byelaw 3 to discharge surface water into the RSIDB Drainage District via an existing outfall to the River Stour, following the development of a new open storage site with newly impermeable area on land south of Chart Leacon Depot, Leacon Road, Ashford. The development corresponds with planning application PA/2022/2312 and involves an increase in impermeable area of 6,988 m², attracting a SWDC fee of £14,814.56. While the project introduces additional volume, the applicant is maintaining the existing runoff rate of 11.4 litres per second via a pump and rising main, and the provided attenuation ensures there will be no increase in flood risk.

ADMINISTRATION

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

The percentage attendance for the previous four Board meetings is as follows:

5 June 2025	73%	
21 August 2025	73%	
6 November 2025	84%	
5 February 2026	68%	Annual average – 75%

As a result of persistent non-attendance at IDB meetings, and in line with Board policy, two Members were notified that their membership ceased. The Chair reported that the Elected

Member position for General Valleys is now vacant, and that Mr Fuller, who currently represents Wye, would prefer to transfer to General Valleys as this is his local area. It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Ledger, and resolved that Mr Fuller be elected to represent General Valleys.

The Chair further reported that Mr Edward Cyster has expressed interest in the resulting vacancy for Wye. He proposed that the Board elect Mr Cyster to serve until November 2027, the date of the next IDB election. This was seconded by Mr Howard and agreed by all present. The Chair added that Dover District Council has since appointed Cllr Michael Nee, meaning the Board's vacancies have been filled. **Action: C&E to inform Mr Cyster.**

Ref: A1-3 Review of Internal Drainage District Boundary

The Chair reported that a formal request was submitted to the EA on 9 February for this proposal to be put to Defra for Ministerial approval. A meeting was held on 20 May to discuss the proposal, and while the local EA team is generally supportive, the EA's Legal team has requested further clarification on the following:

- The proposed extension is not in accordance with the Medway Letter.
- It needs to be shown how the extended area will benefit from IDB activities.
- Whilst the current Board may not intend to introduce new rates and levies for the extended area, it needs to be checked that a future Board is not able to do so without seeking separate approval.

It was further noted that no other IDB in England has previously sought to cover an entire river catchment, meaning the proposal could set a legal precedent and must therefore be thoroughly tested before submission. **Action: C&E to provide additional clarification.**

Ref: A2-3 Annual Inspection

This year's site visit for Members has been set to take place on Thursday 23rd July 2026 in the Ashford area. This will include a visit to a small wastewater treatment works, a river restoration project, a Sustainable Drainage facility and possibly a flood risk and Nutrient Neutrality scheme. Further details will be issued in advance.

Ref: A3-1 Members' Register of Interests

The Register of Members forms were issued to all Board members, and the majority have now been returned. Reminders will be issued for the remaining two that are outstanding so that records can be fully updated.

Ref: A3-6 Health & Safety

As part of this year's review of the Board's Health & Safety policies, a Health & Wellbeing Policy was drafted. It was proposed that this be adopted as a standalone policy for now, with incorporation into the main policy at the next full review in 2027. This was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hallett, and agreed by all present.

Ref: W1-45 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The Clerk & Engineer reported that he contacted the York Consortium of Drainage Boards to seek information and advice on their recent experience of LGR, completed in 2023–24. The advice received was broadly as expected, emphasising the need for early engagement to ensure a smooth transition, particularly in relation to:

- **IDB Membership:** Existing Members must be formally authorised to act on behalf of the new Authority until new appointments are made, which may not occur until several months after Vesting Day. It was also advised that the new Authority be encouraged to consider appointing a wider range of interested parties, including Parish Councillors and Council officers, rather than relying solely on full Councillors.
- **Special Levy Payments:** The Consortium noted that new Authorities may initially experience difficulties in processing levy payments, and the Board will need to consider the associated risk of late payments.

It was further noted that a Ministerial decision on the final proposed arrangements for Kent is expected in July. Cllr Scobie commented that, rather than seeking individual Councillors to represent specific areas, it would be more effective for the new Authority to appoint joint memberships. He suggested that Members of the Council's Flood Risk Committee should also be appointed to the IDB, given the significant crossover of issues and interests between the two roles.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Williams reported that, following a 2024 feasibility study into the use of Phoslock at Fordwich Lakes, Natural England has now funded a significant new trial. Phoslock, a phosphate-binding clay (Lanthanum Modified Bentonite) sourced from Australia, will be applied once to each of the three lakes in November. To enable a successful trial, the flood banks between the lakes and the River Stour have been raised to prevent the historic inflow of silt and nutrients. The trial includes a comprehensive five-year monitoring programme, providing sufficient data to support potential PhD-level research. Although Phoslock is expensive, it is considerably less costly and far less disruptive than dredging, making this an important test of its suitability for a protected waterbody. As part of the funding agreement, the Canterbury & District Angling Association has adopted a Fisheries Management Plan and committed to maintaining native fish stocks with no further Carp introductions.

MEETING CLOSED

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